

Call for Papers

Under Construction.

The Material and Symbolic Meaning of Architecture and Infrastructure in the Gulf Region

An International Workshop at the *Zentrum Moderner Orient* (ZMO) Berlin, 7-9 October 2010

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Maps, information brochures and newspaper articles regarding cities, infrastructure and recreational spaces on the Arab side of the Gulf often present virtual realities that have not yet been built. While the Emirate Dubai (UAE) is very much on top of the race and has already realised at least a huge amount of its landmark architecture and strategic facilities, cities like the Qatari capital Doha – that even advertises “Doha 2030” as a label – still appear to be heavily under construction. In countries like the Sultanate of Oman, the establishment of ultra-luxury tourism projects only started recently. On the media level, advancements in this area are enthusiastically hailed and widely broadcasted.

The workshop at the “Zentrum Moderner Orient” (ZMO) in Berlin traces phenomena, such as the widespread construction of artificial islands (meanwhile also in countries like Kuwait), innovative infrastructure and prestige buildings (global container ports, free zones, inter-island causeways, metro connections, theme parks etc.). It calls to analyse and compare activities of this kind and their rhetoric within a theoretically informed framework from the overall perspective of material and symbolic impacts. Although emphasis is put on the Arabian Peninsula, complementary contributions regarding the Eastern coastline of the Gulf are also invited.

The conference is scheduled for October 7-9, 2010. It aims to encourage a transdisciplinary dialogue between scholars (and practitioners) from the fields of Islamic Studies, geography, architecture, culture management, economics, urban studies, history etc. Potential contributors are kindly asked to send a working title with an abstract of 200 words, addressing contents and methods, to the organizers (E-Mail: gulf2010%confzmo@gmx.de) by June 30, 2009.