



12th OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition (TAC)

Theatre of Possibilities

Introduction

This is the 12th OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition (TAC) organised by Sharjah Performing Arts Academy (SPAA) and the OISTAT Architecture Commission with support from Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) and Sharjah Architecture Triennale.

This document provides a design brief, which is to be read in conjunction with the Terms and Conditions below and associated site drawings and photographs.

The Theatre Architecture Competition is an international ideas competition aimed at students and emerging architecture practitioners. The winning entry is unlikely to be built, but cash prizes will be awarded, and the best entries will be exhibited at World Stage Design located at Bait Al Obaid Shamsi, in Sharjah, in October 2025.

We are interested in seeing innovative ideas for a performance space that could be built to provide the best use and highest value for an area of cultural activity.

Performance is more than the visual, there are many ways to tell a story and at the very beginning of this process is the space it happens within. What is the audience interaction and experience from the beginning of their visit to the time they leave? They are part of that experience, not merely an observer. A theatre space should envelop the audience, feel safe for the artists and have a plethora of opportunities and flexibility.

Timeline

3rd June 2024: Brief issued

11th November 2024: deadline for questions

2nd December 2024: answers to questions

19th December 2024: Submissions open

14th April 2025: All submissions must be received

(Please note: Any submissions after this date will not be accepted)

May 2025: The jury meet to finalise entries

9th June 2025: Entrants are informed whether they have been chosen to exhibit their work.

Drawings, photographs and information on the site are provided and can be downloaded with the brief from the [World Stage Design website](#).

Design Brief



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The site for the competition is the courtyard of Bait Obaid Al Shamsi, situated in the Heart of Sharjah

[Google Maps](#)



Site History

Built around 1845 for merchant Obaid Bin Hamad Al Shamsi, the site surrounding the courtyard is situated over two floors. The main building material is coral.

Bait Al Shamsi reflects authentic Arabic Islamic Architecture. Built on two levels, there are 16 rooms, three upstairs and importantly, the distinctive top ventilation-structures wind-towers known as 'Barjeel'. After renovation in 1997, 13 studios are maintained around the traditional courtyard, titled the 'Hall of Arts', as they host professional artists.

How is the site currently used?

The site is currently managed by Sharjah Art Foundation. The courtyard is used throughout the year for various cultural activities such as the Focal Point Art Book Fair, performances, concerts, workshops and community programming. When there's no programmed activity, the courtyard is a popular thoroughfare. The rooms surrounding the courtyard are host to artist studios, artists in residence, exhibition spaces and office spaces. There is an air of tranquil creativity across the property during the day, while in the evenings the area becomes a hive of activity.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for ideas for the most innovative use of the site that would provide flexible and multiple options to both SAF and SPAA. We do not want to place undue limitations on ideas that may be developed in this design competition, and accordingly, we only ask that creativity and flexibility be embraced.



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HOW CAN WE CREATE A FLEXIBLE TEMPORARY PERFORMANCE STUDIO FOR 6 MONTHS OF THE YEAR WITHOUT LOSING THE LOCALE OF THE HOUSE?

- Embrace the heritage of the site and the region.
- Create a temporary outdoor performance venue for multiple live performance genres, including but not limited to contemporary and traditional music, solo artists and small groups, drama, new writing, and spoken word between the months of October and April.
- Consider a maximum build and deconstruct time of no more than 3 days and efficient storage capabilities.
- Employ sustainable methods in its construction and encourage and support sustainable ways of working in its daily activity.
- Include accessible design for disabled artists and patrons to have equal opportunities to experience and engage with the performance.
- Provide audience capacity of a maximum of 100 patrons in a variety of configurations.
- Facilities and artist support, such as dressing rooms (both single and ensemble), greenroom and company office, bathrooms, kitchens and foyer space, will be provided in the existing buildings within Bait Al Shamsi.
- Costings are not required, but the jury will favour submissions which are practical and realizable.

Climate Considerations

The venue is intended to be used for 6 months of the year between October and March inclusive, where temperatures range from 19 – 30 degrees celsius. Rainfall during this time averages between 2 – 18 mm per month, although we have recently seen more rainfall than previously experienced. Performances will primarily take place in the evening when it will be the coolest.

Environmental Considerations

There are several environmental considerations that should be taken into account to ensure sustainable practices and preservation of the site's cultural and ecological integrity. Here are some key items:

Sustainable practices such as using locally sourced materials, incorporating traditional architectural elements for natural ventilation and passive cooling, and implementing energy-efficient systems are essential. Preservation of biodiversity, along with water conservation measures, aligns with the Emirate's commitment to environmental stewardship.



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The design should respect the historical significance of the site and its surroundings. All designs should be done in a way that preserves the original architecture and cultural heritage.

Noise Considerations

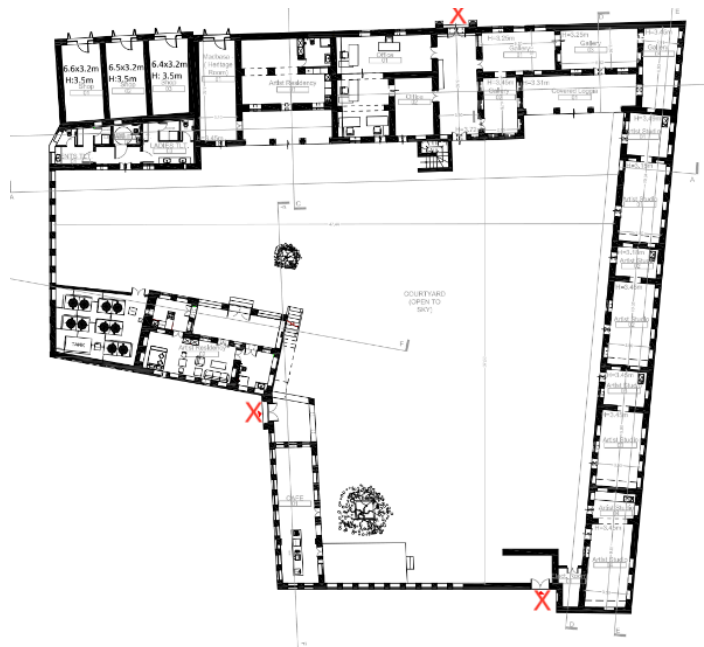
Noise emanating from the site may be one of the easiest environmental concerns to miss. The surrounding environment is home to many different people who either work, create in or visit the area. Also, how can we enhance the site so that it supports the acoustics of the various types of performances?

Physical Considerations

The size and immediate environment of the Courtyard will inform an intimate performance space, and this should be acknowledged and reflected in the design. The relationship between the performer and the audience in this context is crucial, and entries that remove any barriers are sought.

Site Access

There are three access points: Corniche Street at the creek side, from the street in front of Sharjah Art Museum, and through a narrow passageway from Arts Square, as highlighted by the red arrows below. Consideration should also be paid to services and their access. Does the primary access point for all deliveries affect the positioning? How can services be supported in the design of the building?



More information about the site can be found in the Bait Obaid Al Shamsi Package available from the World Stage Design 2025 website.



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More information about Sharjah Performing Arts Academy and Sharjah Arts Foundation can be found at <https://spaa.ae> and <https://www.sharjahart.org>

If you have any questions regarding the competition, please contact infowd2025@spaa.ae

All questions should be received by the 11th November 2024.



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1. Terms & Conditions

- a. Sharjah Performing Arts Academy, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah Architecture Triennale and The Architecture Commission of OISTAT (International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Technicians and Theatre Architects) is promoting an international ideas competition in a single stage, open to architects and students of schools of architecture.
- b. Collaborations between architects and other theatre practitioners, such as directors, designers, writers, technicians, actors, dancers, musicians, or students in those fields, will be welcomed, although it is not an essential requirement.
- c. Architects or students associated with members of the jury are not permitted to enter.
- d. The fee for the competition is AED 200 per entry and must be paid at the time of submission by Credit Card and prize money will be awarded to winning entries in accordance with clause 4.1 below.
Entrants from the MENA, etc., have the same conditions as exhibitions and subsidised entry. (check)

e. Timeline

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2. Entry Requirements

- a. You can enter the Theatre Architecture Competition digitally via the World Stage Design Awards platform from Award Force. The World Stage Design 2025 Award Force page can be found [here](#) or accessed from the World Stage Design, TAC page [here](#).
- b. The platform will allow you to save and review your work before completing your application.

2.1 Drawing Requirements

- a. Plans: Floorplans of each level, at least two sections, one situation and important elevations to a scale of not less than 1/200, one site plan to a scale of 1/1000, with measurements all in pdf format at 300 dpi resolution.
- b. A single panel at AO size (841 x1189 mm) in vertical (portrait) format, submitted as a pdf file at 300 dpi resolution presenting three-dimensional images of the building and the theatre space and auditorium



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studies showing it in use for a range of configurations and types of performance including your short written description as detailed in 2.1 c.

c. A short written description of the project, the performance(s) to be staged and an explanation of the design concept (maximum 200 words). The text should be incorporated into your panel but will also be submitted separately on the entry form.

d. A short video file illustrating the proposal. The file will be identified by the same six-figure code used on the drawing (e.g. 123456/video.mov), with a maximum length of 3 minutes.

e. Drawings and text documents must not carry any means of identifying the entrant(s) apart from the code number referred to in para 2.2 (a) below.

2.2 Competition Exhibits

Both the drawing and text documents are to be identified by a code of six numbers to be chosen at random by the competitor(s), appearing in the top right-hand corner of each document. No name or other identifying mark can appear on any document except the entry form, as the entries must be judged anonymously.

Every exhibit shall comprise on the following:

a. A single panel at AO size (841 x1189 mm) in vertical (portrait) format, submitted in pdf format at 300 dpi resolution. The document will be identified by the six-figure code (e.g. 123456.pdf)

b. A short video file illustrating the proposal. The file will be identified using the same six-figure code used on the drawing(e.g. 123456/video.mov) maximum length of 3 minutes.

c. Models cannot be accepted, although photographs of models can be included.

d. All text is to be in English or Arabic.

2.4 This is an ideas competition and there is no intention that the winning entry will be built.

2.5 Entries will not be returned. Competitors should retain copies of their work.

3. Competition Schedule

3.1 The competition documents and conditions will be available from 3rd of June 2024 on the World Stage Design 2025 website.

3.2 Written questions can be sent by email to infowsd2025@spaa.ae Questions must be received no later than November 11th 2024.

3.3 Competition entries are to be uploaded electronically to the World Stage Design 2025 Awards website. Entries can be submitted between 19th December 2024 and April 14th 2025. Entries submitted after this date will not be considered by the jury.

3.4 The fee for the competition is 200 AED per entry. Competitors will pay via credit card on the website at the time of submission.

3.5 All entries will be managed by a third party, and the jury will not know the origin of the entries.

4. Prizes

4.1. The following cash prizes will be awarded:



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1st AED 15,000

2nd AED 8,000

3rd AED 5,000

Joint Prizes 3 x AED 1500

In addition to these prizes, there will be honourable mentions. The jury reserves the right to modify the distribution of prize money within the same total amount and number of prizes.

The 6 winning entrants will also receive free event passes to attend WSD 2025 but will need to pay for their own travel, accommodation and living expenses in Sharjah.

4.2 The results of the competition will be announced on the World Stage Design 2025 website on 9th June 2025. Prizes will be presented at the World Stage Design event in Sharjah between 18th – 25th October 2025 and paid electronically to those unable to attend after the prize-giving.

5. Exhibition

5.1 The prize-winning entries and other high-scoring entries, up to a maximum of thirty projects, will be exhibited at the World Stage Design event in Sharjah between 18 - 25th October 2025, and those included in the exhibit will be invited to attend at their own expense.

5.2 The top entries will potentially be 3D printed. If your entry is selected for this, information will be sent with the specific file requirements needed.

6. Publication

6.1 The competition entries will become the property of World Stage Design 2025 and may be published and exhibited in any country at the discretion of WSD 2025.

6.2 WSD 2025 will respect and acknowledge the copyright of all participants.

6.3 A digital catalogue illustrating selected entries with the jury report will be published and will be available to download from the WSD 2025 website.

6.4 WSD 2025 and OISTAT will offer the results of the competition to the international press (publications covering theatre design and architecture).

7. Acceptance of Conditions

7.1 By submitting an entry, participants or participating teams will:

- a. Agree to the rules and regulations as set out in this document.
- b. Declare that the proposed design is their own work.
- c. Agree to accept the decisions of the jury as final.
- d. Agree not to disclose their identities or publicise their entry in any way before the results are announced. Any breach of this rule will render the entry invalid.

8. Jury



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8.1 The international jury will consist of 4 theatre architects and one experienced theatre practitioner. The chair of the OISTAT Architecture Commission will be a jury member.

8.2. In case of the absence of a juror, OISTAT will assign another qualified person as a member of the jury.

8.3 The jury will produce a report explaining the reasons for its decisions and commenting on the prize-winning and honourably mentioned entries.

8.4. The report of the jury will be published on the World Stage Design Sharjah website website and included in the digital catalogue.

8.5 The jury will select up to 30 entries for the Theatre Architecture Competition exhibition at the World Stage Design event in Sharjah between the 18th and 25th of October 2025.

