



thirteen
WNET NEW YORK

450 West 33rd Street
New York NY 10001-2605
www.thirteen.org

press information

IN AN AMBITIOUS ARAB EMIRATE, WHERE PLANS ARE AFOOT TO DESIGN A DAZZLING NEW CAPITAL CITY FROM THE SAND UP, *WIDE ANGLE* VENTURES INSIDE A SHEIKH'S PALACE AND A NORWEGIAN ARCHITECTS' PRACTICE TO OBSERVE THE UNFOLDING OF AN UNLIKELY EAST-WEST COLLABORATION

The Sand Castle Premieres Tuesday, July 24 At 9 P.M. As *WIDE ANGLE* Continues Its Sixth Season On PBS

His Highness Sheik Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi of Ras al-Khaimah has a grandiose dream – a brand new capital in the middle of his desert kingdom. Once an outpost for pirates and the pearl trade, the United Arab Emirates is reinventing itself on a global scale, and Ras al-Khaimah, the northern emirate, wants a piece of the future. Following in the footsteps of its sister-state Dubai, this sleepy oasis plans to build itself into significance by commissioning world-renowned architects to invent a city on the sand dunes. And the ambitious plan must be delivered on a tight budget – for Ras al-Khaimah has hardly any oil.

The process of designing a city that will bring a sheikh's dreams to life becomes an intriguing, often humorous encounter between East and West. *WIDE ANGLE* captures this surprising chapter of the global economy's unfolding story in *The Sand Castle*, premiering Tuesday, July 24 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).

The Sand Castle follows a roller-coaster ride as the Norwegian architectural firm Snøhetta makes its bid to design the master plan for Ras al-Khaimah's new capital. At the firm's headquarters in Oslo, charismatic head architect Kjetil Thorsen dumps a bag of authentic Gulf



sand on the conference table and his design team races the deadline to imagine a city of the future rising from the dunes.

Standing between the architects and a contract to design the city is Dr. Khater Massaad, special advisor to the sheikh, an astute businessman with strong ideas about the impression Ras al-Khaimah's capital must make. While Thorsen and his team labor frantically to create one plan after another to satisfy Massaad, they ultimately lose the contest to the celebrated Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas.

But Snøhetta isn't out of the picture. Although Koolhaas's firm OMA has won the contract for the city's master plan, the Norwegian architects are invited to submit a proposal for the capital's signature building – a vast convention and exhibition center. If they win this, it will be the largest commission they have ever landed – having already designed the 21st century library in Alexandria, and the new Oslo Opera House.

As the team sets to work, their challenge is to meld their own ideas about design with the decidedly different vision of their exacting clients. From the drawing boards of Oslo to the depths of the royal headquarters and into the minds of the Emiratis themselves, *The Sand Castle* charts an unfolding drama in which agents of East and West struggle to arrive at an architectural vision both worlds can embrace – and one that will ultimately fulfill a sheikh's bold dreams.

The Sand Castle was produced by Finn McAlinden and Arne Dahr, and directed by Eirin Gjørvi.

After the film, *WIDE ANGLE* anchor Daljit Dhaliwal will conduct an interview with Afshin Molavi, a fellow at the New America Foundation, to explore the United Arab Emirates' rise as a major center of the global economy and a safe haven in an insecure region.

For additional information and photography, visit thirteen.org/pressroom/wideangle or pbs.org/pressroom.

Major funding for *WIDE ANGLE* is provided by PBS, The William and Flora Hewlett

Foundation, Bernard and Irene Schwartz, Mutual of America Life Insurance Company, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation, The Jacob Burns Foundation, Ford Foundation, Josh and Judy Weston, Rosalind P. Walter, and The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation.

WIDE ANGLE is a production of Thirteen/WNET New York for PBS. Stephen Segaller is executive producer. Pamela Hogan is series producer. Andy Halper is senior producer.

.....

Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *NOW With David Brancaccio*, and *Cyberchase* - as well as the work of Bill Moyers - to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as The Ethnic Heritage Specials, The Thirteen Walking Tours, *New York Voices*, and *Reel New York*. Thirteen extends the impact of its television productions through educational and community outreach projects - including the Celebration of Teaching and Learning - as well as Web sites and other digital media platforms. More information can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

.....

Press Contact:

Deirdre Branley

Thirteen

212.560.3130

branley@thirteen.org

Gloria Park

Thirteen

212.560.2063

parkg@thirteen.org