BEYOND REALITY
Welcoming New Worlds

CONVERSATION BRIEF

Tuesday, 2 July 2019
Serpentine
Sackler Gallery,
London, UK
World Expo and Global Conversations

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, World Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future. With its mix of art and science, imagination and analysis, machines and ideas, nations and people, the Expo is a special place for convening inquisitive minds interested to ask questions about the future and, in so doing, learn more about each other. Expos have always been a mirror of their times.

Inspired by the format and values of the traditional majlis, the World Majlis is an original format for open, informed and measured conversations between diverse thought leaders and change-makers with the objective of helping us to explore and better understand areas of great significance for society from multiple points of view. The goal of these conversations is to generate new perspectives and incubate meaningful connections between people and new ideas.

The World Majlis will take place in the UAE and internationally in the lead-up to and during Expo 2020, with the goal of opening new horizons around the theme and the subthemes.

Hosted in culturally significant locations, these conversations are committed to an inclusive and constructive dialogue of the highest quality in an environment that reflects the UAE’s tradition of welcome and respect... the Majlis.
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In the span of only a few centuries, maps have evolved from parchment to digital constructs capable of visualising complex, real-time data.

The history of cartography, including in the Arab world, is the history of human exploration. As physical space becomes recoded by layers of data and digital media, a new generation of artists and technicians are creating "mirror worlds" that use data and storytelling to transcend physical barriers and time. In doing so, they will forever alter how we perceive spaces and what they inspire in our imaginations.

As these prototypes make their way from the fringes of geekdom to the mainstream, we must consider definitions of public, private, cultural and personal in charting a new world in which reality is half-invisible but contains near-limitless potential.

Since the very first Great Exhibition was inaugurated in London by Prince Albert, World Expos have long been a celebration of culture, technology and innovation. Hosted alongside the Shubbak Festival, London’s largest celebration of Arab culture, this Expo 2020 World Majlis will bring together artists, technologists and innovators in the Emirati tradition of a Majlis, to engage in a conversation about augmented reality, mirror worlds and how they will impact the future of humanity.

How will these changes transform our lives and shape our interactions? What opportunities do these developments represent for collaboration, storytelling and understanding? What type of responsibility and ethical considerations will this entail?