



DUBAI DESIGN WEEK CONCLUDES ITS SEVENTH AND MOST COMPREHENSIVE EDITION TO DATE, CONSOLIDATING DUBAI'S SIGNIFICANCE AS A DESIGN HUB FOR THE REGION

Dubai Design Week is held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) and member of Dubai Council

- A celebration of design and creativity in the region and beyond, **Dubai Design Week** concluded its seventh and most comprehensive edition with **270+ free-to-attend events and activities** and **participation of 430 UAE-based designers** and **560 companies**
- **Downtown Design** returned with an in-person showcase of **150+ international and regional exhibiting brands and designers**
- **MENA Grad Show** presented 60+ ideas and solutions by 78 students from 29 universities across 10 countries from the region
- In its online showcase, **Global Grad show** unveiled 150 projects from 114 universities in 50 countries
- **15 outdoor installations** alongside an array of pop-up exhibitions were staged throughout d3, including the **Abwab 2021** commission and the **2040: d3 Architecture Exhibition**
- The annual initiative **Urban Commissions**, supported by **A.R.M. Holding**, unveiled the 2021 winning proposal; a modular public space installation by Beirut-based **Bits to Atoms** titled 'Yowalah'
- **AlUla Design** presented an immersive showcase inspired by the extraordinary rock formations in North West Saudi Arabia's desert and mountain landscapes
- **Bentley Motors** collaborated with **Hessa Al Suwaidi** to create 'Safeefa', a creative concept drawing from a modern iteration of traditional Emirati weaving combined with Bentley's design and craftsmanship
- Bringing people together throughout the week, the **Making Space** hosted a programme of more than 80 workshops for visitors of all ages, under the theme of 'Paper, Plastic + Play'
- **The Marketplace** returned in its second iteration with **50+ new participants** and a dedicated section to support designers and producers working in Lebanon

United Arab Emirates, Dubai, 15 November 2021: Staged 8-13 November 2021, in strategic partnership with Dubai Design District (d3) alongside Dubai Culture and supported by A.R.M. Holding, the region's most important creative festival concluded its seventh and most comprehensive edition, reaffirming Dubai's role as an important hub for design and creativity for the region and beyond.

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Mette Degn-Christensen, Director of Dubai Design Week, commented, “*The feedback we have received from visitors, exhibitors and partners this year has been hugely enthusiastic. From the interactive exhibitions installations activating the open-air district and generating discussions, to connecting brands and designers with commercial opportunity at Downtown Design, we are thrilled to see our diverse audiences actively engage with the festival’s key programmes. We look forward to witnessing the impact of the festival and the myriad of ideas explored over the coming year before we open for our next edition in November 2022.*”

The region’s leading design fair for high-end and quality design, **Downtown Design** returned in a physical format this year after an online-only iteration last year, featuring more than 150 exhibiting brands and designers. International brands presenting at this year’s edition of Downtown Design included **Ethimo** from Italy, **Kvadrat** from Denmark and **Verdi** from Colombia.

“*Downtown Design has once again been an incredible networking and business platform for the interior design industry. The 47 companies selected to be part of the Italian representation by the Italian Trade Agency, the Italian Embassy and the General Consulate of Italy, had the opportunity to showcase their collection of creativity and craftsmanship to the Gulf region that keeps reaffirming its interest for Italian furniture. Amedeo Scarpa, Italian Trade Commissioner to the UAE,* commented on the success of their participation.

The region’s representative of exhibiting brand Vitra added; “Downtown Design 2021 was a great opportunity for us to connect with industry peers and the community. Given the current situation, the fair was an amazing platform for us to reconnect with old clients and meet new customers face-to-face after more than 2 years.” **Sankar Viswanath - Managing Director of Swiss Corporation for Design & Technology LLC.**

Individual designers and studios from across the region showcased their work in the fair’s section dedicated to limited-edition and bespoke design, Downtown Editions, from **aRE**, **Faresi** and **Monochrome** from the UAE to **George Gerara** from Lebanon, **Le Lab** from Egypt, and **Roham Shamekh** from Iran. Art studio Tashkeel unveiled the products that have resulted from the 2021 edition of the Tanween design programme.

“*For Tashkeel, Dubai Design Week is where we debut pioneering new work, jettison promising designers into the spotlight and engage in meaningful discussions with fellow protagonists from the UAE design sector and beyond. This year allowed us to engage with collectors, design professionals and students around the future of sustainable design, premiering 4 groundbreaking material innovations reflecting this country’s wealth of natural resources, design and manufacturing talent;*” commented **Lisa Ball-Lechgar**, Deputy Director, Tashkeel.

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The fair also hosted **The Beirut Concept Store** which presented works by more than 50 established designers and emerging creatives based in Lebanon as well as the second iteration of the **UAE Designer Exhibition**, which unveiled works of 31 designers based in and producing in the UAE.

Established as part of the Global Grad Show platform, the second edition of **MENA Grad Show** presented 60 ideas and solutions by 78 students from 29 universities across 10 countries from the MENA region, from a solar powered robot built to plant seeds in desert areas to an app that organizes the routine of dementia patients, and magnetic skin to allow people with quadriplegia to control their surroundings.

Commenting on their participation in MENA Grad Show 2021, students said:

"The MENA Grad Show 2021 was an excellent opportunity for me to not only showcase the hard work I put into my master's thesis project but also to connect with other aspiring students from the region. I look forward to the Entrepreneurship programme and the opportunities it offers." **Amna Sana, Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar.** **Hind Rais, Zayed University,** added: *"Participating in the MENA Grad Show has been an amazing way to meet people from across the globe and share ideas with other students from across the region."*

In parallel to the MENA Grad Show's physical showcase at d3, the **Global Grad Show** unveiled 150 game-changing projects from 114 universities across 50 countries for its seventh edition through a digital exhibition at globalgradshow.com. The ideas echoed the collective concern of students around the world with a focus on mental and physical health, food supply, city living, ethics and community welfare.

As part of the main festival, 15 outdoor installations were staged throughout Dubai Design District (d3), including; this year's **Abwab** commission 'Nature in Motion', an undulating design concept that references the Dubai desert's constant motion, emulating the city's continual evolution, by architect Ahmed El-Sharabassy.

Supported by **A.R.M. Holding**, the seventh edition of **Urban Commissions** was unveiled at Dubai Design Week, showcasing an innovative public installation by Beirut-based architectural firm, **Bits to Atoms**. Titled 'Yowalah', the winning proposal is an inclusive and inter-generational public space, designed to undo social disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, using 3D-printed beams.

Commenting on the success of their installation 'Yowalah', **Bits to Atoms CEO and Founder, Guillaume Crédoz** said: *"This year's theme of Dubai Design Week's annual Urban Commission was to repair the social damages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic through play. With this task in mind, we developed 'Yowalah', named after the eponymous traditional Emirati dance, and aiming to reinvent the way we use public spaces, inviting communities to reunite and engage. The work was clearly a success with people - and particularly children - enjoying, interacting and engaging with the installation throughout the week."*



The globally significant heritage and geological destination, **AlUla**, presented an immersive exhibition designed by **Gio Forma** and **Black Engineering** and inspired by the extraordinary rock formations in the region's desert and mountain landscapes. The exhibition highlighted the projects that are shaping the emerging design city in North West Saudi Arabia and hosted a series of daily **AlUla Design Talks** featuring Pritzker-prize-winning French architect, **Jean Nouvel**, amongst others, who shared the design philosophies and principles that are guiding the transformation of AlUla.

Unveiling a unique creative installation at this year's Dubai Design Week, **Bentley Motors** collaborated with **Hessa Al Suwaidi** to create 'Safeefa', a creative concept drawing inspiration from Bentley's craftsmanship and design of movement, combined with a modern iteration of traditional Emirati weaving.

Alongside the outdoor installations around the pedestrian setting of d3, the festival featured a variety of exhibitions, including the **2040: d3 Architecture Exhibition**, which featured five architectural firms presenting concepts of how Dubai could look in 20 years, while the **The Marketplace, supported by Dubai Culture**, returned this year with 50+ new participants, from a curated selection of delicacies and ceramics to mouth blown glass and unique hand-crafted designs.

Azra Khamissa, founder of AZRA Dubai and a first-time participant, said; "It has been so great to connect with the design community again, it's definitely been successful for us and the perfect place to participate as the community of Dubai Design Week really appreciates well thought out design'.

Bringing people together throughout the week, the **Making Space** hosted a programme of **more than 80 workshops** for visitors of all ages, under the theme of 'Paper, Plastic + Play' and an extensive line-up of children's activities over the weekend. The festival's new programme of informal gatherings, **Meet the UAE Creatives**, hosted engaging dialogues between creative talent in the UAE throughout the week.

Fatma Al Mahmoud, Guest Curator of Dubai Design Week 2021 said: "*Being given a platform to host and curate a program for UAE creatives to come together and discuss topics of relevance to what the design scene is witnessing today was absolutely needed and hoping these discussions create an impact for the future generation of designers.*"

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Note to Editors:

Dubai Design Week is an annual, free-to-attend event. For all upcoming announcements and updates, visit dubaidesignweek.ae and follow @dubaidesignweek and #DXBDW2021.

Contact:

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About Dubai Design Week

Held under the dedicated patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture), Dubai Design Week is a platform for regional design as well as a catalyst for the growth of the creative community in Dubai. The festival's varied programme consists of design-related events, exhibitions, installations, competitions, talks and workshops across multiple creative disciplines. Key components of Dubai Design Week include the region's leading fair for high-quality, original design, Downtown Design; MENA Grad Show, bringing innovative projects from the Middle East and North Africa in an exhibition focusing on solutions to improve and transform lives – an initiative by Global Grad Show, a year-round programme for graduate students across the world; Abwab, the annually re-modelled, interactive platform for creative talent from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia; alongside an extensive programme of talks, masterclasses and workshops. Dubai Design Week is owned and managed by the Art Dubai Group and is the region's largest creative festival, reflecting Dubai's position as the design capital of the Middle East.

For more information, please visit: dubaidesignweek.ae

About Dubai Design District (d3)

Dubai Design District (d3) is a global creative ecosystem dedicated to design, fashion, architecture, art and retail. In line with Dubai's position as the leading business destination for the region and beyond, d3 is created as the first-of-its-kind creative ecosystem that enables people and businesses to grow and co-create, whilst simultaneously providing a strong platform for creativity. Strategically located in the heart of Dubai, d3 is one of the city's lifestyle and business destinations that challenges thousands of people to rethink the regular.

With state-of-the-art infrastructure designed to meet the needs of the industry and a business-friendly framework, the community offers creative talent the tools to drive innovation that permeates through various areas of Dubai's economy, further reinforcing Dubai's status as a UNESCO Creative City of Design.

d3 is a cutting-edge retail destination with over 40 retailers offering a variety of multi-brand boutiques, fashion brands, art galleries and showrooms. In addition, d3 is home to leading companies and talent including architects, interior designers, photography studios, product and fashion designers. The Design Quarter, the central component

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in the development of d3, features world-class offices, studios, showrooms and retail spaces spread across the district.

Some of the region's most popular and sought-after events take place in d3 and attract international artists and audiences to cultural exhibitions and gatherings such as Dubai Design Week and Sole DXB. The destination also regularly hosts a roster of industry talks, workshops and educational programming, accessible to people of all ages. d3 is also home to the cutting-edge business incubator – in5 – that aims to support the fashion and design industries by offering students and entrepreneurs the opportunity to transform their ideas into successful commercial ventures. This ecosystem is further supported by the Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation, the region's only university exclusively dedicated to design and innovation.

For more information, please visit: dubaidesigndistrict.com

About Dubai Arts & Culture Authority

On 8th March 2008, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, launched Dubai Culture & Arts Authority to be the custodian entity of the cultural and creative sector in the emirate, based on its cultural responsibility towards Dubai and to help define it at the local and global levels, enabling and developing these sectors to consolidate the emirate's position as an active global centre for creativity. In August 2020, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum issued a law to transfer Al Jalila Cultural Centre for Children to Dubai Culture, becoming an entity under its organisational structure. His Highness also issued a law in May 2021 to affiliate the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation to Dubai Culture to promote the strategic alignment of the cultural sector and raise it to a level that would enhance Dubai's position on the global cultural map.

Under the leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture, the Authority is committed to enriching the cultural scene of the emirate, based on the heritage of the United Arab Emirates, and is working on building bridges of constructive dialogue between various civilisations and cultures to enhance Dubai's position as a global centre for art and culture, an incubator for creativity, and a thriving hub for talent.

The Authority is also committed to reviving Dubai's history and highlighting the splendid image of its contemporary cultural fabric through a series of innovative cultural initiatives, events and projects, as well as the cultural, historical and heritage assets it sponsors, including the management of five of the city's notable heritage monuments, six museums, and eight branches of Dubai Public Libraries.

Dubai Culture is working to develop regulatory frameworks for the cultural and creative sectors in Dubai, based on the priorities of its strategic roadmap for 2020 – 2026 and on the enablers that contribute to its realisation to

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seek and support talents and stimulate active participation from all segments of society. The aim is to create an economic system that stimulates creative industries and reinforces Dubai's position as a global cultural destination, in addition to its cultural responsibility of safeguarding the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the emirate.

For more information, please visit: dubaiculture.gov.ae

About A.R.M. Holding

A.R.M. Holding is a private investment firm and multi-focused economic enabler that creates synergies and opportunities through local, regional and global investments. At the core of the company's business strategy is its commitment to impactful investments, actively employing its resources to advance society and empower its players to pursue innovative solutions and inspire a better future. It collaborates with like-minded organizations and leverages its network and partnerships to create meaningful relationships and growth opportunities.

A.R.M. Holding's investments are focused on tech-enabled industries and sophisticated technologies around the world that demonstrate strong potential for long-term positive social impact. It also holds equity stakes in some of Dubai's foremost companies in a variety of sectors including Banking, Telecom, FMCG, Real Estate, and Hospitality. A.R.M. Holding has contributed to society with significant investments in numerous industries and versatile projects. In 2021, it became the first corporate patron of the Dubai Collection, the first institutional art collection in the emirate of Dubai.

To learn more about A.R.M. Holding, please visit: armholding.ae

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