



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy paper discusses the benefits of arts education. The goals of the research were to 1) identify educational and community benefits to art and arts education; 2) conduct a nationwide survey of existing arts and cultural initiatives to understand the broader contexts of arts programming in the United Arab Emirates (UAE); and 3) identify ways organizations and policy makers could meaningfully engage and support burgeoning arts initiatives in Ras Al Khaimah. This research cites studies that detail how arts education programs enhance educational outcomes and contribute to community development, particularly civic engagement and scholarly achievement. Based on ethnographic and archival research, it then surveys a history of arts initiatives in the UAE, and identifies resources for potential growth of arts education initiatives in Ras Al Khaimah.

Arts Education: Resources and Options for the UAE and Ras Al Khaimah¹

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Introduction

The arts are often seen as additional, rather than integral, parts of an academic curriculum; in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the arts curriculum is largely neglected and do not appear in the government curricula of secondary schools (Ridge, Kippels, & Farah, 2017). To better understand the role the arts play in education, it is worth asking: what are the tangible benefits of the arts, and what resources exist to promote the arts in the emirates, particularly in Ras Al Khaimah? The goals of the research were to 1) identify educational and community benefits to art and arts education; 2) conduct a nationwide survey of existing arts and cultural initiatives to understand the broader contexts of arts programming in the UAE; and 3) identify ways organizations and policy makers could meaningfully engage and support burgeoning arts initiatives in the UAE and Ras Al Khaimah.

Relevant Background

This project highlights key findings from several influential studies about the utility of arts education, and reveal the myriad ways that arts programming and engagement initiatives can significantly contribute to educational and community development. While most of this literature is based in the United States and Europe, the findings are promising and suggest that implementation would be similarly successful in the UAE. These studies reveal significant academic gains for students in the areas of identity development and social skills, community engagement, and improved academic performance.

First, the *Room to Rise: The Lasting Impact of Intensive Teen Programs in Art Museums* study (2015) explored the effects on teenagers when they had access to "the art, artists and ideas of the Whitney Museum" (p. 5); these effects included increased social skills, interpersonal development, and community engagement. Pooling data from immersive teen engagement programs at the Whitney Museum in New York City, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, the study found that students who had exposure to the arts demonstrated significant gains in the following areas: personal identity, expanded career horizons, and community engagement and influence. Study authors Linzer and Munley note, "Working alongside professionals in a museum setting reveals potential career directions and opportunities, helps teens crystallize their professional goals, and promotes long-term academic and career development" (p. 33). Key also is that engagement with the arts and museum programs, especially for teens, leads "participants [to] value community, collaboration and diversity" (p. 40). The *Room to Rise* study noted that many teen participants then went on to become organizers, educators, and community leaders.

¹ Thank you to Ms. Hanadi Mohammed at the Al Qasimi Foundation for her kind assistance connecting me with art teachers in Ras Al Khaimah, and to Ms. Maryam Wissam al Dabbagh.

Other studies support these findings, particularly around the question of community and civic engagement. Scholar Paul Kuttner (2015) has argued that arts education should be understood in the context of building cultural citizenship, which he defines as “the right and capacity of people to develop and pass on diverse cultural traditions and identities while participating effectively in a shared cultural and political arena” (p. 70). Kuttner demonstrates that “arts educators are helping youth to acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible members of their cultural communities” (p. 70). Based on Kuttner’s study, as well as *Room to Rise*, it is clear that arts education offers long-term benefits to social cohesion, the creation of community, and a vibrant civic atmosphere.

Studies of extant arts programs also reveal that these programs encourage and facilitate academic achievement. One study, entitled *Arts and At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies* (2012) found that students who had a high arts engagement were nearly twice as likely to attend a four-year college, and 25% more likely to attend college than those with low arts engagement. In addition, those with high arts engagement scored better on writing tests, and achieved a slightly higher grade point average in math than fellow students. Students with higher arts engagement tended to participate more in extracurricular activities including sports and academic honor societies.

Another study, *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Achievement* (2006), supports the findings of the *Arts and At-Risk Youth* study, demonstrating improved academic performance for youth exposed to the arts. This study reported that students involved in the arts participated more in their communities, watched less television, and reported less boredom in school. They also scored higher on college admissions tests. The study identified six key areas of benefits, across academic skills, basic life skills, and social skills. These benefits include: enhanced reading and language skills; better math skills especially in computation and estimation; improved thinking skills; better social skills; increased motivation to learn; and strong contributions to a positive school environment (p. 10).

Other invaluable resources include the *Art Education Journal*, an initiative of the National Art Education Association in the United States, which publishes bimonthly, and *Annual Reviews* articles in social sciences and education that discuss the social contexts of art education.

Overall, arts engagement is particularly relevant for organizations wishing to better educational outcomes, to enhance educational impact outside the classroom, and to develop civic engagement and participation.

These studies conclude that arts engagement provides students with improved career and study opportunities, and suggest that arts programs would thus contribute to the community life in the UAE and Ras Al Khaimah. It must also be noted that all of the available arts engagement studies currently available are based in Western contexts, and there is little data available about arts engagement initiatives in the Middle East region and therefore a distinct opportunity for contribution.

Overview of Study and Methods

My research consisted of speaking to local artists, curators, and arts professionals across the UAE as well as conducting archival research in order to excavate the history of arts production and gain a thorough understanding of various ongoing initiatives in the country for a total of 18 months (October 2015 – March 2017). Participant observation led to conducting semi-structured interviews (91 total). Additional methods included collecting and reviewing archival materials including exhibition catalogues, press releases for arts events, marketing materials, and social media documentation. Between October 2016 and March 2017, interviews were conducted with artists and art teachers based in Ras Al Khaimah to identify potential arts education resources and opportunities specific to that emirate.

Findings

In what follows, I describe the results of my research, which consists of two parts: first, I offer a preliminary art history of the UAE to identify key figures and organizations that have historically supported and/or currently support the arts. Second, I draw from interviews with Ras Al Khaimah-based art teachers to offer tailored suggestions for support of arts initiatives in the emirate.

Art in the UAE: 1971 – 2017

The art history of the UAE is only beginning to be written, a situation which affords a unique opportunity for contribution. My research explored the creation and importance of several early efforts to excavate and promote an Emirati art history, which is particularly important in order to contextualize current and future developments. Most accounts date the beginning of organized arts production in the UAE to the founding of the Emirates Fine Arts Society in 1980, by decree from His Highness Sheikh Sultan of Sharjah (Allison, 2017; Al Qassemi, 2016; Derderian, 2017; Worrell, 2017). Many older artists across the UAE cited the importance of Hassan Sharif, an Emirati artist who returned to the UAE in 1984 after being trained in London. Sharif is widely cited as the godfather of the UAE art scene, and the country’s first conceptual artist. Throughout

Table 1. Timeline of UAE Arts Activities and Developments

Year	Major Developments in UAE	Major Developments Outside UAE
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emirates Fine Arts Society founded in Sharjah 	
1987		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institut du Monde Arab founded in Paris
1988		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darat Al Funun founded in Amman
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majlis Gallery opens in Dubai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Magiciens de la Terre</i> exhibition (Paris/ Centre Pompidou)
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Sharjah Biennial held 	
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Art Gallery opens in Dubai Sharjah Biennial 2 held 	
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharjah Biennial 3 held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Image Foundation opens in Beirut
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharjah Biennial 4 held 	
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharjah Biennial 5 held 	
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latifa College begins in Dubai (2003–2007) Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi reorients the Sharjah Biennial Sharjah Biennial 6 held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global art market doubles between 2003–2006
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Third Line Gallery opens in Dubai thejamjar opens in Dubai Canvas magazine launched Sharjah Biennial 7 held 	
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheikha Manal Young Artists Award established Brownbook magazine established Christie's auction house establishes presence in Dubai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Without Boundary: 17 Ways of Looking at MoMA</i> in New York <i>Creative Reckonings</i> by Jessica Winegar published
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latifa College graduates first class Initial DIFC Gulf Art Fair held Global Art Forum 01 talks series held Harper's Bazaar Arabia Art magazine launched The Flying House established Alserkal Avenue established Sotheby's auction house establishes presence in Dubai Sharjah Biennial 8 held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Modern Arab Art</i> by Nada Shabout published
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tashkeel established ArtMap lists 38 organizations First Creek Art Fair held in Bastakiya DIFC Gulf Art Fair becomes Art Dubai First March Meeting held in Sharjah Bonhams auction house establishes presence in Dubai 	
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UAE participates in Venice Biennale for the first time (featuring Lamy Gargash) Abraaj Group Art Prize inaugurated The Culturist blog launches Sharjah Biennial 9 held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global financial crisis
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creek Art Fair becomes Bastakiya Art Fair 	

2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.i.R. residency program established with Tashkeel and Art Dubai • Bastakiya/Creek Art Fair renamed SIKKA Art Fair • Venice Biennale (featuring Reem Al Ghaith, Abdullah Saadi, and Sheikha Lateefa bint Maktoum) • Salsali Private Museum opens in Alserkal Avenue • Sharjah Biennial 10 held 	
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.i.R. residency cohort 2012 • The State publication issue #1 released 	
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.i.R. residency cohort 2013, in partnership with Al Riwaq Gallery, Bahrain • Salama Foundation begins Emerging Artist Fellowship • Wael Hattar initiates Young Collectors Collective • Campus Art Dubai 1.0 program • Venice Biennale (featuring Mohammed Kazem) • Salwa Mikdadi teaches Art History: Contemporary Art at NYU Abu Dhabi • Sharjah Biennial 11 held 	
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.i.R. residency cohort 2014 • A4 space inaugurated at Alserkal Avenue • First Introduction to Museum Studies course taught at NYU Abu Dhabi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Here and Elsewhere</i> exhibition at the New Museum, New York
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.i.R. residency cohort 2015 • Salama Foundation opens Warehouse 421 in Abu Dhabi • Critical Practice Programme launched at Tashkeel • Tribe magazine issue #1 published • <i>1980–Today</i> exhibition at Venice Biennale curated by Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi • Alserkal Avenue begins first artist commissioning program • Quoz Fest at Alserkal Avenue moved to November • Sharjah Biennial 12 held 	
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.i.R. residency cohort 2016 • <i>1980–Today</i> exhibition comes to Sharjah Art Foundation • Alserkal Avenue expansion opens • First Professional Practice course at Tashkeel • Portfolio Building course at Sharjah Art Foundation • Hassan Sharif passes (Allah yarhamu) • AMCA Conference held at NYU Abu Dhabi and Barjeel Foundation • Jean Paul Najjar Foundation opens at Alserkal Avenue • 10th anniversary of Art Dubai celebrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hassan Sharif solo show <i>Focus: Works from the Mathaf Collection, Vol. 2</i> held at Mathaf, Doha • <i>But a storm is blowing from paradise</i> exhibition held at the Guggenheim
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.i.R. residency cohort 2017 • First Venice Biennale UAE pavilion featuring national and non-national artists • <i>But we cannot see them</i> exhibition at NYUAD • Art Map lists 96 organizations • Dubai office of Sotheby's opens • Sharjah Biennial 13 held • Louvre Abu Dhabi opens 	

the 80s and 90s, Sharif worked as an artist while also devoting much of his time to mentoring younger artists and translating English art texts into Arabic.

1993 is also a key date in Emirati art history, as that year the Sharjah Biennial was established. This event is quite important, as it was the first biennial in the GCC and demonstrated an attempt to put the UAE on the global art world map. At the time, other places in the Gulf had more thriving arts scenes (Kuwait, for one), yet the Sharjah Biennial was the first biennial in the Gulf. Initially the Biennial welcomed submissions from various nations. At the time of the Biennial's inauguration, Sharjah had no art museums. The Sharjah Art Museum opened a few years later, in 1995, signaling a deepening engagement with the arts and offering residents year-round access to art. In 2003, Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi (daughter of His Highness Sheikh Sultan) took over the biennial and reoriented it to great acclaim. She introduced a curator to the show, who then selected and invited individual artists to participate (rather than being open to uncurated submissions by various artists' collectives or cooperatives). Thus Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi fundamentally restructured the Biennial so that it would parallel other internationally recognized biennials around the world.

By 2009, the Biennial organizers realized that in order to support and develop the audience for the art fair, they needed to offer year-round programming. The local resident audience needed more, and continuous, exposure to art in order to better understand the Biennial and to ensure its success. Thus from a biannual art fair to an organization, the Sharjah Biennial birthed the Sharjah Art Foundation, now the Middle East region's most respected arts institution.

The mid 2000s saw the rise of Dubai's art scene, which has focused largely on the commercial but did include early attempts at residency programming and nonprofit exhibitions (Derderian, 2017; MacGilp, 2016). In 2009, the UAE began to participate in the Venice Biennale, one of - if not *the* - world's most pre-eminent art fair. This is an important step in representing the Emirati nation internationally as an arts destination.

Since 2010, two major developments have occurred. First, several new initiatives were created to support emerging artists, including the Sheikha Salama Emerging Artist Fellowship, the Critical Practice Program at Tashkeel, Campus Art Dubai (CAD), and SIKKA Art Fair. SIKKA, an initiative of Dubai Culture, is a month-long art fair where emerging artists are commissioned to produce artworks. Each year, Dubai Culture hires a curator who develops a theme, and issues a call for proposals. The curator then selects from the submissions and artists produce their proposed works for the fair. The fair is held in the Al Fahidi neighborhood of Dubai during the month of March, with each commissioned artist taking over a

small house or room in the neighborhood. The majority of emerging and established artists in the UAE have shown at SIKKA, and it has become an important place for up-and-coming artists and curators to exhibit work. Amid programs like the Emerging Artist Fellowship, Critical Practice, CAD and SIKKA, emerging artists in the UAE have more opportunities to display their artwork and advance their careers.

Secondly, several important exhibitions were held to begin to formulate a chronology of Emirati art history and name its key contributors. Emirati photographer Ammar Al Attar took portraits of a number of UAE-based artists in their studios and exhibited it as *Art Index 1.0* at Maraya Art Center in Sharjah (June 15 - August 29, 2015). This was an important initial cataloguing of the key contributors to the art scene, and included Hassan Sharif, Mohamed Kazem, Dr. Najat Makki, Abdullah Al Saadi, Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim, Dr. Mohammed Yousef, Abdulaheem Salem, and Abdulqader Rais from the older generation of UAE artists who practiced here in the 80s and 90s.

Then in 2015, Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi curated *1980-Today: Contemporary Art in the UAE* for the UAE National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. The show then came to the UAE in February 2016, and was held at the Sharjah Art Foundation. Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi and her team conducted extensive research for the show, which is manifest in the catalog: they included numerous early published writings, newspaper clippings, archival photographs drawn from Arabic media sources in the 80s and 90s. Featured artists included Abdulqader Rais, Abdullah Al Saadi, Abdulaheem Salem, Hassan Sharif, Dr. Mohamed Yousef, Mohamed Kazem, and Dr. Najat Makki. Because the show was also at the Venice Biennale, it was an important first presentation of a UAE art history to the outside world. The Sharjah Art Foundation continued this important project of documenting early Emirati artists in their 2017 solo retrospective of Hassan Sharif, entitled *I Am the Single Work Artist*.

In 2017, NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery held *But We Cannot See Them: Tracing an Emirati Art Community 1988-2008*. The exhibition featured Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim, Mohammed Kazem, Abdullah Al Saadi, and Hassan Sharif (with four others), and focused largely on these active artists in the UAE whose work was largely very conceptual and contemporary. Sadly, Hassan Sharif, the godfather of contemporary art in the UAE, succumbed to cancer and passed away in September 2016 (Allah yarhamu). Sharif's passing signals the end of an era, and the end of the first chapter of Emirati art history. As observers, curators, and institutions navigate this new era, the loss of this icon also reiterates the importance of documentation. Archiving exhibition documentation and publications are critical in enabling future scholars and curators to retrieve these works for the annals of

history. Currently in the UAE, the Emirates Fine Arts Society has an archive, and there are several smaller private archiving initiatives such as Ammar Al Attar's *Reverse Moments*, the *Lest We Forget* initiative of the Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, and Meem Gallery's Noor Library. Publications like *ArtMap*, published quarterly by Art in the City, offer a comprehensive listing of the country's wide array of arts offerings, from commercial fairs like Art Dubai and Abu Dhabi Art, non-commercial fairs like SIKKA, commercial and university galleries, art centers, studio facilities, and festivals.

In sum, while artists actively made work in the UAE since unification, the past ten years have witnessed a profusion of new opportunities and organizations. The Al Qasimi Foundation's Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival, instituted in 2013; fellowship programs like the Salama Foundation; residencies such as Maraya Art Center's or A.i.R. Dubai; and commercial galleries and art fairs like the Third Line Gallery and Art Dubai join established institutions such as the Emirates Fine Arts Society (established 1980), the Sharjah Biennial (1993), Abu Dhabi Music and Art Foundation (1996), and Sharjah Art Museum (1997), in a well-rounded and diverse arts and cultural landscape. Organizations and policy makers wishing to support the arts in the UAE therefore have a wide variety of institutions to draw from and collaborate with.

The arts in Ras Al Khaimah

Yet what of the arts landscape in Ras Al Khaimah specifically? In addition to compiling this archival evidence about the UAE's artistic production, I also studied current arts education programs in Ras Al Khaimah. As there are no formal institutions dedicated to art in the emirate, and the extant museums historical and natural in content, the place to find art is in schools. For this research, I contacted ten art teachers in the emirate and interviewed six of them (three English-speaking; three Arabic-speaking). These teachers taught at private international schools and at government schools.

In government and Arabic-speaking schools generally, art teachers reported that recent reforms from the Ministry of Education had changed the schedule: students take art two hours per week, and alternate the next week with a period of music. Thus students have minimal exposure to art in the school: if they miss one period due to illness or travel, they will not have another art class for a month. One teacher, Hammad, noted that the curriculum in his school was very strong theoretically, but that the school lacked the resources for more experimental work such as installations or work in different mediums including sculpture.² For

example, he noted that printing, photography, and acrylic painting were all available to his students; but for the modules on ceramics, sculpture with wood and/or stone, public art, land art, and installation art, the school lacked the facilities and resources to allow students a chance to experiment and practice – and even to see examples of such artwork (Hammad, personal communication, February 6, 2017). Another teacher, Rami, noted similarly that ceramics and sculpture are not available to students (Rami, personal communication, February 6, 2017).

All six teachers expressed a desire to have visiting guest artists lecture in schools or teach workshops, as well as to take students to exhibitions. Rami also noted he had taken previous students to the Museum of Calligraphy in Sharjah, and the students were very inspired. They still speak about the visit and hope to go again soon, so he was quite enthusiastic about the possibility of having art exhibitions in Ras Al Khaimah to provide students resources nearby.

All the teachers responded positively to the possibility of accessing gallery space for student exhibitions: Hammad noted that they struggle to find space for exhibitions, and commented that he would love to have his students exhibit in a "proper art space, rather than a commercial space" (as the students often have to exhibit at malls for senior or end-of-year shows). They all also expressed interest in year-round arts programming, both for their students and for their own professional development. Another teacher, James, observed that having visiting artists in residence offer workshops or seminars throughout the year would allow the teachers to improve their own skill sets and knowledge and thus enrich their teaching (interview with author, January 26, 2017).

Recommendations

In the past couple of years, many UAE-based arts organizations have begun to offer new platforms for emerging artists, to catalog a specifically Emirati art history with canonical artists, and to produce texts and exhibitions about them. The current moment is therefore ripe with possibility: the contributions and offerings of each institution and each emirate are being established. For organizations or policy makers interested in supporting the arts, I offer the below recommendations:

Recognize that arts education is about more than the arts

Arts education programming offers several key benefits to the community and does not just benefit artists. Rather, research studies show that arts education

² All names are pseudonyms as per anthropological disciplinary norms and IRB regulations protecting research participants.

improves students' learning outcomes and acceptance into college, and has demonstrable positive influences on their civic and community participation. Studies also reveal that arts education increases leadership abilities and personal development. Thus organizations and policy makers should consider arts education and programming as one arm of a range of programming to stimulate such leadership capacity building and community enhancement.

Organizations and policy makers can capitalize on the existing body of artwork about the emirates to enhance community pride and to support local artists

As the art world becomes more defined and embedded in the UAE, different emirates have begun to carve out niches for themselves. Dubai is best known for its commercial initiatives; Abu Dhabi for federal government museum projects; Sharjah draws on a rich heritage of extant, locally rooted museums and arts production. Ras Al Khaimah holds a special position in the country and distinctive place among UAE-based artists and thereby has unique opportunities.

Amongst artists, Ras Al Khaimah is perceived as a beautiful and important location and it has inspired several emerging, noteworthy artists. These include Ras Al Khaimah native Asma Al Ahmed, whose installation works "Letters to a Mountain" and "Geo Displacement" focus explicitly on Ras Al Khaimah's geography. Nasser Al Zayani also recently exhibited "Contemporary Archaeology," a piece dedicated to the northernmost emirate, and Reem Falaknaz produced an exceptionally successful photo series documenting life in the emirate's mountains, called "The Place of Perpetual Undulation." Similarly, rising star Farah Al Qasimi produced a photo series entitled "The Quiet Emirate" for Brownbook magazine. There is also a significant body of work focusing on the emirate that can be exhibited and promoted, and used to support community pride and education about contemporary issues around conservation and landscape management that face the emirate.

Art teachers are a major untapped resource for organizations and policy makers wishing to enhance arts education and programming

Art teachers have a wealth of knowledge about art and art education, but are also deeply and integrally connected to the local community. Therefore they are a great network for organizers to tap into. In addition to serving as a conduit to students and emerging artists,

many art teachers are themselves practicing artists and therefore an audience for potential programming. Obtaining their support and buy-in will ensure the success of arts education and initiatives in the emirate.

Data suggests that arts education will attract a largely female audience, for which organizers can be prepared

The majority of artists emerging in the UAE today are female. It is also worth noting that there has been a significant gendered shift in the constitution of arts staff and artists in the UAE since the 1980s. Dr. Najat Makki is the only female artist in the *1980-Today* exhibition; Ebtisam Abdulaziz the only female artist in *But We Cannot See Them*. While the early generations of artists practicing here were largely male, most young artists are now female. Furthermore, the heads of many UAE-based arts institutions are female: the Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Foundation, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah Museums Department, Art Jameel, Art Dubai, Abu Dhabi Art, NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, and Tashkeel Art Center are all run by women (only DUCTAC and Maraya Art Center are run by men). Of the 91 total interviews I conducted with key artists, curators, and arts professionals over my 18 months of fieldwork, 33 were with men. If we extrapolate percentages from this data, we can assume that roughly 36% of the art world is men, and 65% women. There are of course several important emerging male artists and arts professionals but in terms of the UAE art world demographics – it is overwhelmingly female.

This study did not reach out to those uninvolved in the arts scene, and therefore does not comment on major reasons for the lack of male youth involvement. Future research can and should be done in this area, especially to identify any gendered stigmas about participation in the arts. In the meantime, however, organizations and policy makers wishing to support arts education programming can anticipate early adoption from a female audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, extant studies show the wide-ranging value of arts education initiatives, which improve learning outcomes as well as community development. In the UAE, significant advances in the art field have been made recently; the art history of the UAE is only beginning to be written. Thus there remains space for organizations and policy makers to harness the power of art and arts education to benefit the community of Ras Al Khaimah and the greater UAE.

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