

Studio Anne Holtrop

ETH Zürich

seminar week

FS20

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

March 16–22, 2020



Jaradah Island ●



Photo by Camille Zakharfa

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KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

For millennia, Bahrain was known as Dilmun, and was associated with the land of paradise and the Garden of Eden. The region was a central economic and cultural hub that linked trade routes from the South East to the civilizations of Mesopotamia. Pearls from this region were sought after as the world's most beautiful, and thus shaped the economy, history and culture of Bahraini society. The increasing demand for pearls generated a single-product economy on the island, and influenced the livelihood of the entire society. Nowadays, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities celebrates this heritage with an initiative called the Pearling Path, a cultural project listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

During our trip, we will visit the Pearling Path, which comprises the coral reefs and oyster-beds, the pearl diving and trading culture, and traditional

buildings. We will see new architectural projects that have been added to rehabilitate the old city, such as the Visitors Centre by Valerio Olgiati, the Dars and Public Squares by Office Kersten Geers David Van Severen, the Search Library by Atelier Bow-Wow, the Parkings by Christian Kerez, and ongoing and recently completed projects by Studio Anne Holtrop, such as the Qaysariya Suq and the Siyadi Pearl Museum. Through-out the week, we will also visit the archeological site of Dilmun Burial Mounds in A'ali, and a boat trip to Jarada Island. We will go pearl diving and visit the oil drilling sites in the desert.

SCHEDULE

Monday 16, March

FLIGHT **LH1185 09:30 ZRH → 10:35 FRA**
LH636 12:20 FRA → 21:55 BAH
(airline might be changed)

Tuesday 17, March

BURIAL MOUNDS **09:00 breakfast at Bait Al balaleet in A'ali**
11:00 Burial Mounds tour in A'ali
by Bahraini Danish
14:00 lunch at Riffa Fort
16:00 Desert camps
evening free

Wednesday 18, March

STUDIO ANNE HOLTROP	09:00	Customs House
	10:30	Green Corner building
	11:00	Bahrain Pavillion
	12:00	House for Architecture Heritage (exhibition of Atelier Bow-Wow)
	13:00	lunch at Raazjy Coffee House
	14:30	search library by Atelier Bow-Wow
	15:30	Siyadi House and Majlis
	16:30	Studio Anne Holtrop
	17:30	tikka dinner at Studio Anne Holtrop

Thursday 19, March

PEARLING PATH	09:00	Pearling Path tour (Dar Al Muharraq, historical houses on the path, Visitors Center, and Qaysariya Suq)
	12:30	lunch at Saffron
	14:00	Visitors Center by Valerio Olgiati
	15:00	presentation about Pearling Path project by Noura Al Sayeh
		evening free

Friday 20, March

JARADA ISLAND	09:00	Manama Waterfront an architecture tour by Ali Karimi
	afternoon	boat trip to Jaradah Island
	19:00	dinner at Copper Chimney, Al-Hasam Ave

Saturday 21, March

PEARLING

09:00 pearl diving
afternoon Matter Jewelers
20:00 traditional music at Dar Al Muharraq
or Dar Al Riffa

FLIGHT

LH637 23:40 BAH → 06:25 FRA (Sunday 22, March)
LH1184 08:00 FRA → 08:50 ZRH (Sunday 22, March)
(airline might be changed)

Tuesday 17, March

DILMUN BURIAL MOUNDS

A'ali, a village where traditional methods of forming and burning clay are still practiced to this day, is home to Bahrain's most recent UNESCO World Heritage site of the Dilmun Burial Mounds built between 2200 and 1750 BC, and to a significant number of traditional pottery-making workshops.

We will first visit one of the largest burial mound fields, consisting of several thousand tumuli, a portion of more than 11,000 remaining mounds thought to be the greatest concentration of burial mounds found anywhere in the world today. Then we will go into A'ali village where seventeen "royal" tombs are embedded in the urban fabric and daily lives of the residents.

The "royal" mounds are the best example of the cylindrical, multi-tiered, limestone architecture of the ancient tombs first excavated by a Danish archeology group led by P. V. Glob in the 1950s. They are still an important research site for Danish archaeologists today. The last stop of the tour in A'ali is the studio of Bahraini Danish, a design collective, located in the centre of the pottery-making area.





GUEST

bahraini-danish

‘bahraini-danish’ is an establishment that uses culturally inherent differences, both social and professional, as a means to create. On the basis of dissimilar intuitions, they engage themselves with design. Through dialogue and by vote, they work their way, drawing by drawing, towards finding a new common order and together with local artisans and craftspeople, they carefully question the better way to make. Their work has been presented around the Middle East and in Europe and continues to make its way from A’ali and Copenhagen into the world. ‘bahraini-danish’ was established in Bahrain in 2016 by Batool Alshaikh, Maitham Almubarak and Christian Vennerstrøm Jensen. It is named after the many historical encounters between Bahrain and Denmark in archaeology, architecture and dairy production to name a few.

Wednesday 18, March

STUDIO ANNE HOLTROP

Project architects in Studio Anne Holtrop will present projects at various stages of implementation – recently built, under construction and still awaiting construction.

The Studio’s investigations of Material Gesture will be seen in a local context. For example, sandcast concrete is fabricated on the building site.

The visit will comprise works such as Customs House, the Green Corner Building, the Bahrain Pavilion, the Qaysariya Suq and the Siyadi Pearl Museum. The day will be concluded at the office and worship space of Studio Anne Holtrop.





Thursday 19, March

PEARLING PATH

The Pearling Path Tour will include Dar Al Muharraq by OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, the Visitors Centre by Valerio Olgiati, the Qayseriya Suq by Studio Anne Holtrop and a number of historical houses along the path. In the afternoon, Noura Al Sayeh will give a presentation about the Pearling Path project.

The project Pearling Testimony of an Island Economy is the second site in Bahrain to be registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list (2012) and celebrates the pearling legacy of Muharraq, the capital of the pearling industry in the Arabian Gulf region. It is a serial nomination consisting of 15 property components: three vast oyster beds located in the northern territorial waters of Bahrain, one seashore site at the southern tip of Muharraq Island, and nine clusters of historic buildings embedded in the urban fabric of Muharraq city.

For millennia, pearling and its associated trades shaped the economy and culture of Bahrain's island society. As a centre for pearling, Bahrain was the regional economic hub. The haul of the pearling season provided the livelihood of many local residents and, even though the pearling industry was severely exhausted as a result of irreversible economic changes in the 20th century, many of its features and practices survive, and it remains a major facet of Bahraini cultural identity. The surviving traces of Bahrain's tangible and intangible pearling heritage are rare testaments to the Gulf's trans-regional, socio-economic connections before the discovery of oil.

The city of Muharraq witnessed unprecedented urban growth during the thriving Pearling Era (mid-1800s–1930s). Although Muharraq has conserved its original pattern of narrow lanes and its skyline is relatively undisrupted, today less than 20 percent of the coral stone houses from this period survive and the city has lost its intimate connection to the sea due to the reclamation projects of the 1950s and '60s. As the Path snakes through the historical centre of Muharraq, it offers a cross-section of the many problems affecting these areas; a cumulative result of a lack of maintenance, the changing demographics of residents, a shift in lifestyle, and the increasing presence of cars within the city. While some problems are specific to Muharraq, others are symptomatic of the neglect of historic urban heritage that is endemic in the Arab World. It is hoped that this project will serve as a catalyst for the rehabilitation of the Old City of Muharraq and provide a framework for safeguarding the collective memory of the pearling era by documenting its stories and fostering ongoing practices such as pearling songs, pearl diving and many other traditions that are still cherished today by the people of Bahrain.







GUEST

Noura Al-Sayeh

She is an architect currently working at the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) as Head of Architectural Affairs. At BACA, she is responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of cultural institutions and museums as well as the creation of an active agenda of exhibitions and academic exchange initiatives. Previously, she worked as an architect in New York, Jerusalem and Amsterdam. She was the co-curator of Reclaim, Bahrain's first participation at the 12th Venice Architecture Biennale in 2010, which was awarded the Golden Lion for best national participation. She was also the curator of Background, Bahrain's second participation at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2012, and the deputy general commissioner for the Bahrain Pavilion at the Expo Milan 2015, which was awarded the silver medal for best Architecture and Landscape.

Friday 20, March

MANAMA AND JARADA

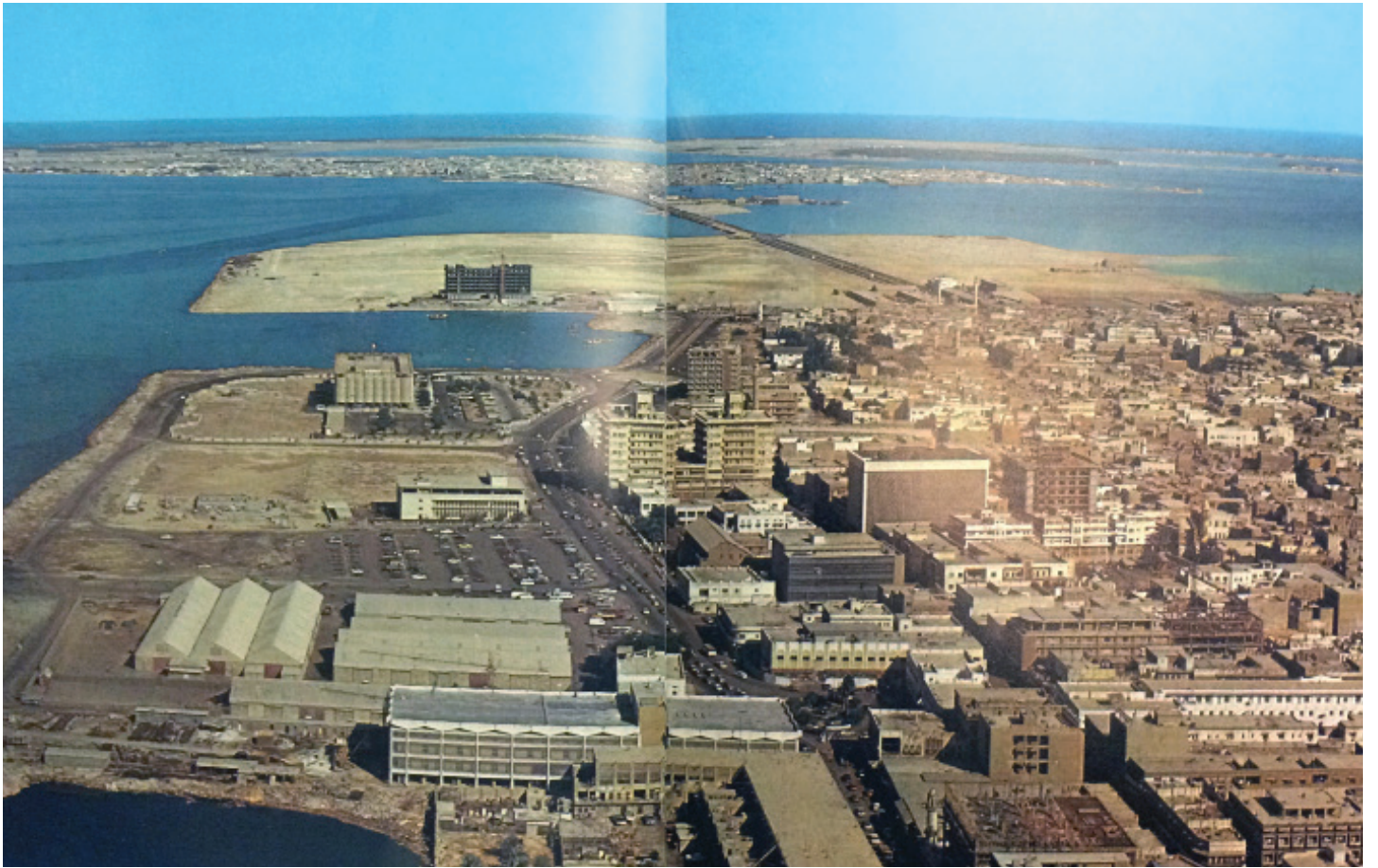
Manama Waterfront tour

The tour will explore a series of case studies that articulate changes in architectural and urban form in the period between pre-independence (1971) Bahrain and the end of the first decade after independence. Ideas around a modern capital changed radically after oil was discovered in Bahrain, and architecture played a role in highlighting the changes from pearl-exporting state to oil-exporting nation. The aim of the tour is to understand the relationship between reclamation, architectural language, and the articulation of building facades as ways of defining the waterfront and with it, a new Bahrain as it moved towards independent statehood. The tour will be conducted by Ali Karimi.

Boat trip to Jarada Island

Jaradah Island is a bar of sand which is located midway between Bahrain and Qatar. Because of the shallow water of the Arabian Gulf, the cay appears at low tide and disappears at high tide. It means the feature only appears for a few hours every day. In the afternoon, we will have an excursion to the cay and experience the tidal phenomenon in the shallow sea. There is an event, Photos a la Chair, by Camille Zakharia and Ali Karimi.





GUESTS

Ali Ismail Karimi

He is a Bahraini architect whose work explores social housing, public space, and the urban landscape of the GCC countries. Ali received his Master in Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design (M.Arch I, 16). He is, along with Hamed Bukhamseen, the co-founder of Civil Architecture, an architecture office based in Manama and Kuwait City. Together they curated the Kuwait Pavilion titled “Between East and West: A Gulf” at the 2016 Venice Biennale. Ali previously worked in Belgium with OFFICE KGDVS, and in Chile with Elemental. His work and writings have been published in various journals including Architectural Record, San Rocco, and CLOG.

Camille Zakharia

Camille Zakharia graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from NSCAD University Halifax Canada in 1997 and a Bachelor of Engineering from the American University of Beirut in 1985. His work has been shown at the Venice Art and Architecture Biennales in 2010 and 2013. He also exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Canadian Museum of Civilization, FotoFest, Photoquai, Albert Kahn Museum, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Florida National Museum, Wichita Center for the Arts, Chobi Mela, and Sharjah Biennale.

Saturday 21, March

PEARLING

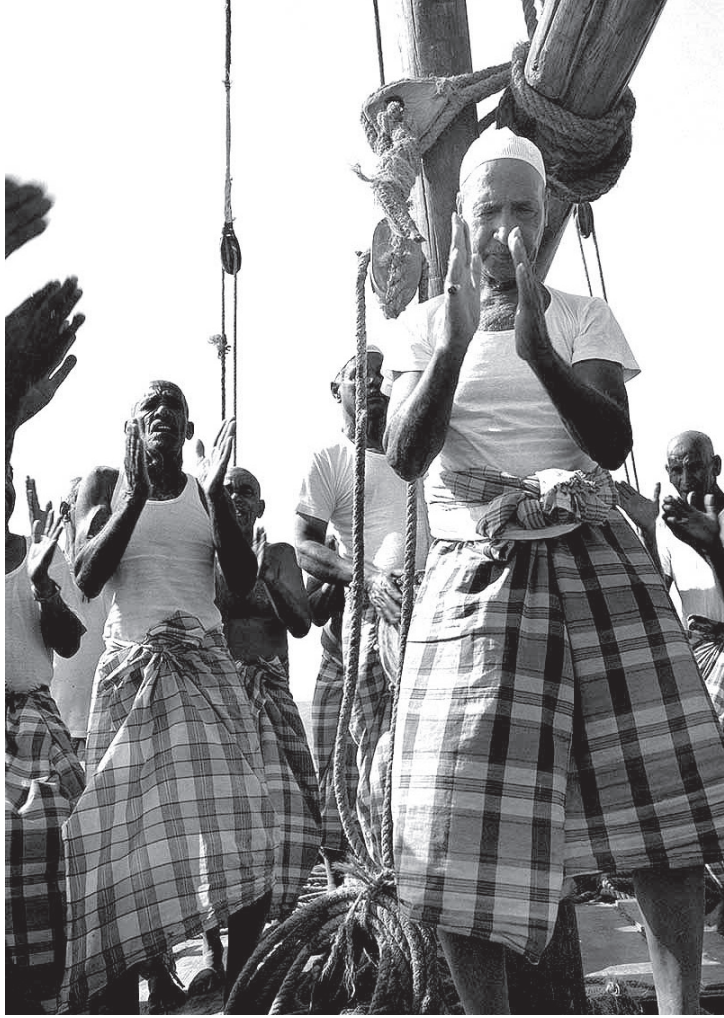
Students will get the opportunity to experience pearl diving first hand in one of the oyster beds located off the northern shores of Bahrain.

In the afternoon, we will be visiting Talal Mattar, a man in possession of an astonishing collection of natural pearls. His collection is physical evidence of the pearling economy in Bahrain. In the evening, we will attend a performance of traditional music that at Dar Al Riffa.

The Dar is a music house, a space where men traditionally gathered to drink tea and coffee, and practice and perform music. Several music genres and numerous songs played at Dar are directly connected with pearling. An important group of pearling songs is called Fijiri and, although not associated with diving work directly, Fijiri allowed for active participation in the songs through hand clapping and the use of instruments such as double headed drums and pottery jars. Midaf, on the other hand, sung by crews during strenuous rowing, reflects the movement of the oars and the rhythm of the sea. As the majority of the local residents were unable to read or write, oral traditions were one way in which stories, knowledge and legends were passed on from generation to generation. As a result, music and oral stories remain uniquely centred in the pearling memory of Bahrain.







PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotel

**Oriental Palace Hotel
17 Tijjar Ave, Manama
+973 17223331**

Restaurant recommendations in Manama

05:30 – 21:00	Haji's traditional cafe
08:00 – 22:00	Saffron
08:00 – 23:00	Naseef
06:30 – 22:00	Swagat (Indian vegetarian restaurant)
08:30 – 08:30	Aloo Basheer (spicy potato)
06:30 – 23:00	Indigo (bar in hotel Marchant house)

Events

Thursday 19, March	19:00	'Once Upon A Time In India' outdoor cinema Lagaan
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**Price range C, includes flights, accommodation, guided tours and a dinner.
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Cecilia Marzullo.**

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