

# MBRF launches 'Writers Exchange' program between UAE and Japan



**THE GULF TIME**  
DUBAI

Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (MBRF) on Monday announced at a press conference in Dubai the official launch of the first phase of its Dubai International Program for Writing's 'Writers Exchange' program between the UAE and Japan in partnership with Japan Arts and Culture Foundation.

As part of the exchange program, two male and two female writers have been selected from the UAE and Japan, who will stay for a while in each other's countries, where they will get opportunities to exchange ideas based on their respective cultures and introduce their works. On completion of the visits to the UAE and Japan, the writers will narrate their experience to their readers through works in Arabic or Japanese.

Speaking on the occasion, His Excellency Jamal Bin Huwaireb, Managing Director of MBRF, said: "The launch of the first phase of the Writers Exchange program between the UAE and Japan is in line with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to strengthen the process of knowledge transfer and empower young Arab talents to develop their skills in order to enhance the contribution of Arab literature and creativity to the literary world."

"The Writers Exchange program partnership has been conceived with the idea of enabling writers to understand other cultures and inspire each other. Writers taking part in the program will be able to communicate their experience and understanding to their readers. We are focusing more on outcome of the exchange program, which is based on the first-hand experience of other cultures, as we believe that experience has a long term impact," H.E. Jamal Bin Huwaireb added.

Commenting on the launch of the program, H.E. Yusaku Imamura, senior advisor to the Japan Arts and Culture Foundation, said: "The Writers Exchange Program offers a new horizon of

cultural exchange between the UAE and Japan. We are very happy and honored to work with MBRF on this very important exchange program. Japan and the UAE have many exchanges in the field of business, but until now we did not have significant official cultural exchanges. I hope this program will be a great opportunity to set the pace for more cultural exchanges between the UAE and Japan."

The writers from the UAE, taking part in the program are Al Hanoof Mohammed, Muhsin Suleiman, Talal Salim Al-Sabri, and Mariam Al Saedi.

Al Hanoof Mohammed, an English Language and Literature graduate from the United Arab Emirates University, is a member of the Union of UAE Writers and member of the Union of Arabs Writers. Mohammed is also a board member of Dubai Theater and chairman of the Media and Cultural Committee of Dubai Theater.

Muhsin Suleiman, a story and theater writer, and member of the Union of UAE Writers, has represented the UAE at art and literature forums in the UAE and Oman and published a number of short stories and social articles in local and GCC newspapers and magazines.

Talal Salim Al-Sabri, an engineer who works as executive director at Etisalat, participated in the first session of 'Prince of Poets program' and won the title 'Poet of Transparency'. A graduate from Khalifa University of Science and Technology and Research, Al-Sabri has published a number of works.

Mariam Helal Al Saedi is a writer by nature and enjoys merging current affairs with personal experience to produce writings of deeper understanding on the concept of life. Mariam has taken part in local and international literary events such as Sheikh Zayed Book Award, Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, and won a prize in the Creative Emirati Women Award from Sharjah.

Expressing keen interest to know more about Dubai and the UAE, Kenkichi Tsurukawa, one of the male writers from Japan, said the Writers Exchange program offered a unique opportunity to meet writers in Dubai and understand their points of interest and how they live. Tsurukawa, a graduate of

Osaka Arts University, is a winner of the 110th 'Bungaku-Kai New Writer Award'.

Mokako Nakajima, a female writer from Japan, was an actress before turning into writing. Inspired by the theme, 'How to combine success in work with an enjoying life', Nakajima said she looked forward to visiting the rehearsal of performances and plays in Dubai and taking part in the rehearsals. Nakajima is a winner of 'Shin-cho-sha Entertainment Award'.

Yumi Fuzuki, another female writer from Japan, said during the visit to the UAE she would focus on experiencing the Arab literary scene and get to know more about poetry in the region. Fuzuki was also hopeful about knowing more about the position and impact of female writers and poets and the role of writers in the society. Fuzuki is the winner of the Gendai-Shi-Techo Award, Nakahara Chuya Award and the Yutaka Maruyama Memorial Contemporary Poem Award.

During their stay in the UAE, the Japanese writers will meet MBRF officials and UAE writers. They will also visit key literary and cultural organizations such as Emirates Writers Union in Sharjah and Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation. The program is coordinated by two coordinators: Yusaku Imamura, Senior Advisor, Japan Arts and Culture Foundation; and Kayoko Iemura, Director, Japan Arts and Culture Foundation. Both Imamura and Iemura have extensive experience on the international cultural exchange and artist-in-residence program. They have also worked on the cultural scene in the UAE - Iemura was a curator for SIKKA Art Fair in 2014, and Imamura was advisor for SIKKA and Dubai Art Season in 2014.

The Writers Exchange program has the strong support of Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Japan Arts and Culture Foundation contributes to finding, nurturing and supporting young innovative talents internationally from arts, knowledge and political fields through platforms such as knowledge exchange, research, conferences, lectures and exhibitions.

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