

Hoor Al Qasimi appointed as Artistic Director of the 25th Biennale of Sydney (2026)



Image: 25th Biennale of Sydney Artistic Director Hoor Al Qasimi. Photo by Dan Boud.

Sydney, Australia: The Biennale of Sydney is delighted to announce **Hoor Al Qasimi** as the Artistic Director of the **25th Biennale of Sydney**, which will take place from **7 March – 8 June 2026**.

Hoor Al Qasimi is the President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, the independent public arts organisation in the UAE founded by her in 2009 as a catalyst and advocate for the arts around the world. Al Qasimi has been the Director of Sharjah Biennial since 2002, an internationally recognised platform for contemporary artists, curators and cultural producers, and curated the critically acclaimed *Sharjah Biennial 15* in 2023. She was appointed as the President of the International Biennial Association (IBA) in 2017 and serves as the President of The Africa Institute, Global Studies University, Sharjah and President and Director of the Sharjah Architecture Triennial.

Al Qasimi was appointed as the Artistic Director of the sixth Aichi Triennale (2025), becoming the first person to be chosen for the role from outside of Japan. She has also co-curated exhibitions at leading organisations around the world, including the Serpentine Gallery in London and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Hoor Al Qasimi, Artistic Director of the 25th Biennale of Sydney, said: “Sydney has a multicultural community at its core, with people from different cultures from across the world choosing and calling this vibrant city as their home. I’m interested in exploring the multifaceted cultures and perspectives within this city, working with local artists and communities, as well as bringing new voices to the Biennale. It is an honour and privilege to be nominated and then selected to be Artistic Director of the 25th Biennale of Sydney, which I have been visiting for over a decade now. I have seen the developments over the years, including the amplification of Indigenous voices both local and global, which has made it an essential platform for rewriting art history.”

Al Qasimi’s curatorial approach centres on the histories of each place and multidisciplinary programming, with a collaborative approach and emphasis on supporting experimentation and innovation in the arts. Over the past 20+ years, she has worked extensively with various mediums including film, music, dance, talks, publications and more, to bring together all forms of art in conversation. For the 25th Biennale of Sydney (2026), Al Qasimi will collaborate with local communities, artists and academics, whilst drawing on her own international network, to develop and realise the concept for the 2026 edition.

Barbara Moore, Chief Executive Officer, Biennale of Sydney said: "Community, culture, and connection are at the core of the Biennale of Sydney, and a vital component of any vibrant cultural landscape. We are thrilled to welcome Hoor Al Qasimi as the Artistic Director for our 25th edition. Al Qasimi's profound dedication to fostering international artistic and cultural exchange and her visionary approach to curatorial practice make her the perfect fit to lead the artistic direction of the Biennale of Sydney. Her commitment to amplifying diverse voices and engaging with local communities aligns seamlessly with our mission to create a platform where art brings people together to connect and learn from each other in meaningful ways."

Kate Mills, Chairman, Biennale of Sydney, said: "Under Hoor Al Qasimi's curatorial leadership, the Biennale of Sydney is poised to embark on an exciting new chapter of collaboration and immersive artistic expression. As we develop the entire Biennale program with her over the coming two years, we look forward to witnessing Al Qasimi's transformative vision unfold in 2026, enriching our diverse cultural landscape and fostering connections that transcend borders of the highest international calibre, for locals and visitors alike. With her unparalleled expertise and commitment to championing emerging voices in the arts, Al Qasimi will undoubtedly deliver a program that feels inspiring and welcoming for people to attend."

John Graham, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Minister for Tourism said: "The Biennale of Sydney is an important celebration of international contemporary art that puts Sydney in the spotlight on the world stage. I look forward to seeing Hoor Al Qasimi’s creative vision brought to life in 25th Biennale of Sydney in 2026. The NSW Government is proud to continue to support this important event on our city’s creative calendar."

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ABOUT THE BIENNALE OF SYDNEY

The Biennale of Sydney is a leading international contemporary art event. It plays an indispensable role in Australia’s engagement with the world, and a meaningful role in the life of the nation. For almost 50 years, the Biennale has been a unifying force in the Australian arts sector, embedding boldly creative art exhibitions and experiences in the everyday life of Sydney and putting the artistic excellence of Australia front and centre on the world stage. The Biennale of Sydney has commissioned and presented exceptional works of art by more than 1900 national and international artists from more than 130 countries. With free admission to its exhibitions, the Biennale of Sydney is committed to free access for all.

ABOUT HOOR AL QASIMI

Hoor Al Qasimi is President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, the independent public arts organisation she established in 2009 as a catalyst and advocate for the arts in the UAE and beyond. She has expanded the Foundation’s scope to include

major international exhibitions; residencies; commissions; publications; grants; performance and film festivals; architectural research and restoration; and educational programming.

In 2003, she co-curated Sharjah Biennial 6 and has remained Biennial Director ever since. She was elected President of the International Biennial Association (IBA) in 2017. Al Qasimi was also curator of Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present* (2023).

Al Qasimi has curated major solo exhibitions at Sharjah Art Foundation, presenting works by CAMP (2022), Khalil Rabah (2022), Tarek Atoui (2020–2021), Zarina Bhimji (2020–2021), Amal Kenawy (2018–2019) and Yayoi Kusama (2016–2017) as well as a major touring retrospective of work by Hassan Sharif (2017 – 2021). She co-curated *Kamala Ibrahim Ishag: States of Oneness*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2022–2023), Bani Abidi's survey at MCA Chicago (2021–2022); and a major touring exhibition of work by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige (2016 – 2017).

Al Qasimi curated the UAE Pavilion, 56th Venice Biennale (2015), the second Lahore Biennale (2020) and *Dream Projects*, Dream City Festival, Tunis (2023).

President and Director of the Sharjah Architecture Triennial, Al Qasimi also serves as President of the Global Studies University, Sharjah, which includes The Africa Institute and The Asia Institute. In 2025, she will serve as Artistic Director of the sixth Aichi Triennale.