

## Learning from Gulf Cities: Spectacles, Investments, Buildings

Inspired by the classic book, *Learning from Las Vegas* produced in 1972 by architectural scholars Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, we can learn from new, even “outlandish” cities. They often reveal trends otherwise obscured by attention to more traditional urban sites. Rather than ridicule or deplore, we look for lessons relevant for other cities around the world. Seemingly arising out of isolated desert locales, Gulf cities are in fact both receivers and exporters of contemporary shifts – in tastes, capacities, and urban consequences.

Our attention is primarily on “showcase cities” of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Doha, which are also among the most spectacular, rich, and dynamic cities in the world. While there is no single “Gulf city” urban model, we highlight these three cities to show that they share striking features not only with each other but also with cities elsewhere in the world. This is because, more than ever, urban places interconnect across the globe; their spectacles travel, their investments travel, and their buildings travel. This prompts both intra-regional and international comparisons.

This exhibition is an in-progress result of the *Learning from Gulf Cities* initiative - a series of events in Abu Dhabi and New York that examines evolving urban dynamics in the Southern Arabian Gulf region. There are three scholarly workshops (one in New York and two in Abu Dhabi) that take up its themes. The exhibition results from a long-term research inquiry by the accomplished architectural photographer, Michele Nastasi of *Lotus International* magazine (Milan). This exhibition is the basis for more extensive exhibitions planned for Abu Dhabi and then Milan.

Organizers and Curators:  
Harvey Molotch (New York University)  
Davide Ponzini (Politecnico di Milano)

Artistic Curator and Photographer:  
Michele Nastasi (Ca'Foscari University of Venice/IUAV)

Exhibition Design:  
Argot ou La Maison Mobile  
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New York University Abu Dhabi  
19 Washington Square North, New York



# LEARNING FROM GULF CITIES

**Monday March 28 – Friday April 15, 2016**

Hours of operation: 9 am – 5 pm

Associated Lecture:  
**Amale Andraos**, Dean, Columbia University GSAPP  
“Old Centers, New Centers: Architecture, Representation,  
and the Arab City”

6 pm, Thursday March 31, 2016  
19 Washington Square North

**Learning from Gulf Cities - Photographs by Michele Nastasi**

