

/yourAOK

5

PAGES

enhancing the creative industry

// yourAOK
events
benchmark
2015
kuwait

// in this issue
**an adventure from
interior design**
ayka designs dubai /30

web design with
born interactive /40

design of the times

text & diagrams

Cyril Zammit, Fair Director of Design Days Dubai reflects on just how far the region has come in embracing collectible design since 2012

I CAN scarcely believe it has been less than four years since the very first Design Days Dubai, held annually in Emaar's Downtown Dubai. It is always a challenge to trailblaze new disciplines, ideas and concepts and at Design Days Dubai that first year, I don't think people knew what to expect and were possibly a little confused – was it a furniture show or was it a design exhibition? How could a simple piece of furniture command such a high price tag? Many visitors didn't realise that our furniture and objects were even for sale. As we start to prepare for our fourth fair in March 2015, I am proud of how we have evolved, both as a team and culturally as a city, in such a relatively short time.

The fair, and the initiatives that have sprung up through it, have played a significant part in that evolution through a process of education and understanding of design. Our ability to showcase galleries from such diverse geographic locations - Algeria, Australia, Mexico, China, Brazil, Taiwan - for the first time, bring a truly global impression of the design world to our city. Throughout the fair, daily workshops supported by Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) and Dubai Design District (d3) and hosted by design professionals help widen the public understanding of the design process and talks with leading figures of design, live performances and installations all play their part in imparting the spirit of collectible design to those with a thirst for more knowledge.

The fair is something of an education for the galleries too. Many of our visitors are unfamiliar with big design names and those representing them, so our visiting galleries need to work hard. The galleries will only bring a designer's work they have invested in on many levels – so it is an opportunity to transfer in-depth knowledge to a fresh customer base. They are required to become storytellers and speak exhaustively about the design process and craftsmanship that has gone into each piece so it is not 'just a chair' or 'just a mirror' that happens to cost Euros 35,000. I'm also impressed by the fact that our visitors aren't afraid to ask questions whereas in more developed markets they may feel self-conscious at showing a lack of knowledge. To help, we provide each of our galleries with an Arabic-speaking intern to translate each piece's journey to any visitors expressing an interest.

I feel we have adapted our range of exhibitors to suit the market now. There is a perception in the West that only collectors go to fairs, but we have visitors who will just come to buy one work because they emotionally connect with the rare and different shape of a piece of furniture or an objet and may never turn into a collector. Similarly, we have visitors who turn into avid collectors – but always I say only buy for the sake of love, not just investment.

Bespoke design is also a concept that the region is becoming more familiar with since the inception of the fair. All of our

designers only produce limited edition collections usually between eight and 12 pieces. But visitors are now understanding that if you see a piece and it is not quite what you want, it can be commissioned then tailor-made for an individual, a company – or even a city. For a bespoke chair or table, the cost is comparable with those in high-end furniture stores.

So what can visitors to Design Days Dubai expect in 2015? We are constantly working to bring fresh design to the fair and are delighted to be showing works by designers from Taiwan and China for the very first time. Designer Zaha Hadid will be represented three times: David Gill Galleries from UK who will bring a collection of Hadid's tables; Wiener Silber Manufactur from Austria with a regional premier of the designer's stunning silver vases and the incredible vortex light produced by Sawaya & Moroni and presented at the fair by Zumtobel. The Middle East's leading designer Nada Debs will be celebrating 10 years of her work and we're also working with the UK's Craft Council who has selected eight talented young artisans to showcase their work. We are also proud to be the launch platform for Emirati designer Aljoud Lootah who will unveil her very first collection of limited edition furniture pieces in March. For the last three years we have witnessed her path into the design world and are delighted Aljoud has chosen her hometown of Dubai to premier her work. From the United States, a great line up of three new galleries will make their Middle Eastern Debut: Todd Merrill, Chamber NYC and The NWBLK. We have also the chance to welcome for the first time Gallery FUMI, Fiona Barratt Campbell, both from the UK and Galerie Silbereis from Paris. In another regional first, Van Cleef & Arpels will bring their dazzling new collection entitled Pierres de Caractère – Variations paying homage to the dazzling colour and quality of some truly exceptional stones

New also for Design Days Dubai 2015 is the Audi Lounge, a stylish and exclusive venue where collectors can relax between seminars or enriching journeys around the many global galleries. We'll also feature The Game, a pop-up design store from Belgium offering witty and affordable design pieces for home and lifestyle for sale. During the week of the fair, the very first phase of the 21 million square foot, Dubai Design District (d3) will also open its doors. Its vision is to give those connected with all aspects of the design industry an area of the city in which to live, to work, to create surrounded by like minds. It is indeed – quite literally - concrete evidence, if it were needed, of quite how far design in this part of the world has come.

Cyril Zammit will be speaking at the Benchmark Design Entrepreneurship Forum in Kuwait on 17th January as part of Design Stories, a regional roadshow aimed at promoting design and spark discussions with designers.

أيام التصميم
**DESIGN
DAYS
DUBAI**

MARCH

16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

2015

The global hub for collectible design

Strategic partner



Sponsored by

Van Cleef & Arpels

