



CYRIL ZAMMIT

by Rana Aytug

DESIGN DAYS DUBAI FAIR DIRECTOR

Parisian-born Cyril Zammit started his career at the Institut Français in Prague, then relocating to work at the cultural department of the French embassy in London for three years. Zammit later moved to Switzerland to manage the sponsorship for Montreux Jazz Festival, and then to the international sponsorship team of UBS, where he managed the launch of the UBS Verbier Festival Youth Orchestra, and later the sponsorship of Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach. In 2005, Zammit joined HSBC Private Bank (Suisse), as marketing and communications senior manager, where he signed and managed the sponsorship of Design Miami and Design Miami/Basel until June 2009, moving on to join the cultural department of Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC), Abu Dhabi, as senior sponsorship and funding manager. Zammit was then approached by Ben Floyd, one of the co-founders of Art Dubai, to start a fair entirely dedicated to collectible and limited edition design – the first of its kind in the Middle East and South Asia, which launched as Design Days Dubai in 2011. Zammit continues to coordinate with global design galleries and to work with the renowned designers and professionals from the industry to strengthen Design Days Dubai's role as the definitive modern and contemporary design show, appealing to a broad public including design collectors, designers and architects.



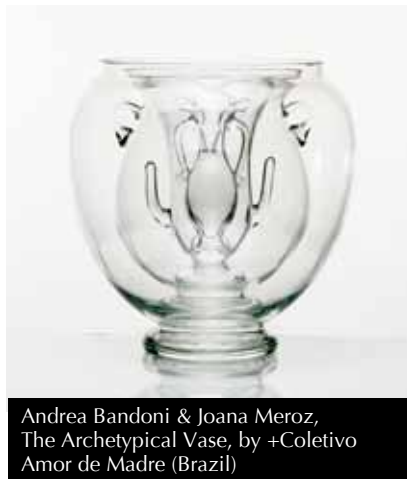
Marco Costa, Gold Folding Screen,
by Nakkash Gallery, Dubai



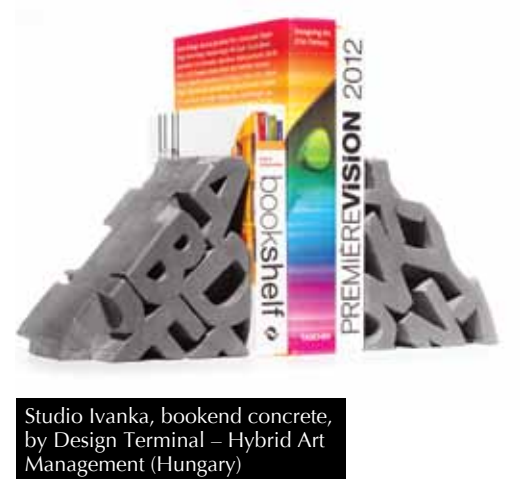
Odd Matter, Overnight Pendant, by The Crafts Council (UK)



Ottoman ATIQ by Atelier Uraiqat design studio



Andrea Bandoni & Joana Meroz, The Archetypical Vase, by +Coletivo Amor de Madre (Brazil)



Studio Ivanka, bookend concrete, by Design Terminal – Hybrid Art Management (Hungary)

An interactive platform where relationships between industry professionals, educators and designers are built and nurtured is vital for any city that envisions itself at a world-class level. As fair director of Design Days Dubai how do you feel this platform will significantly contribute to the value of design in our region?

I strongly believe in the strength of relaying information. People in the region might be acquainted with design, but don't have in-depth understanding of this niche world. A fair like Design Days Dubai shines light on the prominent design field regionally and internationally. Enthusiasts will delve into learning more about the processes, what makes an item a limited-edition collectible and how it differs from the mass production piece of furniture found elsewhere. Within this territory, you have the ability to plant the seeds

of design and let the new generation of emerging designers reinterpret the definition, resulting in a creation unique to a region or certain aesthetic. Those factors, in addition to many others, will help one understand the strength of a design piece.

How are design trends developed and what entails a timeless item?

Series of design pieces don't necessarily follow trends. Fashion design follows trends from season to season, where your closet choices change based on the whims of collections. This is where design is different; it reflects more the innate taste of a person, tells you more about their personality. Product designers could possibly follow chemical reactions to produce a colored piece, could be inspired by the natural textures of nature's giving, allowing the feel and the ability to manipulate to determine their next series. An item that doesn't

focus particularly on a passing trend, explores the use of a material differently, the ability to be used in any period of time are some elements that make an item timeless, in addition to its limited availability, of course.

Since its launch, in what ways have you concretely felt a shift in the design perspective of the audience in our region?

People are more interested in the background story, how products were created. Gallerists have noticed that visitors have a listening ear, they are interested to listen to a creative process. This alone creates, within a person, the willingness to become a collector. Another difference that has intrigued visitors is the ability to touch and feel, unlike an art piece; the more a person gets to integrate their other senses, your appreciation goes to another level. That is a great factor that played



Wendell Castle, Night Sky Stained ash with oil finish & light fittings, by Carpenters Workshop Gallery (UK/France)



Mustafa Mehdi, Table, Ms & Rose wood, by Coalesce Design Studio (Pakistan)



Tripode, Desk, Resin & Oak, by Binôme (France)



Claudio Colucci, Pentagone Lamps, by Clear Edition & Gallery (Japan)

part in expanding the public program this year to include more workshops; attendees enjoy the process of manually producing items, sparking a little passion to explore more the design side of their personality.

How would you describe the selected items on display at Design Days Dubai?

A mix of items from diverse backgrounds, creative processes, unusual materials and alternate time periods.

In your opinion how appealing is Design Days Dubai to the broad public? In what ways can such fairs bridge the gap between design enthusiasts and an appreciating public?

It provides a more diverse look at design. Prominent fairs and collectors are very well aware of mainstream contemporary design galleries. Design

Days Dubai had a mission, for its third edition, of attracting emerging galleries alongside fresh emerging designers. We give a prominent platform for galleries and their designers to enter the world. Communication and interaction are key to reducing the gap. A curious audience will speak to a gallery owner on pieces exhibited, discuss with a designer the process of creation or even attend a talk by a design professional. This year we have a lineup of great speakers including India Mahdavi, who will share her experience and how she made herself a household name in design. Only through sharing knowledge can one expand their understanding and appreciate anything in life.

When it comes to designer items, how do you view the relationship between design value and price?

Beside the value of creativity, we are often looking at hours of research, hard

craftsmanship work and, of course, production. The simplest form in design hides a complex process that a buyer needs to keep in mind when it comes considering purchasing a design creation. It is also important to project the piece in the future when you are confident about the reputation of the designers. Contemporary design creations can only gain in value. When you look at classic icons of the 20th century, they are often priced according to an international market grid (either because of auction sales or simply because of the rarity of the object). You also have to keep in mind that the piece you are buying is a limited edition or has been commissioned by you and it does top up its value.

How has Design Days Dubai fostered and shed light on young talent in the region?

Yearly collaborations and programs conducted by sponsors and exhibitors



Studio Rolf.fr Cutted Cabinet White, by Galerie Judy Straten (The Netherlands)



Naqsh Design House, Doshak, by Naqsh Design House (Jordan)



Ilhoon Roh, Ramus M1, by _Croft (South Korea)



John Vogel, Bloom, American Walnut, by Southern Guild (South Africa)

give the chance to Middle Eastern-based and Emirati designers to present their work. For the third edition of Design Days Dubai, FN Designs, a Dubai-based gallery, reinterpreted Francisco, concept of 10/100/1000, where 10 UAE-based designers create a series of 10 stools, to be sold for \$1000 at Bloomingdales Dubai, one of the venues participating in the offsite program. In its second year, Van Cleef & Arpels collaborated with Design Days Dubai exhibitor Tashkeel for an open call competition to all Middle East-based designers and artists under the title "Turning Point." The winner will exhibit their work at the Van Cleef & Arpels booth at the fair. Salem Al Mansoori, a UAE designer and the winner of last year's competition, travelled to Ecole to watch the sketch design process as well as work with precious gems.

What will be next for Design Days Dubai?

The fair has opened the door to a new appreciation for collectible design and a strong focus on high-end production. As the fair grows, we are focusing on not only bringing a strong mix of design but also developing a platform where regional talent can be associated with international renowned design galleries. We already had several success stories in the past and this year, beside Jordan, we welcome Algeria, Pakistan, China, Portugal, Hungary, Austria and Japan. Design Days Dubai is the fair of discoveries and brings a fresh new selection each year.

How successful do you feel Design Stories Amman has been?

It was such a positive session. Ending with Amman, the regional tour of Design Stories, this year has definitely been successful attracting a wider audience, including collectors and university design students. People

are showing a growing interest and collectors have now opened their eyes to a diverse definition of design. We held a discussion of the design scene in Amman with Naqsh Design House, a Design Days Dubai exhibitor, as well as Basel Uraiqat from Atelier Uraiqat; you see such great potential as well as great designs. Nurture and constant empowerment will propel any design scene. I also met Tareq Abu Ghazaleh from Voi Artis who introduced me to his amazing creations.

Following your visit to Amman, will there be Design Days Amman in the foreseeable future?

We are in discussion with Randa Jabaji at Design Institute Amman to develop regular events in Jordan. There is obviously a great interest around design and I would be delighted to share my address book to raise awareness about limited edition design. ■