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## Business | General

### Design fair eyes \$2 million in sales

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Buyers fly from US, Switzerland, Germany just to attend the event

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Image Credit: Virendra Saklani/Gulf News

Visitors admire a display called Sa'nam, a multi-functional sand carpet, made up of geometric shapes filled with sand and stitched out of camel leather at Design Days Dubai which is host to an exciting mix of galleries from around the globe, bringing together an inspiring selection of work from both emerging and established designers.

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Dubai: The latest edition of Design Days Dubai opened yesterday with hopes of generating at least \$2 million (Dh7.3 million) in sales and attracting 12,000 visitors over five days.

The fair, which is on its third year, hosts 40 exhibitors from 20 countries and 34 design galleries showcasing modern and contemporary works, from bespoke furniture to art installations. Fair organisers said the event has already attracted the interest of buyers, mostly private individuals, from as far as South America and Switzerland.

“There are more countries participating this year than a year ago, which featured 12 countries. The number of galleries has also increased from 29 last year. This only shows that the design market in the UAE is growing,” Cyril Zammit, director of Design Days Dubai, told Gulf News.

“So far, we’ve attracted a lot of interest from buyers. We have already people that we know coming specifically for the fair — from Germany, Switzerland and the United States. And I have a couple of design galleries who showed up to see the fair and they’re considering to join us next year,” Zammit said.

The fair is an ideal venue for designers to meet potential clients and for buyers to find exquisite design pieces from the Middle East region and other parts of the world. It offers a lineup of innovative works that are rarely found in exhibitions in London, Paris or Miami.

Last year’s exhibition generated at least \$2 million in sales and attracted 10,500 visitors and a number of buyers from India, Kuwait, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia,

among other countries.

“We expect to surpass or replicate that record. Having more exhibitors, as well as amazing and historical pieces, will help us achieve that,” Zammit said.

Design Days Dubai is taking place at Emaar’s custom-built location called “The Venue” in Downtown Dubai, just outside Burj Khalifa. This year’s edition features for the first time exhibitors from Austria, China, Hungary, Japan, Portugal, Algeria, Jordan and Pakistan.

More than 700 works from 145 designers are being showcased. Many of the items carry a price tag of between \$1,000 and 20,000. The event also features some works of ten UAE-based artists, and hosts discussions and workshops with world-renowned designers.

“Anybody can come, even if they don’t want to buy anything. And if they do want to buy something, visitors can speak to the designers directly and customize the item they want to have,” said Zammit.

Held under the patronage of Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, the design fair runs until March 21 and coincides with Art Dubai, an international art fair.