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GULF BUSINESS

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HE MAYTHA AL HABSI,
EMIRATES FOUNDATION
BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR
& OVERALL BUSINESS
LEADER OF THE YEAR

MANUEL RABATÉ,
LOUVRE ABU DHABI
TOURISM & HOSPITALITY
BUSINESS LEADER
OF THE YEAR

GULF BUSINESS AWARDS 2018

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
HE SHEIKHA LUBNA BINT KHALID AL QASIMI
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER



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FUTURE

DESIGNING THE

With the fourth edition of Dubai Design Week taking place next month, Elias Kamel Jabbe looks ahead to the increasingly popular event, and how the region's design and architecture industries are evolving

AFTER WELCOMING some 60,000 attendees in 2017, this year's edition of Dubai Design Week – taking place from November 12-17 – is set to build on past successes, with scores of events showcasing the best of the region's design industry.

Taking place at TECOM Group's Dubai Design District – which houses 36 architecture firms, including one launched by legendary Arab architect, the late Zaha Hadid – the increasingly popular event has become a staple in the emirate's vibrant fourth quarter calendar.

According to Dubai Design District CEO Mohammed Saeed Al Shehhi, this year's Dubai Design Week will offer a variety of programming focusing on education and international collaboration.

"This is the fourth edition of Dubai Design Week and offers six-days of programming with 200 events covering design across a range of disciplines



Al Habori, an architect who designs home items and furniture using upcycled wood and sells them as part of collections offered by her company Khashab Design. She created a special piece of art upon request by Dubai Cares and Dubai Culture.

"My artwork 'Tolerance' was a commissioned for the Dubai Scavenger Hunt by Dubai Cares and Dubai Culture (launched in January 2018 to celebrate the Year of Zayed.

"It represents the harmony of the Islamic pattern art, where every line and geometric element intersects with one another to paint a beautiful picture of unity and order," said Al Habori, who has exhibited at UAE events such as Sikka Art Fair.

Her design for 'Tolerance', inspired by a canvas of an Islamic pattern that dates to AD 670/AH 50 found in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia, represents themes of understanding, respect and tolerance, which resonate with the ethos and multicultural ambiance of the United Arab Emirates.

Among the many wooden pieces designed by Al Habori, some of the most distinct Khashab Design items reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Arabian Peninsula, including Al Habori's ancestral Yemen. Some of the standout pieces, a chalkboard and complementary designs featured in the Doaan collection, are inspired by the historic homes built on the sides of the mountains of Wadi Doan within the Hadhramaut governate.

"The Doaan collection is inspired by the Wadi Doan in Yemen, with its rock formation and man-made buildings that blend in and work in harmony with nature," says Al Habori, who has complemented the chalkboard with a collection of tables and stools, which were made using rustic wooden cubes.

The theme of designing for a good cause will continue when Dubai Design Week displays unique creations as part of its inaugural Design For Good campaign next month.

One of the designs featured will be titled The Mesh: three structures created as the result of a collaboration between the Fatima Bint Mohamed Bin Zayed Initiative (FBMI) and Emirati designer Roudha Al Shamsi, who partnered with Afghani women on the pieces. After Dubai Design



"The Doaan collection is inspired by the Wadi Doan in Yemen, with its rock formation and man-made buildings that blend in and work in harmony with nature"

MIASER AL HABORI
KHASHAB DESIGN

Week concludes, they will be permanently on display at Dubai Design District.

Another, yet to be announced, will be selected from a competition featuring submissions from designers from across the UAE. An expert jury will select one of these submissions, which can be a piece of furniture or a functional object, then produce 100 pieces and sell them during Dubai Design Week as part of the 'Design 100' campaign.

All of the proceeds from the aforementioned sales will be given directly to Dubai Cares in order to support education that that will help develop and enhance the skillsets of the aforementioned women in Afghanistan and other countries.



New designs in the kingdom

In neighbouring Saudi Arabia, where demographics are experiencing a massive change, the consumer market is also shifting when it comes to architecture and interior design. Currently, 70 per cent of Saudi Arabia's population is under the age of 30, and it is only getting younger.

As younger Saudis, many educated abroad, come of age, some of the design trends are also reflecting change. Given that cities in various regions of Saudi Arabia are known for their distinct cultures, it's no surprise that the latest interior design trends often contrast as well.

"In Riyadh, modern styles of interior design have been more appreciated by home owners this year: from hidden lights in the ceiling to modern furniture, says Amina Ali, an architect and interior designer from Riyadh who works on design projects throughout GCC countries and Asia.

"Meanwhile in Jeddah, traditional styles of interior design are still as popular as they were in the past, including traditional Islamic patterns on ceilings and the use of gold as a popular colour choice."

The types of real estate that are favourable among younger Saudis also are not resistant to this change, according to recent research about architecture and real estate in the kingdom.



Hayy Creative Hub in Jeddah



**“Hospitals,
clinics and
schools are now
being rethought
as holistic
environments
for healthier
human
experiences”**

NADIA BAKHURJI
NBA DESIGN CONSULTANTS

rethought as holistic environments for healthier human experiences. The emphasis is now on a higher quality customer experience.”

Designing the future

As 2019 approaches, the Gulf’s design industry is preparing to welcome new spaces that can inspire the next generation of creatives.

At present, several spaces catering to designers exist in cosmopolitan cities such as Dubai and Jeddah. The former features TECOM Group’s in5 Design at Dubai Design District: an incubator for entrepreneurs who are focused on design. Jeddah is home to Kayan Space, which has hosted design-centric entrepreneurs since it was launched in 2012 by Makkah native Sofana Dahlan, who operates several businesses and was appointed as vice governor for entrepreneurship advancement

“A big cultural shift is happening with new generations in Saudi,” explains Amad Almaodi, founder and CEO of online real estate search engine Aqarmap.

“Younger consumers are now more interested in living in residential communities that have shared amenities and there is less focus on privacy, especially in the Eastern and Western region, but also in some newer neighbourhoods in the central region.”

“Developers are therefore looking into building residential gated and semi-gated communities to take advantage of this new shift in demographics and demand. The number of consumers who are interested in buying in a gated community have increased by 21 per cent in the past 12 months.”

According to Nadia Bakhurji, president of Nadia Bakhurji Architectural and Interior Design Consultants (NBA) in Riyadh, architecture and related industries will have to adjust rapidly to the drastic changes that Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing and will pursue further in the coming years.

“Vision 2020 and Vision 2030 have become a catalyst for a shift in the nature of the demand opening up new sectors to the construction industry, thus encouraging new thinking in the design trends of our built environment. Public space for entertainment and commercial space are becoming more relevant and important.

“With the advent of new building technologies and building materials, architects and interior designers are challenged to create innovative contemporary solutions, which are in keeping with today’s current design trends and fulfil the developing and changing needs of society.

“This can be seen most in the new hotels, commercial office buildings, strip malls, plazas and entertainment complexes. Private hospitals, clinics and schools are now being

at the Small and Medium Enterprises Authority of Saudi Arabia.

Hubs like in5 Design and Kayan Space offer the opportunity for entrepreneurs and independent designers such as Jeddah-based interior designer and Figs & Oliver founder Sara Bamehriz to make an impact on the marketplace without being overwhelmed by heavy overhead costs that come with renting office space.

Late 2018 and 2019 will also bring new spaces to both Dubai and Jeddah that can showcase the design sector to the public and offer training opportunities for members of the creative industries.

Art Jameel, an independent organisation that supports causes such as arts, heritage and education in the Middle East, is launching the 10,000sqm Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai’s Al Jaddaf area on the edge of the Dubai Creek on November 11, 2018. This will be followed by the launch of the 17,000sqm Hayy: Creative Hub in Jeddah during the winter season of 2019 and 2020. The 17,000sqm space will host events and offer an entrepreneurship incubator to support creatives from Saudi Arabia and other countries.

The launch of this ambitious hub couldn’t come at a better time in Saudi Arabia’s history: an era when embracing entrepreneurship and considering a career outside the public sector, is on the agenda.

According to the 2018 edition of the Arab Youth Survey, 26 per cent of young GCC nationals believe that creating new, well-paying jobs is the most important factor needed for the Arab world to move in the right direction over the next 10 years.

With the increase in availability of hubs that support entrepreneurship in diverse sectors across the GCC, time will tell if more designers will emerge in the region’s rapidly changing creative economies. ●