



Vaduz, 10th June 2022

**Press release to the special exhibition
«Spectrum – Rashid Al Khalifa»**

«Spectrum» Spectrum employs traditional Middle Eastern architectural principles, such as those seen throughout Bahraini artist Rashid Al Khalifa's heritage, and contemporizes them by playing on structural attributes that are also reminiscent of contemporary Gulf architecture. Additionally, Rashid integrates a specific palette and tones that are characteristic to the landscape of his country. Despite the physicality and monumentalism of his work, which has transitioned over the years with the surroundings that have long inspired him, if we are to truly understand the essence of Rashid's oeuvre, we find that he has undergone a very conscious journey. He has always aimed to express the fundamentality of life, through the contrasts he has regularly observed in his immediate environment, as well as the colours and light reflected in a land that he treasures.

As a child I was interested in art and archaeology and began reading general books on such subjects from that early age. His artistic development has been inseparably linked with the establishment of the state of Bahrain. But he soon broke away from traditional painting in this genre and began to sketch women, especially as intimations of nudes. Over time, his figures became increasingly abstract. Eager to experiment and open to new ideas as Rashid al Khalifa has always been, he explored three-dimensional aspects of canvas as an artistic medium, he began to bend the canvas. This led him to convex canvases, thus giving the already very abstract bodies additional and special curvaceous qualities. He has developed this approach further. In recent years he transformed convex canvases into aluminium supports, which in turn were broken up into many small surfaces. These are reminiscent of the layout of Arabian cities and of Arabian windows, of the expanding old town with its curving and chaotic street alignments and of the highly decorative latticework of ornamental window grilles. These allow occupants to see out, but not to be seen from outside. Using aluminium as a working material also references the fact that aluminium requires a great deal of energy in its production. Gas-rich Bahrain, nota bene, is one of the world's leading producers of aluminium. His works are consequently always closely linked to aspects of the state of Bahrain. With an artist as restless and energetic as Rashid Al Khalifa, one can only be curious to see what new transformations will take place in future. Each of these can simultaneously be likened to enchantingly beautiful and exclusive pearls on a string, thus reminding us of earlier times when Bahrain was famous for the most exquisite and best quality pearls to the delight of jewelry lovers around the world.

Liechtensteinisches
LandesMuseum
.....

Städtle 43, Postfach 1216
FL-9490 Vaduz

T +423 239 68 20
F +423 239 68 37

info@landesmuseum.li
landesmuseum.li



Long version to «Spectrum»

Rapid urban and architectural development in the Gulf Region has undoubtedly influenced Rashid Al Khalifa's latest work, as is evident in his appreciation of refined, structural forms. The technical and political processes concerned with the design of land use and built environments has undergone major transformations over the decades and Bahrain's panorama reveals this radical change with its myriad of construction ventures. Rashid has played a pivotal and formal role in the completion of various projects, whereby he was assigned, with complete authority, to envisage, spearhead and oversee key architectural developments to their completion. Such responsibility requires extraordinary patience, perseverance, innovation and resourcefulness, which in turn, has greatly encouraged and shaped his artistic practice.

Whether consciously or not, Rashid's desire to balance such weighty obligations has resulted in imagery that is not only inspired by contemporary architecture but is also reflective of those sensibilities to the natural landscape he has long held dear. His preoccupation with simplicity and symmetry also allowed him to produce work that balanced the contrasts and contradictions of his daily life. The peace and serenity Rashid strove to express throughout his artistic practice, became more clearly observable in his latest creations.

For over a century, Bahrain has offered a real platform for contemporary design and architecture and yet much of the country's rich, ancient history continues to be seen through remnants of its early structures and traditional buildings. Traders, seafarers, pearl merchants and travellers have long traversed and dwelled on this desert island and their homes, villages and traditional ways of life are a constant reminder of their presence. Moreover, the country's social and cultural backdrop, as well as the natural beauty of its surrounds, have widely influenced the functional design of the island's living spaces. Typically organized around an open central courtyard, traditional Bahraini homes were connected and assembled with thoughtful consideration of their positioning within the landscape; the direction of the rising and setting sun, the cool draft of the morning breeze, and the arrangement of the family living space each played a fundamental role in determining the design of the household.

Much of this has inspired Rashid's most recent work, as he considers innovative ways to express these heritage elements and explore their functionality within contemporary Bahraini society.

Despite the upsurge of modern building in recent decades, Islamic pattern continues to play an important role in contemporary Bahraini design. Historically, rhythmic arabesques were employed to represent spiritual attributes of the natural environment and were incorporated in the mashrabiya, a distinguishing feature of traditional Middle Eastern architecture. A projecting oriel window featuring carved wooden latticework on the upper story of a building, the masharbiya's



original purpose was to ensure privacy, so the occupants could see but not be seen, whilst providing shade and protection from the searing heat and allowing a breeze to pass through a room. The functionality of the mashrabiya inspired Rashid Al Khalifa's Parametric series, from 2018 onwards. Applying coiled and interwoven aluminium to create a mesh pattern, the rhythmic nature of the repetition in Rashid's Parametrics, alludes to his desire to simultaneously express order and symmetry whilst also creating imagery that shifts and transforms with its surroundings. Using this design paradigm, he is able to both manipulate and inform complex geometries and structures to simulate nature and animate forms. Built on contrasts, these Parametrics integrate opposing attributes; positive and negative, light and shadow, interior and exterior space, and in doing so, generate synergy. Corrugated aluminium casts small shadows within the work, creating an illusion of movement and corporeality. Despite their stillness, they appear to mechanistically undulate while other forms emerge across their rhythmic surface. A sudden change of viewpoint creates other illusory effects. As we fixate on one particular layer of these colourful gridlocked matrixes, the image momentarily leaves an after-image on our retinas. Small, involuntary eye movements cause this 'ghost' image to overlap resulting in a 'moiré effect', whereby similar repetitive patterns merge together at different angles to create a ripple. These works are in essence, suggestive of the transcendent and ephemeral qualities of light and shadow.

More recently, Rashid's Spectrum series further reflects on the 'rules of repetition' in Islamic art, one of the most important aesthetic principles of Islamic architecture. The frequency and repetition of a shape in Islamic art, however complex, creates the illusion of infinity whereby the frame that holds the pattern is incidental: the symmetrical pattern continues beyond the bounds of the frame. Harmony arises from this state of infinitude. Spectrum takes such principles and contemporizes them by playing on structural attributes that are also reminiscent of contemporary Arab architecture, additionally integrating a specific palette and tones, that are characteristic to Bahrain's landscape. As Spectrum transitions from one colour to another, its identity in turn, is altered. Each work is dependent on its placement within the surrounding environment, the emotional state of the viewer, and of course the mind of the artist, who purposely selects and combines colours. Through these endless possibilities of colour combinations that each Spectrum resonates a different feeling, sensation or thought process. Furthermore, the rhythmic nature of such repetition alludes to Rashid's desire to express order and symmetry whilst creating imagery that shifts and transforms with its surroundings.

Despite the new physicality and monumentalism of Rashid's work, which has transitioned with the landscape that has long inspired him, if we are to truly understand the essence of his oeuvre, we find that the artist has undergone a very conscious journey. He has always



Liechtensteinisches
LandesMuseum

aimed to express the fundamentality of life, through the contrasts he has regularly observed in his immediate environment, as well as the colours and light reflected in a land that he treasures. Throughout his unique quest, Al Khalifa has stripped away superfluous details and gifted us with discerning representations of an artist's soul and the spirit of work that is universally and unanimously relatable. In this way, these works materialize as testaments to both tradition and modernity; synchronized representations of the past, the present, and the future.

The exhibition lasts from Thursday, 16th June to Sunday, 4th September 2022.

**Livestream Vernissage on Wednesday, 15th June 2022, 6 pm
Liechtenstein NationalMuseum**

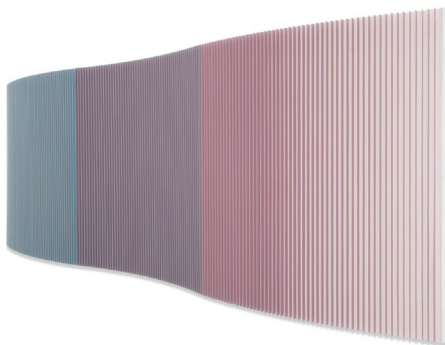
You are welcomed by Prof. Dr. Rainer Vollkommer, Director of the Liechtenstein NationalMuseum. Stefan Batliner, Vice President of the Board of the Foundation of the Liechtenstein NationalMuseum, give the opening words. Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the artist of the exhibition, introduces the topic.

You will find all the details at www.landmuseum.li

A catalog will be published for the exhibition.

This is available for CHF 28.00 in the Liechtenstein NationalMuseum shop or online shop.landmuseum.li.

Picutre



Spectrum XV, 2022 150 x 305 cm. Enamel on Aluminium, Photo:
RAK Foundation, Bahrain

Liechtensteinisches LandesMuseum

Prof. Dr. Rainer Vollkommer

Direktor

Städtle 43, Postfach 1216

9490 Vaduz

Fürstentum Liechtenstein

T +423 239 68 20

info@landmuseum.li