

Bridging Continents: Publishing as an Industry of Peace

The third day (1 May 2024) of the 33rd Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF) featured a session titled 'Bridging Continents: Publishing as an Industry of Peace' on the Thebes Stage, which brought together notable personalities to discuss the importance of publishing in maintaining peace and harmony.

The Fair is scheduled to continue welcoming literature enthusiasts, thinkers, authors, and professionals from various fields to explore tales of the world until 5 May.

Ernest Oppong from the African Publishers Network highlighted the fact that before the 1990s, there were not many training programmes or publishing houses in Africa. In 1992, leading African intellectuals and literary figures gathered in Zimbabwe to discuss how to bridge the continents and eliminate the difference in writing and publishing.

"We are focused on creating good content and publishing it in Africa and beyond," Oppong added. "There are four ways to bridge the continents through publishing. The first is ensuring accessibility to books, both in print and online. Secondly, collaboration and connecting content is especially important to understanding other cultures and peoples, while the third way focuses on adaptability to understand the needs of modern readers, as some have more interest in audiobooks than reading an actual book. And finally, the fourth point is relevance and acceptability."

"I have read a book by the Ruler of Dubai His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum titled 'My Vision: Challenges in the Race for Excellence'.



After reading that book, I gained a lot of ideas about H.H.'s development plan, the challenges he faced, and his vision for Dubai. We must take advantage of our differences to learn from one another and develop our societies," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Li Yu, Executive Assistant of China National Publications Import and Export Group, noted that China hosts a range of activities related to book reading and publishing, explaining that the prime focus at the moment is on translating books from Mandarin to Arabic and vice versa, as translations have profound significance in understanding each other's cultures.

For his part, Michalis Kalamaras, Publishing Consultant at the Limassol International Book Fair, urged the audience to understand the importance of publishing books. "Books are an immersive way to communicate and understand other cultures and behaviours," he said. "Sometimes reading a book makes you travel to places you have never been."

Innovative Artworks with Coffee Beans and Falcon Feathers Attract Visitors' Attention at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2024

The Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, organized by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC), provides a valuable opportunity for talented individuals in the fields of literature, art, culture, and heritage to showcase their creative works to the audience and media outlets from around the world. The talented artist, Taim AlOmar, seized this opportunity to display his rare artistic production, which mesmerized the Fair's visitors.



Three of AlOmar's artworks drew attention for their originality and excellence of execution, being classified as the first and the largest of their kind in the world. One of these paintings, titled "Zayed Al-Khair," was woven from falcon feathers, measuring 5 meters in height and 4 meters in width, comprising 11,500 feathers collected by AlOmar himself from across the UAE. Another painting was created using 520,000 coffee beans, roasted at varying temperatures to form shades ranging from green to blond, light and dark brown, and burnt colors, forming a beautiful and creative artistic painting depicting an image of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and his son His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council, with a height of 2 meters and a width of 3 meters. On the opposite side, three paintings of Abu Dhabi rulers were displayed: Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. Each of these paintings was carefully woven from Emirati "Ghutra" using 100 Ghutras each, with a height of 3 meters and a width of 2 meters.

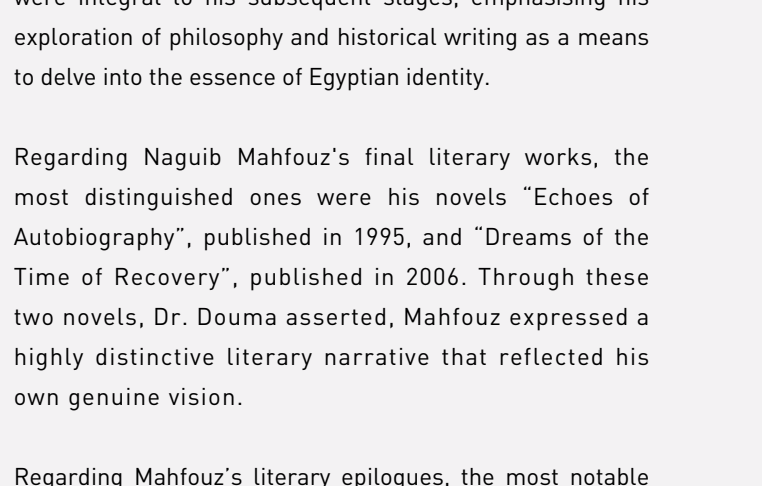
As for the process of preparing and shaping his paintings, AlOmar stated that it takes a long time to complete his work. The feather painting took approximately 8 months of continuous work.

Speaking of his unique talent and the source of his ideas from, AlOmar said: "I studied architecture, but my passion for art led me to leave my scientific studies and pursue my artistic talent."

"During this period, I collected falcon feathers from various regions of the UAE, including Liwa, Al Madam, Al Dhaid, and others. I even visited some veterinary clinics. I collected around 30,000 feathers, sorted them by colour and quality, and used 11,500 of them. I processed, sterilized, and glued them onto the canvas. As for the coffee painting, it required a significant effort and took 4 months to complete. I roasted the coffee at different temperatures to extract 6 different colors and then formed them on the canvas. The Ghutra painting also took more than 4 months to complete as it also involved shaping and treating the fabric to make it appear aged. It was a complex process, requiring numerous attempts and experiments to get the desired effect and ensure the painting maintains its quality and durability over time," he explained.

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2024 Takes Audiences on a Journey Through Novels of Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz

Egypt, and its most renowned author Naguib Mahfouz, remain one of the highlights of the 33rd Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF 2024), where Egypt was selected as Guest of Honour for this year's Fair, while Naguib Mahfouz is celebrated as the Focus Personality this year.



The Fair hosted a panel discussion titled 'Naguib Mahfouz: Beginnings and Endings', featuring Dr. Nizar Qpilat, Head of the Master's Programme at the Mohammed bin Zayed University for the Humanities in Abu Dhabi, Dr. Ayman Bakr, Academic, Author and Critic; Dr. Khairy Douma, Academic and Critic; and Abdo Wazen, Poet and Critic. The session was moderated by the Emirati Academic, Critic, and Poet, Dr. Aysha Alshamsi.

Abdo Wazen highlighted that Naguib Mahfouz's early years were integral to his subsequent works, emphasising his exploration of philosophy and historical writing as a means to delve into the essence of Egyptian identity.

The session discussed Naguib Mahfouz's literary brilliance, which is evident in his novels, exploring his style and themes that earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature. It began with the initial trilogy of 'The Absurdity of Destiny', 'Rhadopis of Nubia', and 'Thebes at War', which vividly portrays political reflections on Egypt's conditions during that period.

Regarding Naguib Mahfouz's final literary works, the most distinguished ones were his novels 'Echoes of Autobiography', published in 1995, and 'Dreams of the Time of Recovery', published in 2006. Through these two novels, Dr. Douma asserted, Mahfouz expressed a highly distinctive literary narrative that reflected his own genuine vision.

The discussion then transitioned to the duo of 'Echoes of an Autobiography' and 'The Dreams', reflecting Mahfouz's personal perspective on various issues.

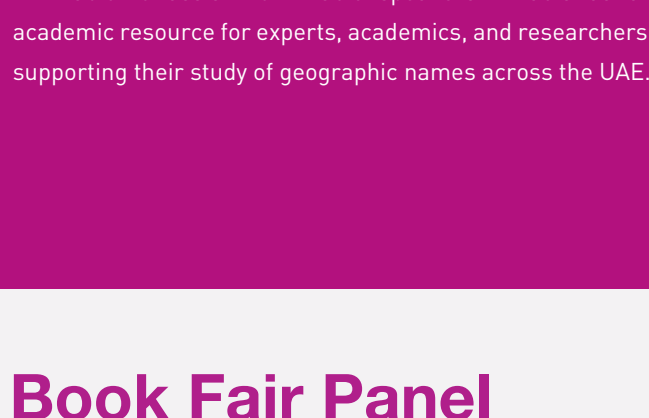
Regarding Mahfouz's literary epilogues, the most notable were his two novels, 'Echoes of an Autobiography' (published in 1995) and 'The Dreams' (published in 2006). Dr. Douma emphasised that through these two books, Mahfouz expressed a literary narrative shrouded in a unique veil, noting that these writings nonetheless reveal important facets of the renowned author's personality.

Dr. Nizar Qpilat said we get to know Naguib Mahfouz's literature through literary exploration, highlighting his pivotal role in advancing the Arabic novel. He emphasised Mahfouz's depiction of the Egyptian neighbourhood and described his novels as vibrant and youthful.

For his part, Dr. Bakr noted that Naguib Mahfouz's literary journey began with the translation of the book 'Ancient Egypt', marking the inception of his focus on historical themes, closely tied to Egyptian nationalism.

Sheikh Zayed Book Award 2024 Honours Dr. Khalifa Alromaithi as Winner in the 'Contribution to the Development of Nations' Category

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Court for Development and Martyrs Families affairs, honoured winners in the 18th edition of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award (SZBA), as part of the 33rd Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF 2024).



The SZBA Board of Directors, headed by His Excellency Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, announced that the winner of the 'Contribution to the Development of Nations' category is Dr. Khalifa Alromaithi from the UAE, who won for his Arabic-language book, 'Al-Asmaa' al-Jughrafiya - Thakirat Ajyal' (Geographical Names - Memory of Generations), published by Austin Macauley Publishers in 2022.

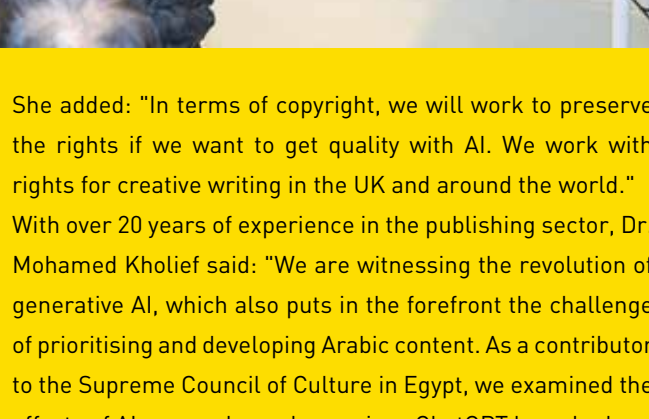
of maps, data, tables, numbers, images, and historical documents. The mini dictionary of geographical names in the UAE provides information about 1,195 names and mentions, in total, over 3,500 geographical names.

Jade Robertson, International Publishing Direct at Austin Macauley, thanked the SZBA Board of Directors for the great honour, saying: "This is so exciting for Austin Macauley Publishers and for the author, Dr. Khalifa. It demonstrates that Austin Macauley publishes books that are not only of great importance and value, but that can also be key players on the international publishing stage."

Moreover, the book explores the bases and regulations used in the naming of locations and the methods for writing names in Arabic to assist non-Arabic speakers. It acts as an academic resource for experts, academics, and researchers, supporting their study of geographic names across the UAE.

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair Panel Discussion Spotlights AI and Content

The panel was led by Sherif Bakr, General Manager of Al Arabi Publishing and Distributing, and featured Dr. Saeed Al Dhaheri, Director of the University of Dubai's Centre for Futures Studies, Dr. Mohamed Kholief, Rapporteur for Digital Culture and Cultural Information Infrastructure Committee at the Supreme Council of Culture - Egypt, Caroline Cummins, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at the Publishers Association - UK, and CEO of Shimmr AI, Nadim Sadek.



AI is the new frontier in the publishing and printing industries, said Nadim Sadek in his opening remarks. He said that "when it comes to neuroscience, AI opens our eyes to things we have never seen before, and broadens our understanding. AI can't play the same function in creative writing, it can't write a complete book, rather it can assist in writing one."

She added: "In terms of copyright, we will work to preserve the rights if we want to get quality with AI. We work with rights for creative writing in the UK and around the world."

"The Publishers Association in the UK has been publishing a lot of work and we deal with independent publishing houses. We have been astonished by what artificial intelligence (AI) has accomplished in the last two years. It helps us market and publish large volumes and document citations. As a result, we need to learn how to work with AI to find more opportunities in printing and publishing," said Caroline Cummins.

Mohamed Kholief said: "We are witnessing the evolution of generative AI, which also puts in the forefront the challenge of prioritising and developing Arabic content. As a contributor to the Supreme Council of Culture in Egypt, we examined the effects of AI on people, and ever since ChatGPT launched, we have been focusing on creating content and overcoming obstacles. The challenge posed by generative AI is how to preserve our cultural heritage and advance our skills so that the Arab world can keep up with these endeavours."

Dr. Saeed Al Dhaheri said, "I completed a master's programme in artificial intelligence. As a bioengineer interested in technology applications in medicine, I was tasked with designing a network and collaborating with a medical centre in Boston."

He added: "We monitored people experiencing dyspnea, and within 86 hours, we applied artificial intelligence to the models and were 75% accurate in predicting heart attacks. The reasons for inaccurate results is attributed to the algorithms."

With daily participation of school students 'Ataalam Platform' Offers Presentations to Attract Children and Youth

The Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF) 2024 is offering a raft of activities for children and youth in a bid to equip the future generation with knowledge, culture, and wisdom. The Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC), the organizer of the event, has been focusing on children's activities to strengthen the connection of children and youth with books and the Ataalam Platform is one such initiative to achieve the centre's vision.



The Ataalam Platform has been leading these efforts by offering children and youth approximately 20 diverse presentations daily, including Arabic language presentations, science and arts programmes, cartoon shows, cultural information programmes, linguistic competitions, sports, and nutritional health shows, running for 13 hours daily, with a show every half an hour.

around cultural information, as well as host lectures on the importance of nutrition and exercise for children and youth.

The platform has witnessed a high footfall of school groups visiting the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair. Mohammed Al Bakri, theatre director, said that Ataalam Platform has attracted large numbers of children and youth since its opening, with each show being attended by over 200 children and youth. He added that the number of schools visiting the fair daily is close to 50, in addition to the children and youth who come with their families, bringing the total number of visitors to the theatre from this demographic to over a thousand daily.

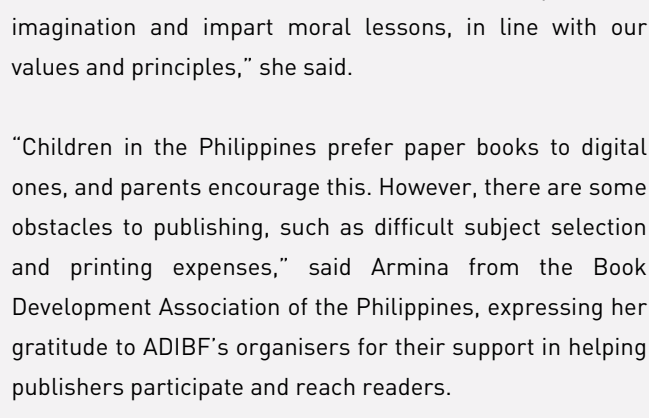
Sports trainer Rawiya Hamish delivered a lecture on the importance of sports and healthy eating, comparing the human body to a mechanical vehicle, explaining that it requires fuel and maintenance to function properly. Similarly, the human body needs "fuel", meaning healthy food, and "maintenance", meaning exercise, to maintain its health for a long time. These lectures are part of the UAE's commitment to building a sustainable future by urging children and youth to focus on their health. The importance of eating healthy food, avoiding fast food, and engaging in regular exercise to prevent obesity and associated health problems and diseases was highlighted.

Al Bakri added that the bookfair is hosting a very diverse lineup of programmes including Arabic language shows such as "Kingdom of Eloquence," "Letter Challenge Competition" and the "Arabic Pals Competition", along with the "Science Street" an informative and interactive show based on scientific experiments. The daily shows revolve

The activities of the Ataalam Platform continue from 9:00 AM until 10:00 PM in Hall 7 daily throughout the bookfair. The presentations are in Arabic and English, while linguistic competitions and letter challenge are conducted in Arabic.

Children's Literature: A Prominent Presence at the 33rd Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

Visitors to the 33rd Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF 2024), organised by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC), will be greeted by an array of colourful books featuring creative illustrations, displayed along seemingly endless rows of bookshelves.



Amid thousands of titles, children's books are a favourite among young visitors, who are drawn to the age-appropriate stories, encouraged by their parents' dedication to preserving the value of paper books in their children's minds, in light of the game-changing technological advancements of the modern era and the emergence of e-books.

readers, Rare Books prioritises comic books, which are their favourite, to promote children's literature among them. "We then harness this interest to create stories that spark their imagination and impart moral lessons, in line with our values and principles," she said.

"Children in the Philippines prefer paper books to digital ones, and parents encourage this. However, there are some obstacles to publishing, such as difficult subject selection and printing expenses," said Armina from the Book Development Association of the Philippines, expressing her gratitude to ADIBF's organisers for their support in helping publishers participate and reach readers.