

Under the Patronage of

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi
Ruler of Fujairah and Member of the UAE Supreme Council
Photo Exhibition
“Desert Water”

by Michel Roggo
Swiss Photographer



The Higher Colleges of Technology in Fujairah
from 7 April until 17 April 2011

and

Ghaf Art Gallery in Abu Dhabi
from 10 April until 16 April 2011

Embassy of Switzerland, P.O. Box 46116, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
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About the photo exhibition “Desert Water”, by Michel Roggo

Capturing pictures in different biospheres of underwater worlds and landscapes, the element of water was always in the centre of the Swiss Photographer Michel Roggo’s attention. As he says, “water is life”. His intention is, through the power of expression and through showing the tremendous beauty and uniqueness of the various freshwater biospheres, to strengthen the willingness to save the environment.

On invitation by the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi Michel Roggo has been working in the United Arab Emirates during November 2010 for his “The Freshwater Project” in Wadi Wurayah and Wadi Shawka. The goal of “The Freshwater Project” is to produce a photographic documentation of important freshwater environments from across the globe, focusing on underwater images (www.roggo.ch).

The Embassy of Switzerland and the Emirati Wildlife Society- WWF, in association with the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi, organize two exhibitions simultaneously, one in Fujairah and one in Abu Dhabi. Each one includes 40 pictures and a video presentation with pictures of Wadi Wurayah and Wadi Shwaka taken by Michel Roggo. Furthermore the exhibition includes not only pictures of the Wadis, but also pictures that were taken in Rub’ al Khali and in the mangroves of Khor Kalba.



About the Swiss Photographer Michel Roggo

Born in Fribourg, Switzerland in 1951, the award winning photographer Michel Roggo has published over 10,000 pictures and has had the opportunity to exhibit over 25 times in different museums and galleries. As a well-traveled artist, his collection contains photographs, which have been taken all over the world: In the flooded rainforest of the Amazon, in Rocky Mountain rivers with millions of salmon, in the valleys of the south Alps, in water-filled fissures in Iceland and in karst springs in Croatia.

Michel Roggo specializes in subjects related to fresh water fauna, flora and fishes. Most of these are projects developed over long periods of time and large part of the images are taken under water.

Michel Roggo was awarded numerous times and he has won various prizes as for example the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2004, 2008 and 2010 as runner-up or the European Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2009.

www.roggo.ch



About the Wadi Wurayah

First officially declared mountain protected area of the UAE, Wadi Wurayah in Fujairah on the East Coast of the country is one the last pristine and intact catchment basin of the UAE. The Wadi Wurayah National Park has also been officially recognized as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention. It is home to a diverse array of rare and endangered mammals, plants, insects, and amphibians because of the permanent freshwater springs. The UAE's only Orchid - *Epipactis veratrifolia* – survives here, as well as the Arabian Tahr, an extremely rare species of wild goat and a freshwater fish endemic to UAE and northern Oman mountains. Wadi Wurayah is also a home to 30 insect species that are new to science, 14 of which were first described within this protected area. Because of presence of freshwater, the wadi has been frequented by humans for a long time: more than 30 heritage sites have been recorded and mapped, including Bedu settlements, ancient Islamic graveyards, pre-Islamic tombs, 15th to 18th centuries AD porcelain and pottery fragments, and rock carving sites.

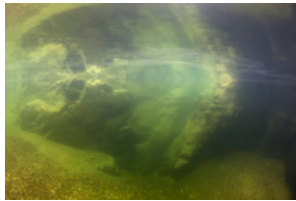
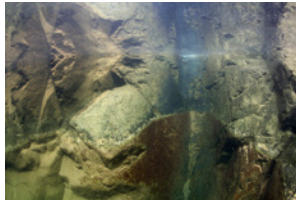
About the Wadi Shawka

With Wadi Wurayah, Wadi Shawka is one of the only wadis with permanent water sources in UAE. Located in Ras al Khaimah, on the western side of the Hajar mountain range, it is home to numerous species of plants, insects, mammals, fish, amphibian, reptiles and birds. It has one of the only records of the presence of the White-tailed Mongoose in the country. In addition to the freshwater fish -*Garra barremiae*- Wadi Shawka hosts the Arabian killifish - *Aphanius dispar*. Unfortunately, like in Wadi Wurayah, these species are highly threatened by the introduction of alien invasive species like the Tilapia. Until recently, Wadi Shawka was permanently inhabited and remains of farms can still be seen here and there. The farming activity is now concentrated in the lower part of the wadi. During the last decade, crushers and road construction works have encroached considerably the upper parts of the Wadi Shawka catchment basin threatening the hydrological functioning of the ecosystem.

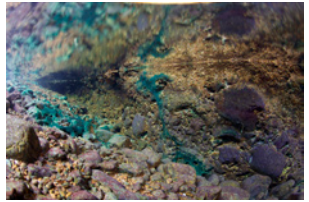
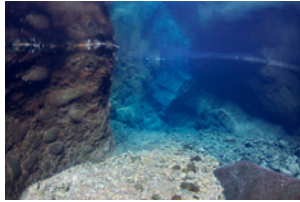
About “40 years of Ramsar Convention”

Since 1976, Switzerland is, and since 2007, the UAE are members of the Ramsar Convention, named after the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, where the international “Convention on Wetlands” was signed on 2 February 1971. It is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention’s mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world”. In 2010, Wadi Wurayah was declared the second UAE Ramsar site after Ras al Khor in Dubai, and joined officially the list of 1923 wetlands “of International Importance” around the world.

Photos Wadi Shawka, by Michel Roggo



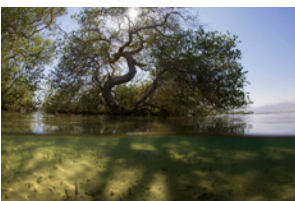
Photos Wadi Wurayah, by Michel Roggo



Photos Khor Kalba, by Michel Roggo

Considered as salty, smelly, sticky and unproductive lands stretched along UAE coasts, mudflats and mangroves are however hosting a unique and great biodiversity that contrasts with one of the bare land washed by the tides. With coral reefs, mangroves are one of the most productive ecosystem in the world providing vital nursery grounds and shelter for numerous fish of commercially valuable species, such as snappers, grunts, emperors and sea breams and last refueling stop-overs for thousands of migrants waterbirds before crossing the thousands kilometres of the Arabian desert. Like coral reefs, they protect the coastline from erosion and act as carbon sinks. Being the only mangroves on the East Coast of UAE, the mangroves of Khor Kalba in Sharjah Emirate, supported until recently the entire world population of the subspecies named after them -kalbaensis- of the White-collared Kingfisher-*Todirhamphus chloris*. For years, Khor Kalba has benefited from the verbal protection from His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah and member of the UAE Supreme Council.

Photos by Michel Roggo



Photos Rub al Khali, by Michel Roggo

Mineral sea of sand, the Rub al Khali, or the “Empty Quarter” of the first European explorers is considered as one of the most hostile places on Earth. However, like in the sea, the desert life is not easy to spot and often lies under the surface. Compared to tropical rainforests, deserts could be considered simple ecosystems with basic food chains, a low primary production and a very low biodiversity. However, desert habitats host unique species that show remarkable adjustments allowing them to survive harsh environmental conditions with unique physiological, behavioural and morphological strategies. With the Arabian Oryx, recently reintroduced after its extinction, Abu Dhabi deserts host a unique but more discrete wildlife like the Sand Gazelle, locally known as “Reem”, the Ruppell’s Fox, the Cape Hare, the Sand boa, the Least Semaphore Gecko and the Leptien’s Spiny-tailed Lizard, known locally as “Dhub”, the tow late species being endemic to UAE and Oman. This wildlife finds food and shelter under the only indigenous tree species that is able to survive in the sands of Arabian Peninsula: the Ghaf.

Photos by Michel Roggo



Higher Colleges of Technology Fujairah

HCT-Fujairah form part of the Higher Colleges of Technology in the UAE. A leader in first rate education, our philosophy is to place students at the forefront of cutting edge technology with outstanding teaching and learning practices. Our approach encourages students to actively participate in their chosen program and their success is manifested in sound teaching practice from experienced and highly qualified staff; and from a holistic college experience. With two campuses, one each for men and women, HCT-Fujairah educates young people of the UAE through a respectful learning environment that inspires them to achieve personal, social and professional success. Our well-designed programs are applied with innovation and creativity in mind; Director, Dr. Dave Pelham's message is clear: "HCT-Fujairah offers world class educational environments with dedicated faculty and staff supporting our students as they pursue their educational goals."

Ghaf Art Gallery

Established in 2006, Ghaf Art Gallery is Abu Dhabi's first dedicated art gallery. United in purpose, the Gallery is owned and operated by two unique individuals, Mohamed Kanoo & Jalal Luqman.

The gallery aims to cultivate the growth and development of the capital's art scene by offering exhibiting opportunities to new, local talent who are eager to reach an attentive audience.

The Gallery features 1,500 square Feet of prime exhibition space and can comfortably accommodate guests for launch receptions.

An Ambitious Agenda of Mixed & Solo Exhibits: Ghaf Art Gallery actively nurtures an appreciation for fine art through an ambitious agenda of mixed and solo exhibits complemented by a regular showcase of contemporary artists featuring local, regional and international names.

Contact The Gallery

Gallery Hours: 10am - 9pm, Saturdays through Thursdays, Fridays Closed

office hours: 10am-6pm

Tel: 009712 6655332 Fax: 009712 6655292

Email: ghafgallery@gmail.com,

P.o.box: 42366, Abu Dhabi, UAE

EAD

The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) is a governmental agency that was established in 1996. The EAD is committed to protecting and managing biodiversity, providing a clean environment and promoting Sustainable Development in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The EAD is also committed to giving environmental protection, regulation and natural resources conservation a high priority on the national agenda. The EAD provides a direction for Government, business and the community to build environmental considerations into the way they plan and live without compromising Abu Dhabi development. In 2008, EAD was awarded ISO 9001 for Quality; ISO 14001 for Environment and ISO 18001 for Health and Safety.

The EAD supported the photo exhibition “Desert Water” by Michel Roggo. This support was the main reason that made this wonderful project possible. The Embassy of Switzerland thank EAD for its commitment and support.

Emirates Wildlife Society in association with WWF (EWS-WWF)

Emirates Wildlife Society is a national (UAE) environmental non-governmental organization. EWS is established under the patronage of HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler’s Representative in the Western region and Chairman of Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD). EWS works in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), one of the world’s largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with more than 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. EWS-WWF has been active in the UAE since 2001 and its mission is to conserve the natural heritage of the UAE and to promote sustainable lifestyles. Since 2006, EWS-WWF has been working with Fujairah Municipality for the protection and conservation of Wadi Wurayah.



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Environment Agency - ABU DHABI

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