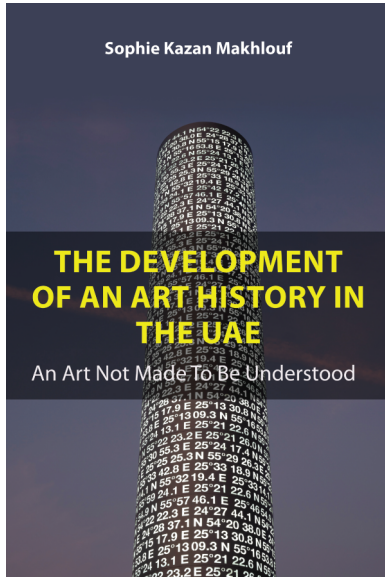




# ANTHEM PRESS



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ART HISTORY IN THE UAE

An Art Not Made To Be Understood

By *Sophie Kazan Makhoulf*

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**Sophie Kazan Makhoulf** (PhD) is an art and architectural historian. She is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Leicester and currently lectures at the University of Falmouth. She regularly contributes to academic journals, art magazines and podcasts.

This book delves into the evolution of art history in the United Arab Emirates through the work of local artists, interviews and first-hand accounts.

### About the book

This book draws together an oral and visual art history of a country that is extremely rich in culture and history but that is often overlooked or underestimated. By observing the country's history and visual culture and the artistic practices of select artists from the UAE, it considers the development of contemporary art from the UAE. This will increase accessibility to art by Emiratis and underline its wider relevance.

There is a dearth of literature on contemporary art by Emiratis, and this may be one of the reasons contemporary art from the UAE is under-represented globally. In order to help the reader better understand art from the UAE, this book traces the country's historical make-up, its culture and contemporary art tradition through oral histories based on interviews with a wide variety of artists and people working in the art industries. It also explores this development using global art discourses that are relevant to art produced in the UAE today.

This book also considers how cultural and artistic identities are formed and explores the political and socio-economic interests in the country that have stimulated art practices and appreciation. For so long, an exclusively Western narrative has dominated Art, and popular media portrays the Gulf's accomplishments in development and modernity with suspicion. Thanks to the UAE's espousal of the Internet and online communities over the last decade, this book is particularly timely. Following the pandemic, a wider understanding of global art discourses, values and perceptions are increasingly welcomed. Art from the UAE bridges the local and the global, giving a voice and a visual presence to a country's contemporary art tradition that has been widely overlooked.

The UAE has a distinct visual arts tradition that relates to a broader and inclusive understanding of art centered on development and change.

### Reviews

The question of the polarity between Emirati traditions and a globalised world drives the book. Calligraphy is also given prominence, and Kazan Makhoulf shows the way that these cultural forms saturate daily life in a way that "visual art" does not. — **The National**

'This volume is an essential guide for anyone interested in learning about the UAE's unique, and very dynamic cultural landscape, whose impact extends far beyond the country's borders. The book offers a wealth of perspectives from key practitioners in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, and outlines some of the most significant artistic and institutional histories of the UAE.' — **Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi**, Founder of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; Instructor at the American University of Sharjah; and Research Associate at SOAS Middle East Institute, London

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