

'Beyond the Fence' explores monolithic industrial wastelands hidden from public view

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Oil refineries and industrial estates are a natural home for Emirati photographer Jalal Bin Thaneya, who draws ideas from his former career in logistics

The debut solo show by Emirati photographer Jalal Bin Thaneya will open at Tashkeel later this month, marking the first public outcome by participants of the Critical Practice Programme 2019.

Opening 30 April, 'Beyond the Fence' presents a new body of work exploring the unavoidable byproducts of modernity in the UAE, amplifying spaces and subjects in large format to drive public debate about what happens behind fences and walls.

"Bin Thaneya's ghostly scenes expose society's all-encompassing reliance on oil and nature's manipulation by human hands," said Tashkeel's Deputy Director, Lisa Ball-Lechgar.

"His pictures are structured and balanced in their composition, yet frequently capture chance encounters, highlighting a side of the UAE largely hidden from view."

Bin Thaneya's work combines elements of landscape, documentary and industrial photography, with subjects heavily influenced by his career in logistics. Entirely self-taught, he seeks to slip behind barriers to record the UAE's underbelly – the monolithic scrapyards, refineries and metalworks peripheral to most people's lives.

The huge, otherworldly prints are rendered in incredible detail thanks to his use of medium-format digital and large-format slide cameras, which deliver sharper, less grainy pictures than more commonplace equipment.

The process of gaining access to these tightly guarded spaces was integral to Bin Thaneya's creative process.

He said: "A majority of the time working on this series was spent gaining access to these places before the images started to take shape.

"The world has become even more security conscious and this has added to the difficulty in creating images related to infrastructure and industry."

Bin Thaneya took part in Tashkeel's 2019 Critical Practice Programme, a long-running programme offering studio space plus professional support, mentorship and critique. During his time on the programme, he was



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mentored by Jassim Al-Awadhi, one of the first Emirati professional photographers, whose two decades spent recording crime scenes can be felt even today in his documentary-style approach. He was also mentored by Flounder Lee, the American multimedia artist, curator and educator, whose work explores topical issues including postcolonialism and environmental change.

Bin Thaneya is the first of this year's cohort to have staged a full-scale solo show at Tashkeel, joining previous CPP alumna Afra Bin Dhaher, Vikram Divecha, Hayedeh Badri, Raja'a Khalid, Lantian Xie and Debjani Bhardwaj.

'Beyond the Fence' will run at the gallery in Tashkeel Nad Al Sheba 1 from 30 April to 11 June 2019. Bin Thaneya's earlier work has previously appeared in joint exhibitions at Sharjah Art Foundation, The Empty Quarter, Dubai Design District and Tashkeel, amongst other places.

Tashkeel is in Nad Al Sheba 1, Dubai. It opens from 10am to 10pm every day except Friday, and admission is free. For details, visit tashkeel.org, email tashkeel@tashkeel.org or call +971 4 336 3313.