

MASQUERADE

APRIL / MAY 2014

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A TALE OF TRADITION
BEHIND THE LENS
CULTURAL RESILIENCE



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Slouchy'z

BY

MARYAM AL SELAICH

15

Dubai Ladies Club, Jumeira, Dubai, UAE
Tel: +971 4 4471699 Mob: +917 50 400881
mail@slouchy.com www.slouchy.com

MASTHEAD



MANAGING EDITOR
Ayman Haddad

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Elisar Sasso

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Nahda Suleiman

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Zoey Coombe

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Elie Chedid

WEB DEVELOPER
Mohammed Atalla

PUBLISHED BY
Mediastar LLC
Ontario Tower, Office 2504
Al A'amal Street
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HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING,
SALES & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Naji Haddad

ITALY & SWITZERLAND
SALES AGENT
Gea Aprile

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER
Yaman Toutounji

FOR ALL ADVERTISING QUERIES:
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EDITOR'S LETTER

In Issue 6 of Masquerade, we aimed to encourage our readers to seek culture, heritage and indeed new beginnings. In such respects we drew inspiration from the celebrated 13th-century Persian Poet, Rumi.

Today, we draw similar inspirations from the modern-day Syrian poet Adonis, who lived through the changing faces of the Yesteryear era of the Levant region. In his poem The Beginning of Speech, Adonis writes:

'The child I was came to me once. Face of a stranger!

He spoke not a word. We walked each of us glancing at the other in silence. Our steps a strange river running in between.

We were brought together by good manners and these sheets now flying in the wind then we split, a forest written by earth, watered by the seasons' change.

Child I once was, come forth...
What brings us together now, and what do we have to say?'

This issue explores our roots and rediscovers our past, in a similar way to how Adonis speaks of his inner-child who is but a stranger, but also a child. A child who has the need to usher new tides while reminding us of our glorious heritage – without it this age would not be possible and indeed forms the backbone of which today is built upon.

Our roots, indeed our cultural roots can be found flourishing within the modern-day arts, an area of today's society that has become greatly apparent and imperative to preserve, in order to hand down to following generations.

We investigate and focus more closely on the arts scene that has adorned and shaped the Middle East as a whole and explore the mystical past of this region through vivid and heartfelt accounts, derived from the Emirate's eldest and first known trades of pearl diving. The manager of the heritage zone reiterates one of their main objectives is reminding and instilling the origins of the region's beginnings, especially within the new generations who were born into modern day UAE and that such trades are curved into the fabric of this country.



The rediscovery of the region is further explored through articles that cover Art Dubai, Fashion Forward and several philanthropy pieces, which look at both the luxury companies' input and that of individual artists and pioneers in such preservation within the region. Additionally, we take you on a culinary journey that revolves around scents, as well as touch upon innovative beauty products from La Mer and The Green Bar.

Our past is our blueprint to the future; it is our DNA, the fabric that wraps around us giving us nostalgic hope and aspirations to go forth into the future. Where would we be today if it wasn't for the ages of time where humanity passed through? What is more intrinsic is that every brick of today's time and tomorrow's future is built from the foundation of yesterday.

As Adonis once said:

'They have established neither bond, nor home for their legends, but written them in the sky as the sun writes history.'

We may try to forget or remove ourselves from our heritage and past, but no matter what the passage to the future is, it will always be built on a path from the past.

Ayman Haddad
MANAGING EDITOR



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BEHIND THE MASK

AYMAN HADDAD

Ayman Haddad has been a part of the Masquerade team for the past four years and has recently took on the role of managing editor. Born and raised in the UK, he attained a BSC in Business Management. Originally from Syria, Ayman decided to move to the UAE in 2010. Having lived in the UK, Germany and Syria, Ayman has experienced a wealth of cultures and backgrounds, which has shaped his overall views.

ELISAR SASSO

The Lebanese journalist has always had a passion for writing since the early age of seven, when she had her short story published. Born and raised in the UK, she attained a BA in Journalism as well as the NCTJ Diploma from Brunel University London. Searching for a new challenge, she decided to venture to Dubai in 2013. Tackling every task with fervour, Elisar has gained valuable experience working for publications such as Gulf News, Forbes Middle East and Style News UK. Specialising in lifestyle and feature writing, she conquers each story with flair and enthusiasm, leaving no stone unturned when investigating various angles.

NAHDA SULEIMAN

Nahda Suleiman has built her niche as an arts and culture editor, working for numerous titles in the Gulf region and beyond. Her work has been published in prestigious titles such as Wallpaper*, Brownbook, The National and Time out Malaysia.

ZOEY COOMBE

Born and raised in the UK, Zoey Coombe achieved a BA in fashion journalism from the University for the Creative Arts in London. Upon completing her degree, Zoey decided to move to Dubai to pursue her journalistic aspirations. Her work has been published in various lifestyle publications in the region.

ELIE CHEDID

Born and raised in Beirut, Elie joined Academie Libanaise des Beaux Art and graduated as an advertising art director. He has gained his advertising experience from agencies such as Leo Burnett, Impact BBDO and HAVAS worldwide, handling international brands including Saks Fifth Avenue, Mercedes-Benz, Davidoff, Kenzo, Swarovski, Haagen-Dazs, Sephora and many more. Additionally, Elie has gained experience in fashion photography production while working with Lebanese photographer Tarek Moukaddem, shooting various local and international designers, look books, bridal catalogues, editorials and advertising campaigns.



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PHOTOGRAPHER *Marta lamovsek*
STYLISTS *Celia-Jane Ukwenya*
MAKE-UP *Katie Cousins*
HAIR *Razvan Tofan*
MODEL *Aga @MMG events*

SOUK

LUXE LIST

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SAINT LAURENT SAC DE JOUR

GOOD LUXE:

A CAUSE FOR CREATIVITY
PHILANTHROPIC ENDEAVOURS

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LUXE LIST

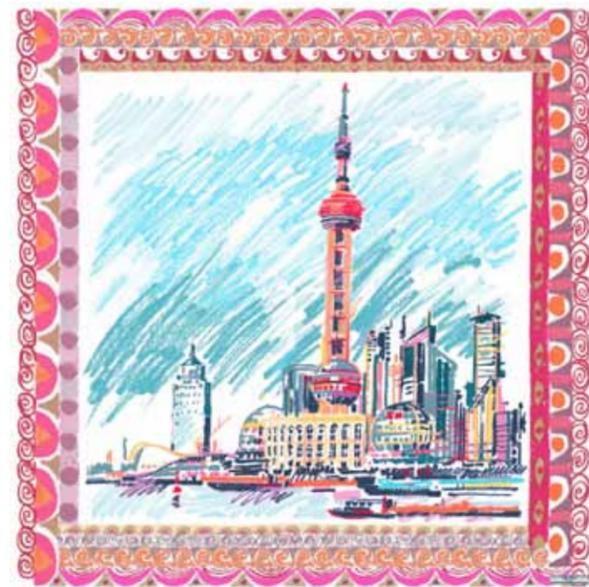
Our selection of inspiring items



By Elisar Sasso, Nahda Suleiman, Zoey Coombe

TRINITI DE CARTIER RING

An avant-garde fusion of red gold for love, white gold for friendship and yellow gold for fidelity, intertwine in harmony creating the ultimate ring by Cartier. First created in 1924 by the celebrated Louis Cartier, the Trinité de Cartier continues to be a timeless classic, with three 18-carat gold rings encompassed in 15 sparkling diamond embellishments. cartier.com



PRADA PINK SHANGHAI MOTIF FOULARD

Devoured in abstract prints and joyous spring colours, the Prada Shanghai Motif Foulard can be used as an accompanying accessory for any occasion. Whether your desire is to add some charisma to a casual plain shirt, or utilise the foulard as a colour breaker, it has the power of transforming any outfit in the simplest of ways. prada.com



ST. LAURENT LION BRACELET

Equal parts pretty and edgy, St. Laurent's Lion bracelet will add statement sparkle to your look. Expertly crafted in Italy, this gold-toned bracelet is enlivened with a black enamel and crystal-detailed lion. ysl.com



WONCHAN LEE COCA COLA LE PARFUM

The concept Coca Cola Le Parfum was developed by creative genius Wonchan Lee and features two scents, the Classique and Belle. The packaging gives consumers a new look on the iconic brand that has been designed with a minimalist approach. Maintaining the signature Coca Cola red and white aesthetic, these bottles have been given a modern and stylish renovation for perfume and fizzy drink enthusiasts worldwide. wonchanlee.com



BOCHIC CONQUISTADOR EARRINGS

New York based Bochic, is a fine jewellery brand that evokes a feeling of romance and timeless allure. The Bochic woman is defined as a liberated soul who oozes confidence, style and possesses a thrill for adventure. Creative director and designer, David Joseph and his wife Miriam Salat, have crafted a collection inspired by vintage hand-carved materials to create exquisite pieces such as these charming birdcage earrings. bochic.com

SOPHIA WEBSTER POLKA DOT SHOES

These pair of shoes that scream spring, are part of Sophia Webster's SS14 collection that is full of butterflies and bubblegum pop. Printed with polka dots and patterns inspired by bugs, the whole collection is extremely girly and fresh, with minor notes of punk and fantasy. sophiawebster.co.uk



MICHAEL KORS JULIA AVIATORS

Michael Kors has injected colour into the classic Julia aviator design by introducing this intrepid addition to the SS14 accessories collection. The sunglasses have been crafted using a rich snakeskin fabric to adorn the frames and classic gold hinges and screws to hold the product together stylishly. The lenses feature an ombre effect that begins with a vibrant yellow fading to burnt orange and finally flaming red to resemble a beautiful sunset; perfect for a season filled with summer vacations. michealkors.com



BOOK OF SYMBOLS TASCHEN

The Book of Symbols combines original and incisive essays about particular symbols with representative images from all parts of the world and all eras of history. Over 800 beautiful full-colour images come together in a unique way to convey hidden dimensions of meaning. Etymological roots, the play of opposites, paradox and shadow, the ways in which diverse cultures have engaged a symbolic image - it's all revealed inside this mystical encyclopedia. taschen.com

VALENTINO GARAVANI CHAIN SHOULDER BAG

Featuring a gold-tone block chain shoulder strap and trim, a zip fastener and an interior zip fastening pocket, this stylish and elegant bag is suitable to take you from day to night. valentino.com





CHANEL MINIATURE PLEXI CLUTCH

Inspired from the Lego toy, this clutch is made of plexiglass, which has a lambskin lining and a long chain. It first came out as part of Chanel's SS13 collection and continued onto the FW13 collection. chanel.com



VERSACE OUD ORIENTAL

A spicy and regal composition differentiates the Versace Oud Oriental from other scents, encompassing sensual flavours of orient roses, a spicy touch of saffron, heliotrope, vanilla and a refined leather-oud. Encased in a lavish gold-plated bottle, this oriental fragrance is designed for the confident and bold woman.

versace.com



DE GRISOGONO ALLEGRA BRACELET

Bursting with colour, De Grisogono has created a charming bracelet boasting vibrant colours and precious jewels - part of the Allegra collection, which is named after the eldest daughter of De Grisogono's founder. Available in shades of burnt orange and brown, the Allegra bracelet is the perfect accompaniment to that summer glow. degrisogono.com

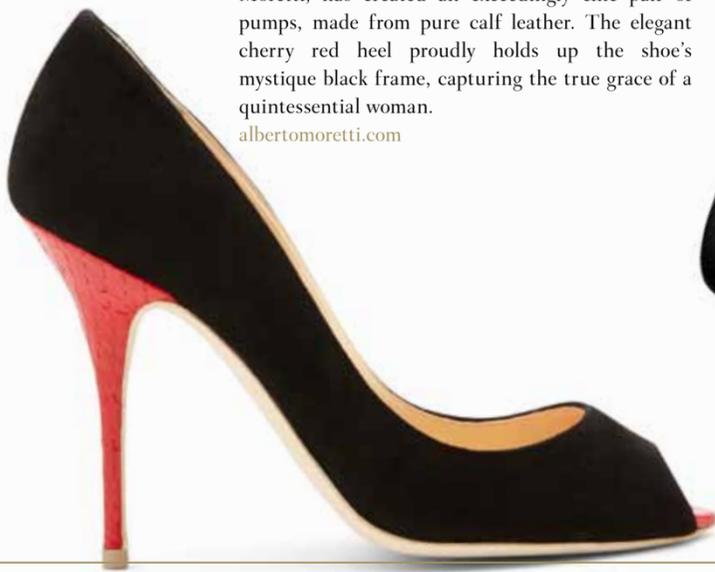


KARL LAGERFELD UNION JACK JUMPER

Following the opening of the designer's first British store last month, Lagerfeld has created a capsule range suitably named the London collection, which features Union Jack-inspired bags, purses and gloves that pay homage to the flag. Available to buy in the new boutique and other stores across Europe and Asia, the line also contains stylish ready-to-wear pieces. karl.com

ALBERTO MORETTI PUMPS

The Italian designer with the velvet heart, Alberto Moretti, has created an exceedingly chic pair of pumps, made from pure calf leather. The elegant cherry red heel proudly holds up the shoe's mystique black frame, capturing the true grace of a quintessential woman. albertomoretti.com



GRAFF BUTTERFLY WATCH

The latest addition to its classic butterfly collection, this watch consists of a stunning feminine arrangement of four pear-shaped diamonds that trace the outline of an exquisite butterfly resting on the 26mm watch face. graffdiamonds.com

THE BRENDA NEOPRENE TIGER LOAFER BY KENZO

The Brenda Neoprene Tiger Loafer by Kenzo is crafted in aqua-green neoprene techno fabric with a multi-coloured embroidered cult signature Tiger Head motif on the front. The shoes are even available for men in denim espadrilles. kenzo.com



MUST HAVE CACHE COLLECTION BY AVAKIAN

By Nahda Suleiman



The latest offering from Avakian - an independent Geneva-based jewellery house - is special in more ways than one. Inspired by a client's bespoke request for a ring that could also double as a pendant worn on a chain, the newest collection titled Cache (aptly named after the French word for hidden), is a capsule line that consists of five unique rings whose gold surfaces are covered meticulously in precious coloured gemstones that extend all the way around the inside of the ring. For an

extra touch of opulence and glamour, each of these five beauties are crowned with a magnificent marquise cut stone and surrounded by white diamonds. Ideal for that pop of dazzling colour to your outfit, the collection comes in a choice of blue sapphires, emeralds, rubies, pink sapphires, amethysts, black, white and yellow diamonds. With top quality craftsmanship, fabulous stones and smart engineering, an investment in these pieces is guaranteed to give you a bang for your buck.

ninety by ninety



Kate Toledo
LYNX SCARVES
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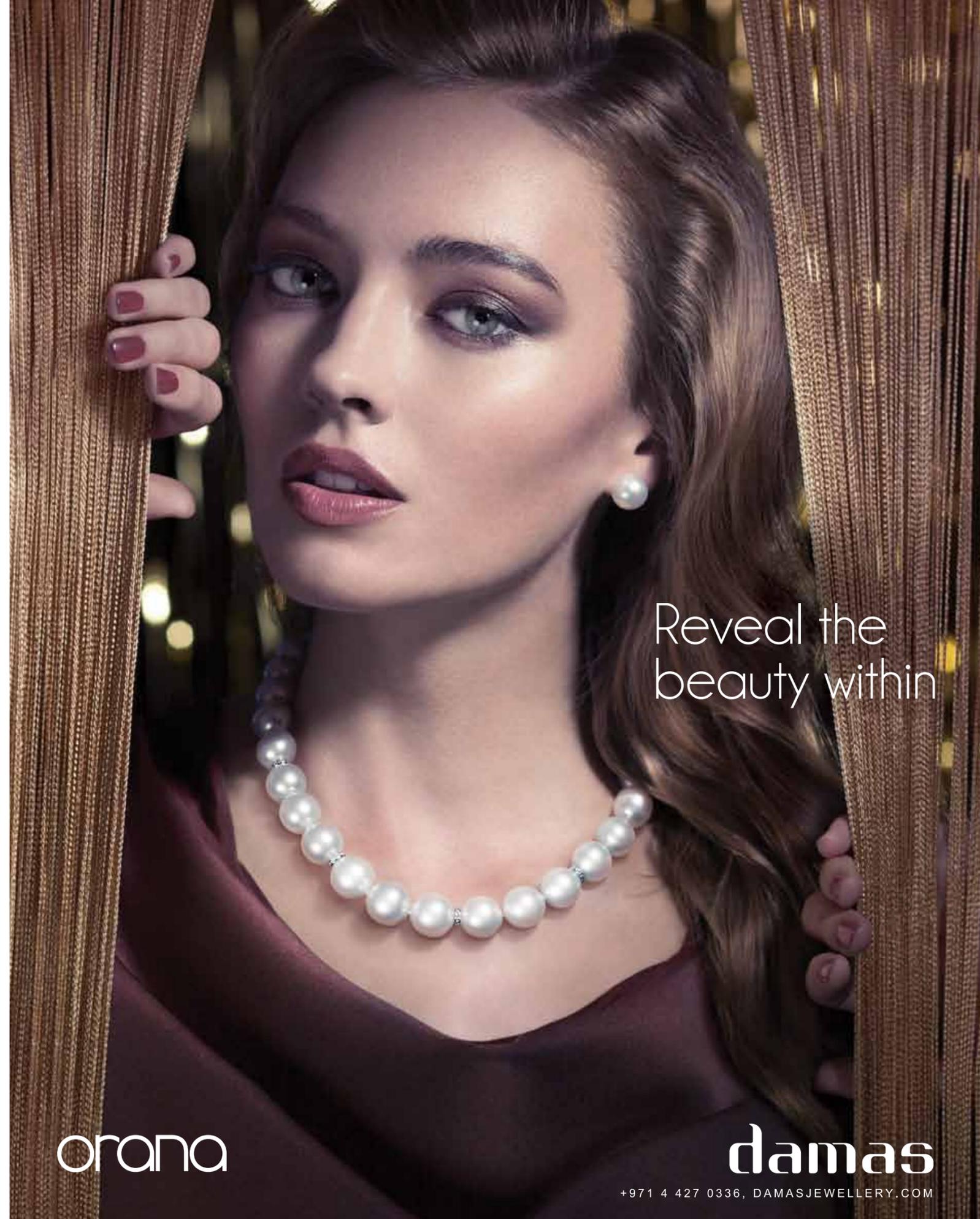
MUST HAVE

SAINT LAURENT SAC DE JOUR

By Elisar Sasso



The Sac De Jour epitomises the raw and chic style of Saint Laurent, through its classy design and signature logo embossed on the front. This timeless leather bag comes in two sizes and an array of striking colours, along with a plush suede interior. Whether you are looking for an opulent bag to carry for the evenings, or a comfortable shoulder bag for your everyday errands – this bag is a must have for this season, to suit all aspects of your active lifestyle.



Reveal the
beauty within

A CAUSE FOR CREATIVITY

By Zoey Coombe

Lebanese-born designer Mimi Shakhashir uses her love of fashion as a vehicle to benefit the lives of communities worldwide. Zoey Coombe speaks with the philanthropist about her motivation behind not only redesigning the region's most coveted wardrobes, but also supporting the lifestyles of many across the globe



As the creative force behind the self-eponymous Dubai-based brand Kaleidoscope by Mimi, Shakhashir is a fashion and interior designer who works cleverly with traditional fabrics and eye-catching patterns to create one-of-a-kind pieces. The journey of the bohemian brand began during Shakhashir's studies at ESMOD Paris, where interior design combined with fashion studies shaped her career.



Addressing the need for authenticity within the region's fashion scene, the vision behind Kaleidoscope by Mimi was fostered during the time the founder spent developing the O' de Rose brand. With an eco-friendly yet aesthetically pleasing design as her foundation, the talented Shakhashir highlights that the birth of the brand focused on creating attractive collections. 'The positive market response to Kaleidoscope by Mimi proves there is an incredible demand for looks, accessories and pieces which are exclusive and emotionally uplifting. The kaleidoscope is a lens through which we see different cultures, travel destinations and these are powerful statements that we all make via our appearance and our homes,' says the designer.



Attracting shoppers on the beachside streets of St. Tropez, on Milan's stylish shopping avenues and also within the MENA region, Kaleidoscope by Mimi blends conventional fabrics with innovative ideas to transform what she describes as 'touristic pieces' into stylish statement accessories and clothing. 'I don't compromise on quality, I am capturing an extravagant market through unique design,' explains Shakhashir.

As well as the covetable appeal that her collections offer, the designer also encourages giving back to those less fortunate by donating profits from sales to charities, along with providing opportunities for work within poverty-stricken communities around the world. One of these charities includes Food for Life Vrindavan, a humanitarian aid organisation based in Northern India.



The designer tapped into the orphaned girls' talents for embroidery and offered them a source of income by using their skills to design pouches, kaftans and even cushions. 'Success for me is defined by doing something that makes me happy and by seeing how I'm changing lives is both highly rewarding and addictive,' says the designer.

Shakhashir considers philanthropy work as a natural process and one that has been embedded in her from a young age. 'Kaleidoscope by Mimi is an emotional brand, it's a real brand affecting real people, it is not only for the purpose of showcasing humanity and making me look good but to make a real difference.'



By sourcing all textiles from tailors in Turkey, Uzbekistan, Africa and beyond, Shakhashir ensures Kaleidoscope by Mimi is both environmentally friendly and socially impactful. 'My relationship with the craftspeople is natural and so gratifying; it's not important to me to see my clothing range being popular and selling well, but to see others benefiting is what matters most,' she explains.

Also collaborating with charitable organisations such as Senses, a residential home in Dubai that works closely with children who have special needs, Shakhashir raises income for the charity through a best-selling t-shirt line that features embroideries created by the children.

As the necessity for people to give back to society continues to increase across the Middle East, Shakhashir plans to expand Kaleidoscope by Mimi and continue to raise awareness for the less fortunate. 'We cannot just co-exist with people and not be aware of their struggles. We are all human and need to contribute as much as possible. Our customers join us on a vibrant journey from the rural to the urban and back, and being a part of a great cause is what many people are keen to experience,' she concludes.

'Kaleidoscope by Mimi is an emotional brand, it affects real people, it's not to showcase humanity and make me look good but to benefit others and make a genuine difference.'

PHILANTHROPIC ENDEAVOURS

By Elisar Sasso

Elisar Sasso investigates various philanthropic initiatives by respected luxury brands



CH CAROLINA HERRERA & KHALIFA BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN FOUNDATION

'The Foundation has adopted a clear vision for offering pioneering initiatives to serve humanity and its mission abides by a holistic approach in the service of mankind.'

His Highness Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, chairman

Carolina Herrera has recently decided to plant her philanthropic roots in the Middle East, after a recent partnership with the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation. The initiative is a philanthropic endeavour founded by his Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In parallel to the opening of CH's most recent store in Galleria Al Marya Island, Abu Dhabi, towards the end of last year, this initiative aims to support vocational educational projects in the region, health needs related to malnutrition, child protection and care, and the provision of safe water on a global level. Aside from her reputation as an admired designer, Carolina Herrera also serves as an ambassador for the American Cancer Society and the Intergovernmental Institution in the fight against malnutrition.

Luxury brands are favoured within many societies, but when looking past the surface of these brands, a much deeper and more meaningful purpose emerges. Philanthropy is not merely the act of handing over a generous amount of money for charitable purposes; it is a long-term relationship where change is observed and hope is given. The word philanthropy, derived from the Greek phrase 'love of humanity', is a significant aspect of numerous luxury brands. Three such brands are Carolina Herrera, L'Oréal and Lancaster, which have collaborated with organisations such as the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation, Ethical Fashion Africa and UNESCO, to do their part to better humanity.



L'ORÉAL-UNESCO FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE AWARDS

'We are convinced that science and women bring hope and foster discovery, innovation and excellence. All the best talents must be called upon to accomplish this mission. L'Oréal believes in women, L'Oréal believes in science.'

Jean-Paul Agon, chairman and CEO of L'Oréal and chairman of L'Oréal foundation

This year's L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards has once again played a significant role in recognising inspiring female figures in the field of science. Farah Ouechtati, a Tunisian postdoctoral researcher in biotechnology, genetics and molecular biology, received this year's L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Awards fellowship, along with 14 other deserving participants. Ouechtati was honoured for contributing revolutionary solutions in science, representing a positive and influential image for women of the Arab world. Founded in 1998, the L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Awards has paid tribute to over 2,000 female scientists from over 100 countries, and continues to distinguish and support pre-eminent women in science throughout the world.



LANCASTER & ETHICAL FASHION AFRICA

'We use fashion as a vehicle out of poverty, at the same time fulfilling fashion's desire to be more fair.'

Ethical Fashion Initiative Representative

Leading beauty brand, Lancaster, has been making a mark on the global beauty industry since 1946. In 2013, a partnership was formed with the UN Ethical Fashion Initiative, to reach out to Kenyan women aiming to improve their lives. Ethical Fashion Africa - one of the flagship programmes of the International Trade Centre - is a non-profit social enterprise based in Nairobi. Through this scheme, groups of women produce high-end fashion products, which are then sent to the international luxury industry, consequently reducing the amount of poverty. In 2013, Lancaster developed the Beach Bag and the Beauty Pouch, prior to the creation of the Sun Bag in 2014. The purpose of these gifts is to promote trade of sustainable fashion for Kenyan women, who have strong desires to improve the quality of their lives.



UNMASKED

PUSHING BOUNDRIES
BEHIND THE VEIL - CROSSING CULTURES
AN INTERIOR MOTIVE
BEHIND THE LENS
CULTURAL RESILIENCE

سُفَا فِئَة

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

By Nahda Suleiman

Riding on the much-lauded success of the launch of her most recent collection, Nahda Suleiman sits down with Ingie Chalhoub to find out her secrets to success



She was at the forefront of introducing high-end luxury brands to the Middle Eastern market in the 1990s and has since then been running a hugely successful retail conglomerate for the last two decades, as president and managing director of the Dubai-based Etoile Group, which incorporates more than 50 stores in six countries across the region and represents 65 high-end labels such as Chanel, Dior and Valentino. Whilst spearheading her fashion empire, she realised that there was an inner artist in herself, waiting to be nourished, so she tapped into her talent immediately and launched her label INGIE Paris, in 2009 – specialising in prêt-a-porter.

Ingie Chalhoub is a name that fashion aficionados based in the region will instantly recognise, however thanks to the success of her line abroad; consumers in the Western market are slowly starting to bookmark her name. Chalhoub is a woman with many achievements under her fashionable belt. However, not one to be complacent, she explains that much of her success is credited to the various influences of people around her. 'Success is always a combination of having a clear vision of your goals and hard work to achieve them. I am a strong woman and I have always been putting all of my passion and efforts into a continuous flow of new challenges and sacrifices, but without the constant support of my family, from my mum in the earlier stages and my husband and

children later on, I am not sure I would have made it,' she explains with a sense of modesty and humility that is rarely ever seen in the fashion industry today.

Having just launched her latest SS14 collection, she says the inspiration behind it was taken from a 19th-century art movement called Impressionism, started by a group of Paris-based artists. 'It includes knitwear, cocktail dresses, gowns and handbags in soft pastel colours and feminine hues. I wanted to create something very romantic and graceful to flow around the body of a woman. All of the embroideries and decorations are extremely light and smooth with a large use of ton-sur-tone sequins and pearl details,' explains Chalhoub.

The elegant and sophisticated business woman-cum-fashion designer maintains that her designs are targeted at the modern-day woman, to cater to her dynamic lifestyle, playful nature and multi-faceted interests. 'I imagine the INGIE Paris woman to be sophisticated, stylish and is in a continuous research of elegant and classy outfits with an unexpected twist. If it's chic, yet comfortable knitwear ensembles for an exhibition you're looking for or a lunch with friends, glamorous cocktail dresses for a sunset gathering and dazzling gowns for red carpet events - I hope a woman could find the perfect piece for any occasion in my collections.'

For someone who has spent years sitting in the front row at fashion weeks across the world, it would seem natural to assume that Chalhoub has taken inspiration from the designers she has worked closely with over the years. If you ask her who she admires most from the industry, Chalhoub modestly replies that she does not have one particular muse.

'There are too many to choose from. I am emotionally attached to all of the ones I have been working with in my past experiences and it would not be fair to pick only one or two of them. I don't take inspiration from others but mainly from art and travels, but for sure, the painstaking attention to detail I have been experiencing with the major couture houses is the greatest heritage that I have been bringing with me in the creation of my own line.'

Observing from the sidelines, as she manages her huge corporation, overseeing more than 500 employees and running her fashion line – one would assume that Chalhoub has an enormous task at hand. So how does this power woman juggle all her roles? 'I enjoy both hats and they are both mutually beneficial. Being the president and managing director of a luxury retail group gives me the attention to the financial aspects of creation that I would not have if I was only a designer; on the other hand, a creative and intuitive approach to business and a rapidity in the decisional process are skills I developed since I started working on my own line.'



With Chalhoub's growing success in the region and beyond, she seems to serve as an inspiration for young women, having recently been given the title of Business Woman of the Year at the Elle Style Awards in Dubai, as well as being included on the CEO Middle East's list of the world's most powerful Arab women – for the fourth consecutive year. 'It is a great honour to receive these awards and titles and I am just thankful for these continuous signs of appreciation from the industry and the community in general. As a woman living and working in the Middle East, these recognitions have a stronger weight. I hope that my example of a female figure creating and managing a successful business can be inspiring to all those young women who want to start their own entrepreneurial experience and leave their print in our society that is still very much male-dominated.'

So what is Chalhoub's advice to emerging designers, wishing to break into the industry? 'To be daring and hardworking are two of the most important attributes I would pass on to any young person wanting to pursue their career in fashion. Having the confidence and strength to overcome challenges, and to constantly push the boundaries forward is extremely important in such a competitive world.'



CROSSING CULTURES

By Al Meem

Al Meem explores the obstacles and challenges she encountered before pursuing her passion to study music in the United States



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When I turned 18, my life changed forever. At the time, I was a classical pianist who lived, dreamed and breathed music. Although I excelled in business class during high school, my dream was to study music in the UK or the USA. I would be the first Bahraini to pursue a music degree abroad. I had sent audition tapes to various music schools and conservatories around the world and was accepted to several, including the Royal College of Music and the Prague Conservatory. Due to the high tuition and cost of living expenses, I was unable to accept admission at my top choice, the Royal College of Music.

As my high school graduation started looming, I started reviewing my options. My heart was set on pursuing my passion of music. On the other hand, I was faced with the prospect of potentially disappointing my parents, who were eager for me to follow the conventional path and choose a degree that was realistic and practical. I had almost given in, until one fine day, the vice-president of admissions at Murray State University (Kentucky, USA) visited the Bahrain Music Institute. He watched me rehearse some Mozart and Chopin and loved the way I played.

I was offered an academic scholarship on the spot, with the opportunity to begin my music studies in the fall of 2005. My dreams had come true, I was finally getting the chance I never thought I would be lucky to have. Then I realised, I had to convince my father to accept my decision to study and live abroad.

My mother had been supportive of my musical aspirations from the beginning, but it was a tough sell for my father who believed in pursuing business or accounting as a career. Even though my father and I disagreed for the longest time, I understood where he was coming from - music is a tough career. It can be competitive and unstable.

Studying music and studying abroad were literally two different obstacles. Although my father was very open-minded at the time, he wanted me to stay close to home. He was scared that the distance would change me and that I would abandon my culture, religion, heritage and traditions. My father feared that I would become "Americanised".

My father's other concern was that a music degree was useless and that I would have to perform in restaurants and bars. While I understood his concerns, I wanted so badly for him to see where I was coming from.

How was I to find a happy medium where I could pursue what I love and at the same time receive my father's blessing? I pleaded with him to see that my heart was set on my passion, that I'll be the first Bahraini to study music abroad and that was a big achievement, in itself. In exchange, I promised I would pick an additional major to study in university.

There were cultural challenges as well. I was ridiculed by my conservative relatives for studying music, which to them was an insignificant degree.

I was crushed. Society at the time thought music was either forbidden in our religion or just not an acceptable profession as opposed to law, medicine and business. I was faced with questions such as, 'what will you do when you come back to Bahrain? There will be no music jobs waiting for you.'



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Frustrated and angry, I almost backed down with my decision to study music and was offered a scholarship to study multimedia in the UK from the Ministry of Education. But the struggle was, should I listen to my heart or listen to everyone around me? I was confused and talked to many local musicians and colleagues, but thanks to their support, I gained the strength and will power to continue with my decision to study music in the US.

Arriving to the United States was a whirlwind experience. Although it was exciting to finally be independent and pursue my musical studies, I was very homesick during my freshman year of college. I missed my family, my country and my friends. It was difficult adjusting to a co-ed setting after being in an all-girls school my whole life.

There was a lot of (and still continues to be) misconceptions about the Middle East and I felt that it was my role to be a positive ambassador for my country and region. Although it took some time for me to adjust to my school, I was able to thrive. I was playing music that I loved, making friends and visiting new places. During my third year, I transferred to a new university that gave me a full-tuition music scholarship and numerous opportunities to grow.

Through the obstacles I encountered, I learned three things: love what you do, do what you love, and never give up on your dream.

AN INTERIOR MOTIVE

By Zoey Coombe



Photographed by: Ruta Jurkuvenaitė

By merging fine art with interior design, Loreta Bilinskaite-Monie has been transforming residential properties for many Emiratis over the past ten years. Zoey Coombe discovers what inspires the Lithuanian creative and the secrets to her ongoing success in the region



Educated at the Central Saint Martins College in London, fine artist Loreta Bilinskaite-Monie first ventured to Dubai on holiday in 2003, where she impulsively submitted her ideas for a project called the Camel Caravan. Winning a sponsorship, her concept titled Dubai Dream - a six-metre-high camel sculpture covered in 15,000-mirrored mosaics - became the foundations of her career after winning Dubai's Best Camel Award in 2003. Ever since, Bilinskaite-Monie has been commissioned to

work on many properties across the UAE, injecting charm through single artworks or by renovating an entire house, using her exclusive design philosophy as a unique selling point. Inspired by both texture and form, Bilinskaite-Monie works passionately with a range of materials including embroideries, metals and woods, to create one-off furniture pieces that combine purpose with aesthetic. 'I won't simply create a functional table with four legs. I believe that everything should be admired artistically and have a story behind its design,' she explains.



Ignoring the trends that fluctuate each season, Bilinskaite-Monie believes interior design should be visually beautiful, high quality and timeless. Fashion seasons are too short lived; I don't imagine buying into an object or concept and throwing it away,' says the designer. 'Art is an investment that you acquire and preserve; it should be inherited by future generations. It's important for people to be ecologically friendly and treasure their investments forever.'

Generally, the artist describes her work as sophisticated yet distinctive templates for modern living; she combines vintage allure and traditional prints with a contemporary aesthetic. 'The correct balance between these elements makes for an everlasting piece or renovation that leaves guests wondering which era they were crafted in,' says Bilinskaite-Monie. Comparing herself to a mirror, the designer absorbs information and reflects her client's needs through her own interpretations and based on specific lifestyles. 'I tailor-make my designs personally, I must be adaptable and considerate to those with children who are still looking for something completely unique but also safe.'

As an artist who is heavily influenced by her surroundings, Bilinskaite-Monie's creativity spawns from an eagerness to learn. 'I love exploring the Islamic world; before I moved to the UAE, geometric patterns were foreign to me. My style has evolved through a hunger to understand the Arab domain and it's beautiful,' she explains.

The Madafati exhibition, translated to Home Away From Home, was held in the Third Line Gallery last year and displayed Bilinskaite-Monie's emotional connection to the Middle Eastern culture. 'My children were born here and I'm proud they are learning to speak Arabic. I love the UAE and art is my contribution to society and my way of feeling involved and a part of it,' declares the artist.

'My children were born here and I'm proud they are learning to speak Arabic. I love the UAE, art is my contribution to society and my way of feeling involved and a part of it'

Having participated in Art Dubai during the last three years, in the near future the artist will be introducing a brand called Sketch by Loretta, consisting of collections that focus on transforming Arabic calligraphy and traditional fabrics into modern furnishings.

BEHIND THE LENS

By Elisar Sasso



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The Oscar nominated heart-rending documentary about Yemen's 2011 Friday of Dignity captures the devastating stories of victims, reliving each and every tragic moment.

Elisar Sasso speaks to director Sara Ishaq about her poignant documentary, *Karama Has No Walls*



On a trip to Yemen three years ago, Sara Ishaq had returned to her homeland to document her family life for a university project. Little did she know she was going to encounter a historic revolution that would change the course of her career.

The horrific sounds of anguish and gunshots will forever be imprinted in the minds of those who witnessed Yemen's Jumaa al-Karama, also known as the Friday of Dignity. March 18, 2011, was a day of death and despair, but also grit and fearlessness. Courageous Yemeni men and women put aside their differences and reunited in the heart of Yemen, Sanaa's Change Square, fighting for their rights and battling the common injustice of poverty and corruption.

Three years ago saw the bloodiest day in Yemen's history. Peaceful protestors had gathered for Friday prayers when pro-government snipers suddenly opened fire, shooting continuously for hours and massacring 53 protestors – three of which were children. These protests against former President Ali Abdullah Saleh were chaotic and horrific, destroying the lives of innocent men, women, old and young – a day that suffered far too much bloodshed. The only harmless weapon protecting these tranquil protestors was a fragile wall built in the space of two days.

Seeing an opportunity, courageous individuals like Ishaq immediately grab their camera and dive headfirst into the conflict, searching



eagerly for tormented sufferers to document their stories. Her motivation was to shed light and truth on these events and educate the world about the victims and their families whose lives were irrevocably crushed. Her self-funded documentary titled *Karama Has No Walls* was merely intended for YouTube, so it came as quite a surprise to Ishaq when it got nominated for this year's Oscar in the category Best Documentary Short. It is a rare occurrence for a university project to get nominated for an Oscar, especially a young woman from Yemen.

'My documentary *Karama Has No Walls* is very simple. It talks about the Friday of Dignity and the victims. I didn't mention the culprits or go into politics.



I just wanted to portray a human story for people to appreciate and relive what Yemenis had experienced and also give the victims the opportunity to tell their story,' explains Ishaq.

Based between Yemen, Edinburgh and Cairo, the 29-year-old's foray into filmmaking hasn't been a straightforward one. From filmmaker and mountain-biker, to even yoga instructor, Ishaq has ventured into most avenues. Working for broadcast organisations such as the BBC and Channel 4 encouraged Ishaq to pursue filmmaking, however the real driving force behind her activist passions was a three-month trip to Palestine. In 2009, she decided to travel to the West Bank in Palestine to film ongoing protests for her documentary about the daily lives of a large family in East Jerusalem. Hoping to spend six months there, her trip had to be cut short due to her deportation back to Edinburgh. Government officials were not pleased with her filming Palestinian families, let alone walking around freely with a camera. According to Ishaq, it was worth the trouble, as this powerful medium was what triggered her desire to document human rights stories in the Middle East.

Born in Edinburgh, Ishaq moved to Sanaa when she was two and aspired to be a human rights lawyer, until she soon realised that she was destined for a much greater path. Moving back to Edinburgh in 2001, she later went on to study an MFA in film directing in 2010-2012 at the Edinburgh College of Art, of which she received a generous scholarship for.

Karama Has No Walls is both a lament to the dead and an exploration of loss and prolonged ordeal. The 30-minute account of this heart-rending film focuses on deep-rooted personal

stories and individuals, rather than the brutality of the country's regime. In a conservative country such as Yemen, it may come as no surprise that Ishaq encountered her fair share of challenges while making the documentary. 'It was a struggle because my family were against me going out into the Square to film so I had to sneak out of the house. My grandfather wouldn't talk to me for days because of this. Especially as a woman in a society like Yemen, I had to keep a low profile and try not to get noticed. We had

'I just wanted to portray a human story for people to appreciate and relive what the Yemenis went through. You see people dying and you realise you were on the wrong side of history'

no funding or professional editing equipment, which was certainly a struggle,' says Ishaq. What distinguishes *Karama Has No Walls* from other war-related documentaries is its focus on humans being compassionate towards one another; how in true intrepidity, they put themselves in the face of danger to protect their country.

In order to convey the human struggles of Yemen from a globalised perspective, Ishaq felt that it was necessary to do so using poignant story-telling. 'Usually, so much is censored on TV. There are always restrictions because you need to think of the audience – see how much

they can cope with. Usually Arabic media are less censored therefore Yemenis are used to the violence they see on TV, whereas in the West you have to really think about how to convey events to them,' states Ishaq. The imagery in *Karama Has No Walls* certainly evokes empathy through vivid scenes, with one particular sequence showing a valiant 11-year-old boy heading out to run an errand for his mother, and returning home with both eyes blinded after being shot by a sniper.

Looking beyond the film's international recognition, Ishaq is grateful for the possibilities that have emerged for the voices of youth in Yemen. She has received numerous calls from Yemeni supporters, expressing their appreciation towards the documentary and how it has changed their perception. 'You see people dying and you realise you were on the wrong side of history,' says Ishaq. The effect this short film has had on artistic Yemeni youth has been crucial in the development of the arts scene in Yemen. Aspiring young filmmakers are contacting Ishaq showing their gratitude for motivating them to follow their creative dreams, which is significant especially in a country like Yemen that do not have an active arts scene. The country has begun to endeavor in a story of its own, with its circle of writers, photographers, designers and filmmakers liberating the arts.

Going from YouTube to Oscars is quite the accomplishment. Receiving international recognition depicts a lot about the calibre of the film and the changing perception of the Arab world, along with another three Middle Eastern films also nominated for an Oscar this year. 'My intention was never Hollywood, it's always been human rights and journalism, not the Oscars. I bumped into Leonardo DiCaprio and all of these other celebrities and you just forget you are part of it. It felt like a dream,' explains Ishaq. 'It was an honour to be there and represent Yemen, especially as a woman.'

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The attention the Middle East is receiving since the Arab Spring erupted across the region is causing a favourable effect on the Arab film industry. Developing into a global movement, people are beginning to get inspired to act beyond their societal norms. This is a promising aspect derived from an extremely negative situation.

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Despite having lived outside of Yemen for most of her adult life, Ishaq says she feels most at home in her native land. 'This is because Yemen is where I grew up – that's where my roots are. I'm constantly stimulated for ideas for films there,' she reflects.

Although faithful to her roots, Ishaq is quick to point out the joys of living in other countries. 'I love Edinburgh because I love the outdoors and also because it's provided me with a number of opportunities. Whereas in Egypt, I just feel like myself because I don't have to be completely western or completely eastern – there's an equal mix,' she continues.

Ishaq's other successful documentary, *The Mulberry House*, runs in conjunction with *Karama Has No Walls*. This humorous documentary portrays Ishaq's relationship with her Yemeni family against the backdrop of the country's revolution. Ishaq is also working as a producer and co-writer on a new Yemeni fictional film with Musa Syeed, the winner of the 2012 Sundance Audience Award for his narrative feature, *Valley of Saints*.



Now based between Egypt and Yemen as a freelance director, Ishaq continues to work towards her dream of developing her local Yemeni production house, named *Setara Films*. The recognition received for *Karama Has No Walls* has prompted Ishaq to continue to work towards raising awareness about important human-interest stories in Yemen. Through the powerful medium of art, a roaring voice was heard, ensuring that the people of Yemen would no longer be ignored.

'My plan is to open up a film academy in Yemen during the next few years, to help support and encourage aspiring Yemeni filmmakers to conquer their ambitions,' says the beaming Ishaq.

For more information visit karamahasnowalls.com



Available at O Concept, Jumeira 1, Dubai, UAE
Mob: +917 50 4780320
info@morenas.me www.morenas.me

CULTURAL RESILIENCE

By Nahda Suleiman

A global movement to rebrand the clichéd narrative of Palestine, and correct misconceptions of the place is underway – one city at a time. To find out more, Nahda Suleiman speaks to Ehab Shanti, the man at the forefront of this social campaign



In one of the most oppressed and war-torn corners of the world, the struggle to make art can be twofold when you have to cope with the harsh realities of violence and military occupation on a daily basis. However, despite these handicapped circumstances, the people of Gaza have maintained their creative aspirations and thirst for life that defies the wanton destruction associated with their land. A look at some of Palestine's influential artists such as the late Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish, Ismail Shamout and Samia Halaby, reveals a rich artistic tradition that has survived decades of conflict and contributed greatly to the cultural landscape of the Arab world.

In a bid to highlight the works of 200 Gazan artists, who are relatively unknown outside their native land, Dubai's prestigious Meydan complex was the setting for the biggest Palestinian cultural festival of its kind last month.

The event which took place over a course of a week, featured a main art show titled This is Palestine – displaying over 250 works - as well as fringe activities showcasing various aspects of Palestinian culture through design and photography exhibitions, musical performances and screenings of award-winning films. According to Ehab Shanti, the founder of the festival, such an initiative not only helps

emerging artists in conflict zones to gain market exposure, but is also part of a larger goal to change the global perspective on the realities of life in Palestine. 'It showcases an alternative image and tells a different story of the Palestinians than the one dominated by the narrative of victimhood. Not only this, the festival helps in revamping the brand of our land that emphasises positive aspects of our national achievement,' shares Shanti who has always believed in the power of the arts to bridge cultural differences.

As well as empowering these creative minds and providing them with the opportunity to develop partnerships that transcend geographical borders, the founder adds that the festival acts as a financial vehicle for artists, through which they can support their income by putting up their works for sale.

Although this is the first time such an ambitious project has taken place, the story goes back much further to 2006 when Shanti, who is Canadian but of Palestinian descent, travelled to Gaza for the first time. Working as the head of communications for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), he says he saw a 'unique opportunity to witness first-hand the real picture of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.'

'What I saw shattered any pre-conceived notions I had. The Palestinian people – despite their immense predicament of being dispossessed and facing the longest standing occupation - have found hope in the midst of despair and built a society that is bursting with colour and creativity. Yet, seldom do we see this story being told,' he laments.

Adding to his frustration was the lack of a comprehensive one-stop market place for emerging artists and designers - particularly those based in conflict zones - where their work could be viewed by the wider public, thus breaking down the barriers of communication. As such, he went on to found Alhoush.com - an online portal that offers creatives from across the Middle East and North Africa, a viable platform to display their work. Founded in 2012, and translating to courtyard, the word 'Alhoush' refers to the common space around which traditional homes are built. It is this communal concept which forms the premise of the website that now features the works of over 320 creatives. 'Alhoush.com uses viral communication and online outreach so that each artist and designer not only has their unique portal, but can market their works and earn their decent income from their productions,' explains Shanti.



According to the founder, This is Palestine is one of several events that have been held as an offline extension of Alhoush.com, in order to drive more income. The first edition of This is Gaza, held in Amman in April 2012, featured 40 Gazan painters, photographers, filmmakers and multimedia artists. Other events that followed included Colours of the Future, held in Amman and Abu Dhabi and featuring Jordanian and Emirati artists respectively.

Hailed as the most ambitious project to date, some of the highlights of This is Palestine included a comedy night by Palestinian-American comedians, Amer Zahr and Maysoon Zahid; performances by actress Najla Said, who acted out excerpts from her off-Broadway play titled Palestine; and the UAE premiere of Jordanian director Lubna Dajani's film, Jaffa – a documentary about life in that city during the 1940s.

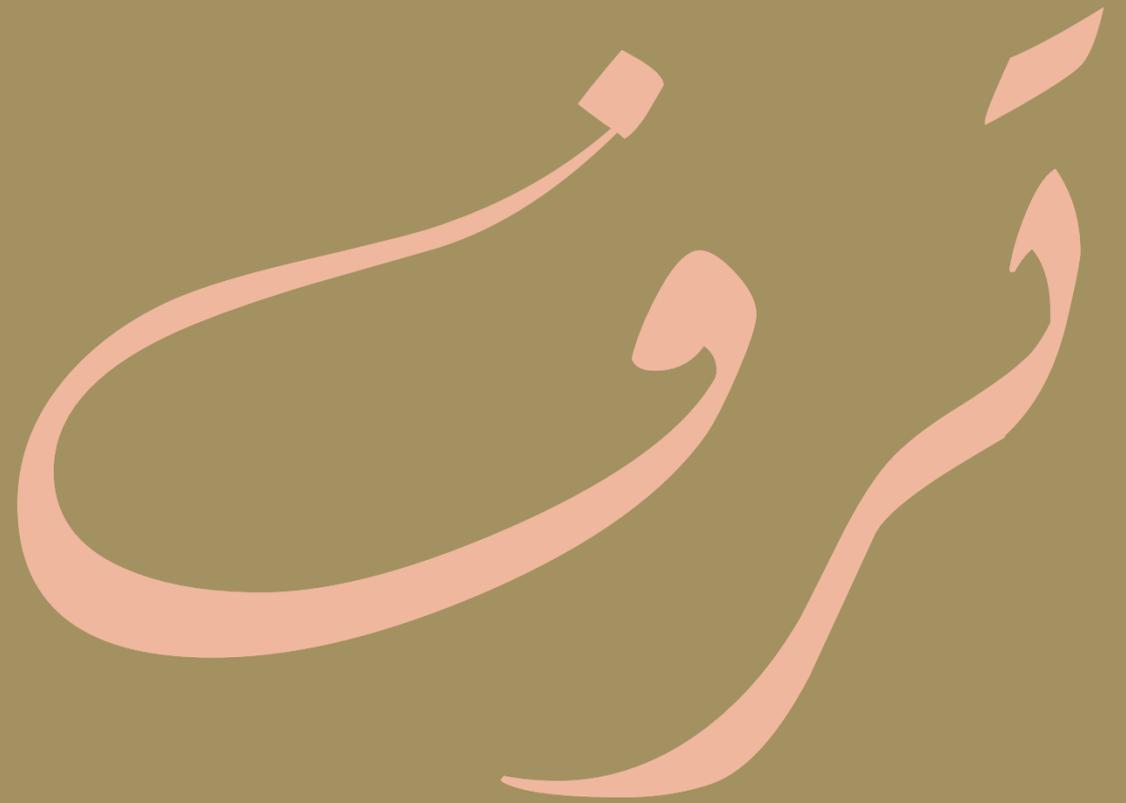
The event culminated in an unveiling of the painting Jamal al-Mahamel, one of the most celebrated works of arts in the Arab world by artist Suleiman Mansour. The original painting, which was destroyed in the 1980s, depicts a porter carrying Jerusalem on his back. Mansour says he recreated this image to represent the essence of his artistic journey over the last 50 years. 'More than any other work I have painted, this one is emblematic of my identity, my concerns, my struggles and the centrality of Jerusalem to my life,' says the artist.

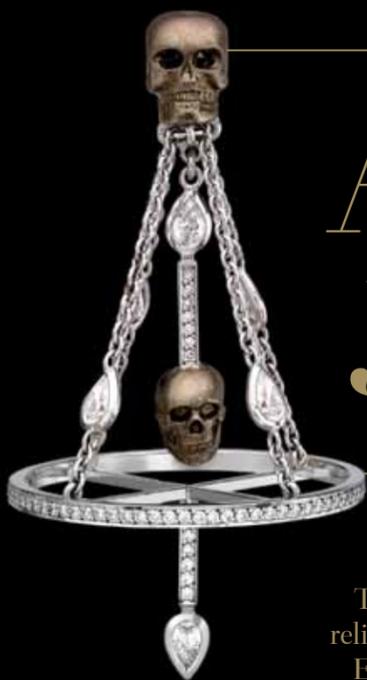
In Shanti's efforts to steer the world's attention away from the narrative of war in Palestine, while focusing on the cultural development taking place, the entrepreneur has plans on taking the festival to other cities within the region and beyond. 'There is tremendous creativity here and we should celebrate the achievements in contemporary Arab art and design. In essence, I want to use the arts to tell the story of Palestine that speaks of resilience, creativity, beauty and ultimately of love,' he smiles.



DECADENCE

ARTISTIC JEWELS
BASELWORLD:
TIMELESS SPENDOUR
OPULENT GLAMOUR





ARTISTIC JEWELS

By Elisar Sasso



Theo Fennell is one of today's premier jewellery designers, reliving heart-felt stories through each of his intricate designs. Elisar Sasso meets Fennell to learn more about his unique brand and what he has in store for this region



Women tend to never leave the house without a mirror in their handbag. In Theo Fennell's case – he won't travel anywhere without his sketchbook. Constantly observing his surroundings, Fennell absorbs the picturesque world around him and transforms the simplest of things into magnificent jewellery masterpieces. As I sat with the talented Fennell at the Damas store in Dubai Mall, I quickly learnt that there are no limits to being innovative.

Born and raised in England, Fennell has always had an artistic eye from an early age. He was educated at the prestigious Eton College, the academic home of 19 British Prime Ministers – including David Cameron. Fennell then went on to study art at York and continued his artistic passion at The Byam Shaw School of Art in London.

His road to success began at the 17th-century Dickensian silversmiths, Edward Barnard, where he worked as an apprentice designer. His core inspiration was derived from a silver champagne flute, bearing the inscription 'Good Morning, Diana,' which triggered an artistic nerve at the time. Since then, Fennell has been religiously following his belief that every piece of jewellery and silverware should tell a story and give a renewed thrill of pleasure every time it was looked at. 'There should be joy in wearing jewellery; it shouldn't be a serious business. It's not about a billion pound diamond – it's about life enhancement, it's about joy,' explains Fennell.



Beginning his career at Edward Barnard, the creative was educated to believe that making jewellery was more than simply a profession – it was a delicate form of art that portrays vivid stories. 'It taught me how important detail was; it taught me how important it was to respect the traditions and the way of making things. It was one of those art forms that wasn't solitary or self-centred. It was much more about working with a team,' says Fennell nostalgically.

Fennell's immaculate attention to detail and accuracy is one of the core reasons why he is favoured within the jewellery industry worldwide. A valued characteristic that causes the Theo Fennell brand to shine amongst others is that it is one of the very few workshops left to do its own mounting, engraving, setting and smithing – as well as using original tools over 100 years old.

Following the initial unveiling of the first Theo Fennell shop on Chelsea's Fulham Road in 1982, further stores began planting their roots around England in famous department stores such as the infamous Harrods, Selfridges and Harvey Nichols.

32 years later the company remains where it took its first steps, with the workshop situated above the Fulham Road flagship store. Today the brand is recognised globally, as a brand that often attracts the eyes of esteemed celebrities. Signature rings, earrings and necklaces have been recurrently spotted on prominent bodies such as Elton John, Cara Delevingne and Cheryl Cole. Fusing together a combination of modern design along with classical, romantic traditions is what distinguishes Fennell's jewellery from the rest.

'It is the marriage of design and craftsmanship with beautiful and rare materials that gives romance and prominence to proper jewellery and silver. I believe jewellery should really mean something and not be just a statement of wealth or fashion,' elaborates Fennell.

The possibilities are endless when it comes to Theo Fennell and his flawless, pristine designs. Each piece of jewellery is different from the last, with a focus on themes of nature, bumblebees, oceans, hummingbirds and even skulls. Fennell prefers to venture and explore a variety of themes, capturing anything that mesmerises his imagination. 'I spend my life walking around with my sketchbook...I think if you keep your eyes and ears open, your mind open especially, things will come to you.'

According to Fennell, the UAE is a cultural fusion of the Far East and west all in one location – a pivotal market for the company. 'In the Middle East, I've been really interested in how fascinated Arabs are with their arabesque patterns and designs that make up the traditions,' explains Fennell. 'They are incredibly collective and I like that.'

Fennell is currently working on an arabesque-inspired collection especially for this dynamic region. One of Fennell's latest creations is a beautifully designed ring featuring the UAE's much-treasured animal – the camel. Three camels are perched on the ring's surface, protected by a glass covering, so miniscule that they are only visible through a magnifying glass. The magnifying glass, skilfully designed and handcrafted by the Theo Fennell team, is accompanied with a chain to wear around your neck.

Like many brands, philanthropy plays a significant role. However, Fennell sees this act of kindness in a different,



more heart-warming light. Rather than helping those less fortunate by writing out a generous cheque, he would rather interact on a more personal level. 'I always believe that giving cash is one thing for anybody, but what's more important is helping with your own skills, your own knowledge, your own product,' says Fennell. The designer has utilised his exceptional talents and skills to help the BBC Children In Need Organisation by crafting limited edition bracelets, of which 30% of each sale was donated to the charity.

In the past Fennell has collaborated with the recognised Franck Muller, to design a collection of watches; one of which was the limited edition Nile watch. A more recent collaboration is between Fennell and the world's leading coloured gemstone producers, Gemfields, allowing him exclusive access to some of the world's most magnificent gem treasures.

'Real jewellery is something emotionally engaging and life-enhancing - it should make you feel quiveringly good,' says Fennell with passion and awe. His distinctive gift of taking something so simple and transforming it into a breath-taking work of art, will undoubtedly continue to influence the jewellery industry for many years to come.

For more information visit thefennell.com
Theo Fennell is available at Damas stores in Dubai, Kuwait and Qatar.



TIMELESS SPLENDOUR

By Elisar Sasso

These classic timepieces dazzled the crowd at this year's Baselworld, with its ravishing diamonds and opulent designs



BVLGARI LVCEA

A new star has been born into the Bvlgari family, paying homage to the brand's Ancient Roman and Greek inspirations. The LVCEA timepiece captures luminous femininity through its lucent purple gemstone etched into the crown, sparkling diamonds and geometrically scaled bracelet.

SWAROVSKI Crystalline Bangle Watch

Boasting 1,700 finely cut crystals, Swarovski has created yet another timeless classic, combining style with precision. The exquisite design integrates a bangle within the timepiece, captivating an alluring sparkle all around the wristlet.

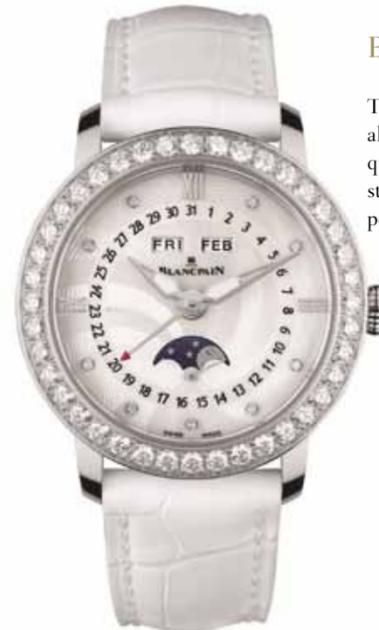


BREGUET Marie-Antoinette Dentelle

The Marie-Antoinette Dentelle watch is the ultimate timepiece for the modern quintessential woman. The dial is made from 18-carat gold, set with a frosting of 96 diamonds, along with a striking 1.30-carat ruby.

GLASHUTTE Original Pavonina

Glashutte's Pavonina collection of feminine timepieces boasts a stainless steel case, red gold hands and lugs, and a diamond topped crown. Engraved upon the mother-of-pearl coloured dial, lies an array of 98 diamonds, with the ornate crown embellished with a 0.03-carat diamond.



BLANCPAIN Quantieme Complet

This innovative timepiece not only looks exquisite, but also functions as a calendar along with a moon phase quality. Fitted with an alligator leather strap, this novel masterpiece features a mother-of-pearl set dial encrusted with diamonds.

CHOPARD Imperiale

Merging monochromatic purity with timeless chic, Chopard has recreated the classic Imperiale watch by enhancing its sculptural approach. With a matte black or white finish, an elegant leather strap and a polished bezel, the 40mm Imperiale is the definition of a luxury timepiece.



OPULENT GLAMOUR

By Nahda Suleiman

Elegant yet versatile, here's our selection of stunning jewellery creations to be worn for that special occasion



BULGARI'S Four Seasons

Celebrating the four seasons is a magnificent mini-collection by Bulgari, that consists of four necklaces, featuring a delicate and foliage-inspired motif. The leaf-shaped cut of the gems is a contemporary rebirth of the motif that is typical of the Mughal tradition. Each individual leaf of the four necklaces has been sculpted in such a way, so as to be unique, thus resulting in a final effect of beguiling spontaneity.

CHOPARD'S Green Carpet

Continuing to place sustainable development at the core of its values, Chopard has added five stunning creations to its Green Carpet collection of jewellery that was born last year, and created using fair and ethical trade as a foundation. Consisting of a ring, three pairs of earrings and a watch, all handcrafted in Chopard's workshops in Geneva, these beautiful pieces are a standing testament to the brand's marriage of superb craftsmanship and incredible artistic skills.

DE GRISOGONO'S Allegra

Elegant and striking, this latest piece from the Allegra collection is a combination of slim white gold rings and sprinkled and set with 79 green stones, to form a vibrant statement ring. This beautiful creation also comes in a choice of yellow and pink gold.



BOGH ART'S Kissing Diamonds

Rooted in tradition but looking to the future with new materials and new techniques that will do justice to the beauty of the gems they use, Bogh Art creates wearable works of jewellery. The Kissing Diamonds collection, sees jewellery being adapted in two stones of unparalleled magnificence and having them blend perfectly together, in a sophisticated technique.



EXPRESSION

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CITY STYLE GUIDE

By Elisar Sasso, Nahda Suleiman, Zoey Coombe

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHT OUTFITS

This season is all about dazzling embellishments, vibrant pastel florals and exotic tribal prints. Whichever country you decide to explore, there is an outfit to suit each occasion, climate and culture. Here, we will take you on a journey around the world to visit some of the finest cities, while dressed in the most gorgeous version of yourself. Whether you plan to go island hopping in Bali, sail away into the sunset in Istanbul, or wander through the mesmerising souks of Marrakech – step into our wardrobe and prepare to be inspired



BALI

Hopscotch in Style



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Sandals MULBERRY
 Dress MARY KATRANTZOU Available via Boutique 1
 Beach bag MICHAEL KORS
 Aviator sunglasses MICHAEL KORS

DUBAI

Fashionably Artsy



Dress CAROLINA HERRERA
 Sandals MICHAEL KORS
 Ear Studs CAROLINA HERRERA
 Leather clutch MULBERRY

RIYADH

Conservative Chic



Sandals BIONDA CASTANA Available via Boutique 1
 Gold ear studs CAROLINA HERRERA
 Statement necklace CAROLINA HERRERA
 Evening gown GEORGES HOBEIKA Available via Valley Dez
 Clutch NASHA MEKRAKSAVANICH Available via Valley Dez

MARRAKECH

A Stroll Through History



Suede Sandals ANCIENT GREEK SANDALS
 Satin Midi Skirt AQUILANO RIMONDI
 Necklace CAROLINA HERRERA
 Linen Cropped Top ISA ARFEN
 Sunglasses MICHAEL KORS
 Bag MULBERRY

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SYDNEY

Opera Obsession



Necklace & Earrings CAROLINA HERRERA
 Pumps CAROLINA HERRERA
 Jacket CAROLINA HERRERA
 Silk Dress ROSIE ASSOULIN
 Bag YVES SAINT LAURENT

ISTANBUL

Stranded in Style



Dress CAROLINA HERRERA
 Sailing Linen Slingback Pumps CHARLOTTE OLYMPIA
 Sunglasses MICHAEL KORS
 Bag MICHAEL KORS
 Hat MULBERRY

PARIS

In Love at the Louvre



Dress MULBERRY
 Shoes MAX MARA
 Bag CELINE
 Ring BOCHIC
 Glasses MICHAEL KORS

RIO

Rocking Rio



Floral Dress CH CAROLINA HERRERA
 Bikini ADRIANA DEGREAS
 Bag CELINE
 Hat MULBERRY
 Earrings PRADA
 Sunglasses CELINE
 Sandals MAX MARA



ALL EYES ON THE REGION

By Elisar Sasso

Positive attention has recently shifted towards the Middle East as prominent celebrities grace the red carpet in ravishing gowns created by none other but our own region's designers, whose influences are spreading beyond the realms of the Arab world



From patterns and fabrics, to cultural influences – the constant altering fashion world frequently introduces fresh trends that are derived from dominant fashion hubs around the globe. Each fashion capital boasts its own personalised style distinguishing cities from one another. In Dubai especially, a novel fashion capital has blossomed, not only impacting the region as a whole but also on an international scale. Some of the world's distinguished fashion designers originate

from the Middle East, momentarily influencing the world of fashion including Reem Acra, Rani Zakhem, Georges Chakra and Georges Hobeika, who have made presiding marks on the red carpet whilst enhancing this region's fashion standpoint. Recent key events in the fashion calendar such as the 71st Golden Globe Awards and the 86th Oscar Academy Awards, saw regional designers evolve into international talents, with innumerable dresses adorning the red carpet.



Rani Zakhem



Georges Chakra



Reem Acra



Georges Hobeika

GEORGES HOBEIKA

For the past 20 years, Georges Hobeika has continued to grace the fashion world with his innate talent, designing beautiful dresses that reflect the quintessential expression of a woman's true beauty. The son of a seamstress, the Lebanese designer never fails to impress his esteemed clientele with his magical imagination, intricate embroidery and immaculate tailoring.



RANI ZAKHEM

The immensely talented Beirut-born, Rani Zakhem, first discovered his undeniable passion for fashion design when living in Nairobi, Kenya. Fascinated by pulsating colours and aesthetics, Zakhem pursued his aspiration and attended the prestigious Parsons in New York, where he worked alongside renowned names such as Zuhair Murad and Patricia Underwood. His effortlessly chic designs harmonise grace to evoke a sense of sophistication and refinement.



Image Captions:

Kimberly Perry – 49th ACM Awards
 Ellie Kemper – 2014 Vanity Fair Oscar Party
 Eva Longoria – Gala
 Sarah Hyland – 71st Golden Globe Awards

Image Captions:

Kaley Cuoco – 71st Golden Globe Awards
 Maria Menounos – 2014 Screen Actors Guild Awards
 Tara Lipinski – 86th Oscar Academy Awards

REEM ACRA

The dexterous Lebanese designer, Reem Acra, epitomises global glamour with her modern yet regal designs. Following the brand's unveiling in 1997, the opulent designs swiftly took the fashion world by storm when a friend wore Acra's first bridal design to her wedding, sparking international interest for the designer. Celebrated for her ability to match a look to a woman's personality, Acra continues to dress distinguished icons such as Angelina Jolie, Beyonce Knowles, and also royal families.



Image Captions:
 Bette Midler – 86th Oscar Academy Awards
 Cristin Milioti – 86th Oscar Academy Awards
 Idina Menzel – 86th Oscar Academy Awards
 Jena Dewan Tatum – 86th Oscar Academy Awards



Image Captions:
 Constance Zimmer - Elle Women in Television Celebration 2014
 Kat Graham - Annual Make-Up Artist and Hair Stylist Guild Awards 2014
 Nathalie Emmanuel - Games of Throne Season 4 Premier 2014
 Sarah Rafferty - Elle Women in Television Celebration 2014

GEORGES CHAKRA

Epitomising the definition of glamour, Georges Chakra introduces an alluring world of glamour and charm. His fluent approach to design is seen in every treasured phenomenal dress he creates. Chakra earned his fashion degree from the Canadian Fashion Academy, and since then has been thriving. Ever since 2002, he has been presenting his highly appreciated haute-couture collections twice a year during Paris Fashion Week, constantly receiving praise. Favoured for his originality, Chakra is well known for taking risks, similar to his core inspiration, Yves Saint Laurent – and spellbound by the same mystical combination of colours and shades.



THE ART REVIVAL

By Zoey Coombe

By experimenting with the connection that art shares with fashion, designers have demonstrated their creative knowledge for SS14 by transcoding their influences across the runways of Milan, London, New York and Paris. From Picasso's cubism and ancient Italian architecture, to the psychedelic 1970s, Zoey Coombe uncovers what is motivating the creative forces this season and why imaginative fashion collections similar to artwork are being recognised for their investment appeal



PRADA

An energetic and punchy concept was revealed in Milan for SS14 as Miuccia combined tribalism with activism to display the brand's strong views on femininity and empowerment.

The backdrop was covered in bold murals that took us on a journey to Mexico and South America, created by street artists including Miles El Mac, Jeanne Detallante, Stinkfish, Mesa and Gabriel Spector, for a project named The Heart of Multitude.

Models radiated self-assurance on the runway and sported bright furs emblazoned with giant printed faces that made for an intrepid statement that spoke of pop art. Combining streetwear and sportswear with embellishments and high glamour, the highlights of the collection included simple shift dresses that are

heavily jewelled, to be worn with varsity-striped calf warmers and sandals. Small boxy handbags accompanied each look in a multitude of bold hues and exotic skins, while larger structured versions were adorned with the mural interpretations of the modern woman.

Rumours quickly spread from backstage; spray guns were used to apply the graffiti eye shadows by famed make-up artist Pat McGrath, which came in muted tones of green, yellow and lilac, whereas hair was sleek and side-parted to reinforce the notion of control.

From colour blocking and layering, to the crystal beading on bralets, the collection proved that complexity is key for this season's story and Prada told it with conviction.





CÉLINE

Influenced heavily by the Brassai photographs and vibrant graffiti found on the walls of Paris, Phoebe Philo changed the sensibilities of the Céline woman for SS14, and although she remained self-assured, she became expressive. Known for her restraint and minimalist approach, the fashion pack were pleasantly shocked by the boldness of the Céline woman this season. Philo explored the power of primary colours; vivid hues and graphic swirls of paint decorated collared shirts with oversized sleeves and round shoulders, whilst an undercurrent of athleticism was referenced with netted skirts. Lines dominated the collection and the continuous brush strokes were seen everywhere; exaggerated eyebrows created drama and pleats teased from underneath overcoats. Highlights include boxy tunics and ankle boots with silver balled heels - must-haves for devoted shoe addicts everywhere. The designer delivered sophistication with an animated collection and clever concept of colour for this seasons attire.

CHANEL

The Grand Palais was transformed again for Karl Lagerfeld's SS14 spectacle; the designer created a world infected by contemporary art and decorated the venue with 75 paintings and sculptures which celebrated the brands signature pieces, such as the camellia flower, decadent pearls and of course the sought-after fragrance Chanel No.5. The creative genius deconstructed signature tweeds and a distinctive theme evolved as models were transformed into the modern art pack, carrying their portfolios confidently. Bold green and pink paints were carefully smudged across eyelids to add further vibrancy and modernity to the collection. A striking rainbow print resembled an artist's paint palette and adorned silk slip tops, sliced up shirts and asymmetrical skirts creating a highly anticipated collection that was nothing short of a masterpiece.



DOLCE & GABBANA



Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana have explored the historical Greek roots of Sicily on many occasions and the concept didn't end for spring; the designers moved swiftly between both regal and ethereal designs to demonstrate precise craftsmanship with intricacy yet again. The collection referenced crumbling ruins, old theatres and distinctive architecture with the graphic prints seen on midi-length silk dresses and skirts. Cherry blossom florals were applied onto semi-transparent flowing dresses and earthy hues dominated the colour palette for a signature Dolce & Gabbana collection. Sleeves were flared whilst waists were nipped in

to create feminine silhouettes, as models walked confidently to the Spiando di Bagno soundtrack by Nina Rota. Paying meticulous attention to detail with accessories that exemplified Italian iconography, the duo made a dramatic declaration that spoke of Roman riches. Ancient gold coins conquered the show decorating belts, ornate headbands and elaborate necklaces, whilst gladiator sandals and carved wedges added further elaborate features to the Sicilian theme. The finale consisted of a rush of byzantine influences; ornate lace pieces and head-to-toe metallics were the climax of the show, proving that all that glitters from a past era really is gold.



KENZO

Never shy of presenting illustrious designs, Humberto Leon and Carol Lim delivered a clear message for this season; we must protect our ocean. The labels' partnership with the charity Blue Marine captured the allure of the ocean as speakers lined with water pulsed throughout the show. Sporty silhouettes and boxy jackets were highlights of the collection and created an easygoing atmosphere, whilst geometric and graphic hand-drawn fish motifs were applied to convey dynamism. The collection featured its fair share of cult buys such as the Kalifornia bag and totes that featured sailing rope, sure to attract Kenzo's loyal following. Make-up artist Aaron de May shaped a fresh appearance by using vivid white eyeliner to define the eyes against bare skin, whilst hair was slicked back and wet for high shine. As each look was revealed, the aquatic theme remained consistent; a wall of water that crashed behind each model reminded the audience of the importance of oceanic inspiration, not only in contemporary fashion, but also in global responsibility.

JEAN CHARLES LE CASTELBAJAC

By using cloth as his canvas, the Parisian designer showcased a charismatic collection that paid homage to the figurative art trend and drew inspiration from Picasso's cubism and Matisse's bold, fluid outlines for SS14. The reference was obvious and dramatic, as large scale and disproportionate portraits took centre stage for a standout aesthetic. The fusion between fine art and fashion spoke assertively and hints of Brancusi inspired drawings appeared on mini skirts and plunging neckline dresses. Presenting his explicit love for art, a real-time projection of Castelbajac's painting on a dress appeared as the final look to end the imaginative showcase. An innovative approach for this season submerged from Jean Charles Le Castelbajac and his perseverance implied that maybe it's time for other creatives to begin fostering the spirit of art.

ANTONIO MARRAS

Celebrating the idea of fragility and grace, the Sardinian designer crafted a stunning SS14 collection using a gentle metallic colour palette to evoke a romantic dream. Distorted portraits on t-shirts were paired with sheer paneled skirts, placing a modern twist on the woodland-fairy influenced line. Dramatic stripes and polka dots were incorporated into primarily monochrome looks, whilst cutout designs and patchwork prints left the crowd examining every single detail. Models wore wreath headpieces that were home to butterflies and make-up appeared effortless; a pop of fuchsia pink lip mixed with a subtle emerald eye adhered to the terrestrial tone that ran through the showcase. Femininity reigned in Paris, as an array of delicate fabrics such as lace, silk and floral appliqué on tulle, made for an elegant and technically precise interpretation.

MIU MIU

An optimistic, 1970s-inspired collection closed the fashion week in Paris with texturally rich fabrics as fringing, embroidery, pastel-coloured PVC and leather fabrics took the runway by storm to the sounds of psychedelic pop music. Glass bottle chandeliers and childlike animal wallpaper decorated the Palais d'Lena for Miuccia's interpretation of 'classic' spring wear silhouettes that oozed sophistication. The designer presented characteristically inventive suede jackets that were adorned with vibrant floral and kitsch fish prints for her vintage vision. Navigating cleverly between shapes, colour and print, the line also had its futuristic accents; Miuccia paid attention to detail with angular sci-fi sunglasses that contrasted with the classic Mary Jane platforms and knitted tights they were paired with.

OMAN MEETS WEST

By Elisar Sasso

Omani sisters Lubna and Nadia Zakwani demonstrate how traditional Arab fashion can take a leap forward whilst staying true to cultural norms. Elisar Sasso learns more about the Endamage brand



woman, which is reflected in the cuts of our clothes,' explains the striking Lubna.

Lubna, the creative mind behind the brand, has always had an eye for fashion. During her adolescent years, she would often spend her spare time designing clothes for her mother and sisters, hoping that one day her side hobby would turn into a profitable career. After a brief stint in the UK studying psychology, Lubna realised that her passion for design was too powerful to ignore. As such, she embarked

on a study course at ESMOD Dubai, and upon completion, she teamed up with her sister Nadia to launch Endamage. Forming a strong partnership, Lubna handles the creative aspect of the business, whilst Nadia takes charge of marketing.

With Oman being home to some of the most diligently preserved traditional architecture in the region, the Zakwani sisters sought out to incorporate elements of this aesthetic into their designs – a nod to their native land's past. 'I always try to bring in our rich Omani roots because I think our country has so many hidden treasures that are waiting to be discovered,' shares Lubna.

Centralised around an elegant Arabesque style, Lubna's delicate hand-stitched embroidery reminiscent of old Omani patterns, varied laser cutting techniques, the use of fabrics such as an unusually thin velvet derived from the corners of Salalah, flowing chiffons, pure silks and colourful beads make up the brand's designs. The collections range from ravishing evening gowns and elegant abayas, to stylish ready-to-



wear outfits. Some are poised and sophisticated whereas others more feisty with hard-hitting embellishments such as studs and spikes. Not quite sure how their designs would be received within the conventional Omani society, they participated in last year's edition of Muscat Fashion Week for the first time, and were taken aback by the public's reaction. 'I was very surprised that people actually accepted our designs because Oman is hugely conservative; people shy away from experimenting with new materials and unusual designs,' elaborates Lubna.

According to the creative designer, there is a lack of platforms for emerging local talent in the region. 'There are so many talents coming up every day and they need more initiatives like Fashion Forward but in different cities such as Qatar and Kuwait,' she says.

Inspired by the forts in Oman, Endamage's new Autumn/Winter collection revolves around frosty colours and patterns, shifting away from the tedious blacks and browns. In addition to the two main annual collections, Endamage also produces various limited

edition collections during the year, in line with significant occasions such as Eid.

So what is Lubna's advice to emerging Omani designers? 'I would say that it's important to break out of your shell, and explore the region to understand the gaps in the market.'

'We want to prove ourselves first and be respected as regional designers before going international'

this, saying, 'I'd like to build a stable platform before we go international. I want us to prove ourselves first and be respected as regional designers. To me it's important that we are respected first and foremost, before gaining recognition.'



With their clothes currently being stocked in independent boutiques in Oman, Sauce in Dubai and D'NA in Saudi Arabia – the brand has begun to receive international recognition. Fashion capitals such as London and New York have been keen for Endamage to participate in their fashion weeks. However, Lubna seems unfazed by

For more information visit endamage.com



NAFS DESIGNS

By Elisar Sasso

From protecting Bedouin women to an international fashion trend – the evolution of the abaya has momentarily developed over time. Elisar Sasso meets Fatma Al Taher, creative designer of NAFS Designs, to learn more about her brand and the ever-changing garment



Four Emirati sisters have added a pinch of glamour along with a handful of chic to the conventional Middle Eastern abaya, attracting women from all over the globe. Whilst maintaining the traditions of the region as well as incorporating Western flair, NAFS offers stylish abayas at attractive prices. NAFS, standing for Noora, Aaliyah, Fatma and Sara, is the modish brainchild of the Al Taher sisters who spent their academic lives on the wrong path. Studying majors such as political science and aviation, their aspirations for fashion soon took over and became a reality.

Today, the Al Taher sisters have managed to build a flourishing abaya empire based solely on their strong passion and knowledgeable experience. With no prior academic background related to the industry, these four sisters are inspiring examples that anything is possible when you are committed.

Their fashion journey began two years ago when NAFS was created, where they used to sell abayas from their own home. Now, they have blossomed into budding fashion designers with their online store frequently receiving requests from countries within the region and beyond. 'We are planning to take some fashion courses in order to be more experienced and

knowledgeable in the field. We have developed a lot and over time you realise what good quality really is,' explains Fatma.

The sisters analyse seasonal trends fresh off the catwalk and incorporate them into their abayas. Designs spotted on trending jackets, trousers or dresses are taken and reinvented into the abaya. Brands such as Chanel and Dior have influenced NAFS; through their distinctive use of colours, patterns and intricate embroidery techniques. What distinguishes NAFS from other abaya designers is rather than having one creative mind, it has four – all differing in tastes and perceptions. They each possess their own particular style, noting that 'each of us have different preferences. We combine different aspects into each design to make them unique,' says Fatma.

When exploring the evolution of abayas, a great deal has changed since they were first introduced to the Muslim society decades ago. In fact, their solitary purpose is not considered to be merely for Islamic reasons anymore. They are seen on the bodies of women nationalities from across the globe, promoting the Arab culture positively through elegant and respectful fashion. 'We gave the wife of footballer Ricardo Kaká, Caroline



'I think celebrities who wear abayas in the right way create a positive image for the Arab world'



Celico, one of our abayas to wear to the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi,' says the beaming Fatma. 'I think celebrities who wear abayas in the right way create a positive image for the Arab world.'

Starting out as a piece of clothing to protect Bedouin women from the scorching heat of the desert, the abaya has evolved into an item that is coveted by many around the world.

Today, abayas are coated with embroidery, sequins, lace, ruffles and bright colours, transforming the customary designs into more of a fashion statement. These influences are derived from different seasonal styles, architectural elements and western couture. Annually, NAFS produce three to four seasonal collections, including around 30 exclusive pieces. Each collection comprises of abayas, ready-to-wear, evening dresses and even elegant kaftans for the holy month of Ramadan. 'We use royal nida for everyday abayas and then organza for wedding pieces,' says Fatma. 'Currently we get all of our fabrics from Dubai but my sisters are going to India soon to explore different fabrics and textures there to bring back with them.'

In a world that is ever-changing in terms of fashion trends, it is quite a challenge to keep up with these evolving times. According to Fatma, abayas will always remain at the heart of the Middle Eastern fashion core, continuing to uphold regional traditions and offer a stylish form of modesty for the quintessential Arab woman. 'It has to come from the heart – not just focusing on selling but focusing on the passion,' she says.

For online purchases visit nafsdesigns.blogspot.ae

Prices range from AED700-1800

A FASHIONABLE STEP FORWARD

By Elisar Sasso

Fashion Forward Season three glorified the Middle East once again, introducing sensational fresh talent whilst also welcoming former faces. This definitive platform stunned the crowd with its awe-inspiring catwalks and extensive panel discussions led by global industry experts



Lamia Asudari



Rami Kadi

The most anticipated fashion event in Dubai returned for its third season at Madinat Jumeirah, introducing a fresh selection of accomplished designers from the region. Upholding its reputation as being the definitive platform for emerging designers in the Middle East, Fashion Forward (FFWD) continues to set new trends, whilst also reviving old ones. FFWD recently partnered up with the Dh4 billion-project Dubai Design District (d3), hoping together they can escalate the flourishing fashion industry in the Middle East.

From the 10th-13th April, the four-day event welcomed designers, celebrities and press from all over the globe, to witness designers showcase their unprecedented collections. With a line-up of 18 fashion designers from all over the region, the memorable show unveiled a vigorous mix of cultures and styles.

Two new influential designers, Lebanese Rami Kadi and Saudi-British Lamia Asudari, sincerely left audiences in awe after showcasing their latest collections on the runway.



LAMIA ASUDARI

Unique elements of masculine shirting, feminine silhouettes and geometric digital prints are all inimitable attributes of the London-based designer's label, distinguishing Asudari from the rest. The Saudi-born designer obtained a BA in Fashion Print from the reputable Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, whilst working under the esteemed Alexander McQueen. Prior to this, she attained experience in pattern cutting from the London College of Fashion. Her intricate attention to detail and emotionally driven handcrafted prints are what lies at the heart of the Asudari brand, ensuring that each piece she produces is unconventional. 'Designing is my way of expressing my emotions and thought process. Like an artist uses his canvas – I see the fabric as my canvas,' explains Asudari.

Starting out by designing and making outfits for her Barbie dolls, to launching her fashion label Asudari in 2007, the designer has continued to maintain her philosophy of integrating various cultures and combining these opposite worlds into a 'harmonic fusion.' 'I like to use subjects that are conflicting and juxtaposing,' she says. Asudari's passion for kaleidoscopic colours is evident in her AW14 collection, which showcased at Fashion Forward this season.

The collection named 'Bullet Time,' comprises fresh shades of blue hues such as pale ice, deep sapphire and midnight, along with key themes such as weaponry, artillery and explosions - epitomising Asudari's innovation and confidence. Dresses and jackets covered in sketches of pistols, hand grenades and machine guns symbolise Asudari's interest in taking risks and being bold. 'My obsession with guns and hand grenades started when I saw a picture on the

Internet about Pakistan. I find it fascinating that we live in a world that is obsessed with warfare. I wanted to challenge that thought,' she elaborates. The core of the theme lies within the finely detailed Exagun print, a geometric hexagonal pattern, which appears on a breathtaking jacket featuring hand-beaded revolvers surrounding both shoulders. Emphasising the daring theme, Asudari has also focused around prints that recollect the luminescence of firework blasts. This is done through miniscule hand-embroidered paillettes along with hand-stitched perspex fragments. 'Bullet time can be a type of cinematography where you get caught in a slow motion movement like the matrix. Through merging together elements of fireworks and explosions, I wanted to break barriers and create a print called firing canon,' explains Asudari.

For more information visit asudari.com
Asudari can be found at Maison Bo-M, Harvey Nichols in Riyadh and online at notjustalabel.com



RAMI KADI



Elegance and gracefulness are two of many qualities apparent in the exceedingly glamorous clothing line by the gifted Rami Kadi, boasting flowing silks and intricate finishes. Focusing on couture rather than ready-to-wear, Kadi intends to design dresses to make a woman feel royal and grand – ready for the red carpet. ‘I like my dresses to be worn inside out. The lining should be that perfect,’ he says with a smile.

Born in the USA and raised in Lebanon, Kadi graduated from the reputable fashion design school, ESMOD Beirut in 2008, later gaining valuable experience working under celebrated Lebanese designers such as Rabih Kayrouz and Georges Chakra. In 2008, he was singled out by the Starch Foundation, which promotes ambitious fashion graduates, to unveil his first two collections. ‘Sometimes I take my glasses off and see blurred objects, I will start to imagine they are not real – this is inspiration to me. Inspiration is everywhere, everyone has different perspectives,’ elaborates Kadi.

His magnifying attention to opulent hand-made sensations along with his flawless craftsmanship attracted an enormous audience at this year’s FFWD, where his new collection, Le Royaume Enchanté, transported the entire audience into a fairytale. ‘The new collection is about a classy and modern lady who wakes up in a castle, similar to Sleeping Beauty. It resembles a fairytale and we wanted to engage with the audience therefore we created a storybook for each audience member,’ explains Kadi. His extravagant dresses were covered in pastel colours and encompassed spring flowers;

the new Kadi collection offers the perfect dress for any enchanting occasion.

Still at the prosperous beginning of his career, aged only 27, Kadi opened his first flagship boutique and atelier in Beirut, where he showcases his couture, bridal and accessories collections. ‘Fashion is my life. Even my dreams are related to fashion. I always leave a small sketchbook next to my bed, so that when I visualise something in my dream, I immediately wake up to draw it,’ ends Kadi.

For more information visit rami-kadi.com



ILLUSION OF THE PEARL

By Nahda Suleiman

Khalid Shafar, an established name on the UAE design circuit, shares how he aims to preserve his heritage, by translating his childhood memories into contemporary furniture.

Nahda Suleiman reports



the beauty of their environment. In my work, I take the beautiful side of things around me, and translate them into my objects,' shares Shafar.

For the third edition of Design Days Dubai (DDD), the region's leading design fair which took place this March, Shafar collaborated with the Lebanese-based Carwan Gallery for the second year in a row, to showcase his ILLUSION seat made out of pearls, and inspired by the city of Dubai. His inspiration for this project was drawn from the pearling activities of his ancestors; an Emirati custom that dates back to around 7000 years and was a great source of wealth for the United Arab Emirates and its neighbouring Gulf countries. During the summer, fishermen would head to the sea and stay there for months, in order to access offshore oyster beds. An activity that required a huge communal effort, as well as the ability to dive to huge depths with very little equipment, pearl trade has been woven into the country's rich heritage.

The ILLUSION pearl seat was created using 8000 cultured pearls, formed into ninety metres of chain and woven around the timber frame of the chair. 'The project came after my discovery of an Emirati Company called RAK pearls which is specialised in locally cultured pearls. I was fascinated with this discovery and the company's production of pearls. I thought it's another local material that I can expose in a design object. I created the link between Pearls and my city Dubai and ILLUSION was a line I created inspired by these two elements,'

explains Shafar, who studied furniture and objects design at the Centre for Fine Woodworking in Nelson, New Zealand.

According to the designer, the line was named ILLUSION due to the 'linear weaving that represents motion and speed,' captured in a snapshot of the city highway at night.

During the four-day event and as part of Shafar's exhibit, a pearling expert demonstrated the process of extracting pearls as well as showcased the various types found in oysters.

Shafar, who is quite possibly one of the very few professional Emirati product designers, believes the local design scene is still in its nascent stage, and it's not so hard to see why, when Shafar points to the lack of production facilities available in the Emirates for working designers. 'There are no strong manufacturing and supply chains that cater to individual designers and artists, so it's difficult to move from the conceptual stage as it's not possible for ideas to be prototyped and manufactured. Also, the cultural barriers make it tricky for some male designers, in particular, to express themselves and their passion to design.'

Despite these constraints, Shafar highlights the growth that Dubai has witnessed in the field of design, over the last few years. 'The scene is growing much faster here, compared to other countries in the Gulf region. In the course of two years, we have seen the launching of two design fairs, a design and fashion council was established and a dedicated design district has been announced,' the designer enthuses.



Shafar is truly flying the flag for Emirati design with his impressive resumé boasting exhibition showcases in Berlin and Tokyo, including a residency in Barcelona and London – a collaboration between the Dubai-based design hub Tashkeel and the Creative Dialogue Association in Spain – aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue. In 2012, Shafar opened his showroom, KASA, in Dubai's Ras al Khor district to showcase Emirati-designed objects, and offer 'designers, collectors and researchers, with a unique perspective of the aesthetics of UAE design, while shedding light on the influences of local crafts.' Most recently, he helped design the interiors of a contemporary Emirati dining café. On his future plans, Shafar says, 'I look forward to strengthening and widening the awareness and recognition of the brand by focusing on international collaborations and exposure.'

Design Days Dubai

The brainchild of Cyril Zammit, the third edition of DDD saw a total of 34 galleries from 20 different countries taking part, including newcomers such as Algeria, Pakistan and China. Now in its third year, the prestigious fair has established itself as a meeting point for regional and international buyers and collectors interested in contemporary design.

FASHION

FLORAL HEAVEN
MYSTICAL SHADOWS

موضة

FLORAL HEAVEN

Amidst the breaking dawn of innocence, we
spring into a brand new season and celebrate fresh
beginnings. A mix of blooming flowers, soft pastels
and vivid brights create a colourful equilibrium



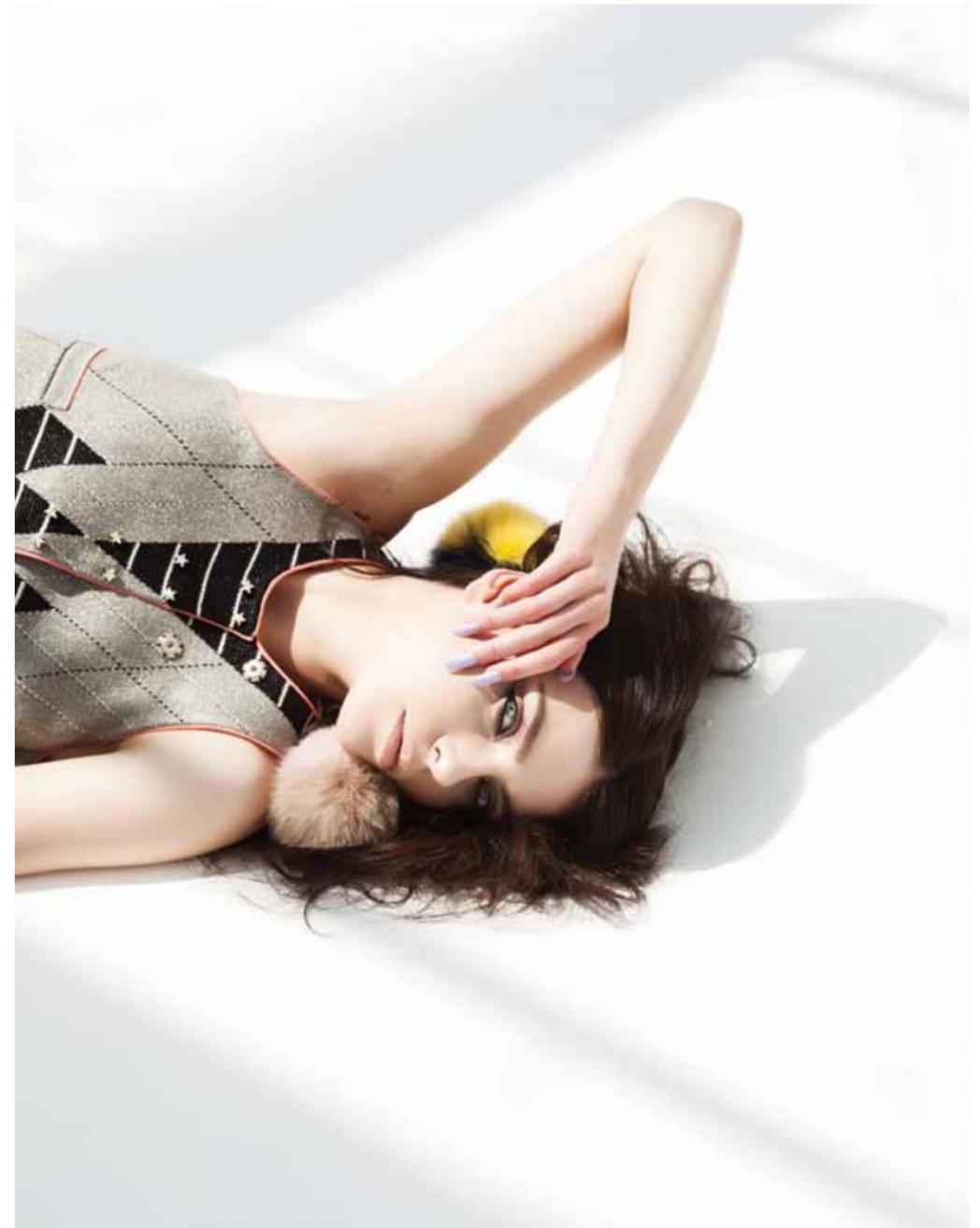
PHOTOGRAPHER *Marta lamovsek*
STYLISTS *Celia-Jane Ukwenya*
MAKE-UP *Katie Cousins*
HAIR *Razvan Tofan*
MODEL *Aga @MMG events*

Dress by SALVATORE FERRAGAMO
Bag by FENDI
Shoes by VERSACE





Necklace, Dress by
SAINT LAURENT BY HEDI SLIMANE
Ring BY FENDI



Top and Skirt by SONIA RYKIEL
Keyrings by FENDI





Jumpsuit by MISSONI
 Necklace by SAINT LAURENT BY
 HEDI SLIMANE



Dress by FENDI
 Bag by SAINT LAURENT
 BY HEDI SLIMANE









MYSTICAL SHADOWS

Refined elegance, mysterious shades and striking leathers come together to create a world, filled with opulent darkness. Edging through the illuminating light and shadows, reveals an intense tale of glamour and simplicity



PHOTOGRAPHER *Marta lamovsek*
STYLISTS *Celia-Jane Ukwenya*
MAKE-UP *Rimmel by Katie Cousins*
HAIR *Razvan Tofan*
MODEL *Maja@MMG events*





Dress by VERSACE
Jacket by FENDI



Jumpsuit by SAINT LAURENT
BY HEDI SLIMANE
Bag by GUCCI





Shirt and Skirt by LANVIN
Bag by FENDI









SURRENDER

THE NEW SILHOUETTE

BEAUTY BAZAAR

RAISING THE GREEN BAR

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE

خفصوه

THE NEW SILHOUETTE

By Zoey Coombe

Drawing inspiration from the shape creation trend that is permeating the skincare industry, La Mer introduces the new Lifting Contour Serum to the Middle Eastern market. Zoey Coombe meets with the brand's skincare expert, Sarantis Tsimilimis, to discover how La Mer continues to revolutionise the beauty industry and meet the needs of the modern consumer



Born and raised in Greece, Sarantis Tsimilimis, La Mer's skincare expert and education manager, is a man who upon meeting exudes endless enthusiasm towards the importance of healthy skin and describes his job as both 'stimulating and exciting'. From an early age, Tsimilimis became fascinated with the beauty magazines that his grandmother would read and began subconsciously cultivating ideas that would later provide him with the wealth of knowledge required to join an ultimate authority in premium and luxury skincare. Continuously impressed by the science and philosophy of the brand and transformative results that their products offer, Tsimilimis begins by explaining the journey that brought La Mer's latest product to conception. 'Shortly after joining La Mer in 2008, the journey of the Lifting Contour Serum began with the assistance of our loyal customer following, who advised they needed a product that could increase the volume and plumpness of the skin and therefore improve the loss of firmness.' For La Mer it was surprising, for what felt like the first time women were saying they weren't fazed by small lines and wrinkles, but were unhappy that their skin was losing its structure and integrity. Taking on board consumer feedback and adopting inspiration from external industry trends, La Mer noticed that shape creation - the ability for people to completely control the way they look or even behave, whether it be a clothing design that re-moulds the silhouette of the body or the advancing designs of mobile phones that improves the ease of usage - had transcended into the beauty industry and demands for applicable products arose. With women now looking younger than ever there are always new demands. 'We live in superficial societies and in a generation where people are proven to live much longer, and the advances in research and technology now means that the 1940s is the new 1920s, so the stereotypical ideal of a 60-year-old woman has transformed,' explains Tsimilimis.

The trend started in Korea, where women were taking drastic measures looking to cosmetic surgery to break their face shape and scrape back jaw lines in order to obtain the desired heart-shaped silhouette. The craze quickly moved to Japan, China and eventually the rest of the world. Consequently, La Mer began to develop what is now The Lifting Contour Serum, which promises to re-sculpt the face's three-dimensional look and improve contours by shaping and defining the face and neck using natural active ingredients.

'We wanted to be the first brand that created a serum capable of dramatically changing the facial contours and redefining faces that are really losing firmness and shape,' explains Tsimilimis. 'In order to contour the skin, you need to improve density, dimension and definition. If you impact on density, skin produces more collagen and elastins build, creating a strong base for the skin overall.' La Mer heavily researched the key actives required to transform the skin in such an intense way by looking back at the famous cell-renewing Miracle Broth, which infuses skin cells with healing energies and promotes natural skin renewal and repair, an important base for the creation of such a product. 'When we try to create new products we try to go back to the heart and DNA of the brand,' advises Tsimilimis. 'We went back to the Miracle Broth because there are four vital benefits of using the product such as intense hydration, radiance, soothing and renewal.'

La Mer continued clinical research in seek of another ferment that would help leverage the energy from the Miracle Broth to create a much more pronounced shape and definition in the skin. 'We scoured the world for the next marine plant and found a perennial brown algae off the coast of France. When you expose old cells to this brown algae they use the energy to start repairing themselves in a much more intense way and cells were living longer as a result.'

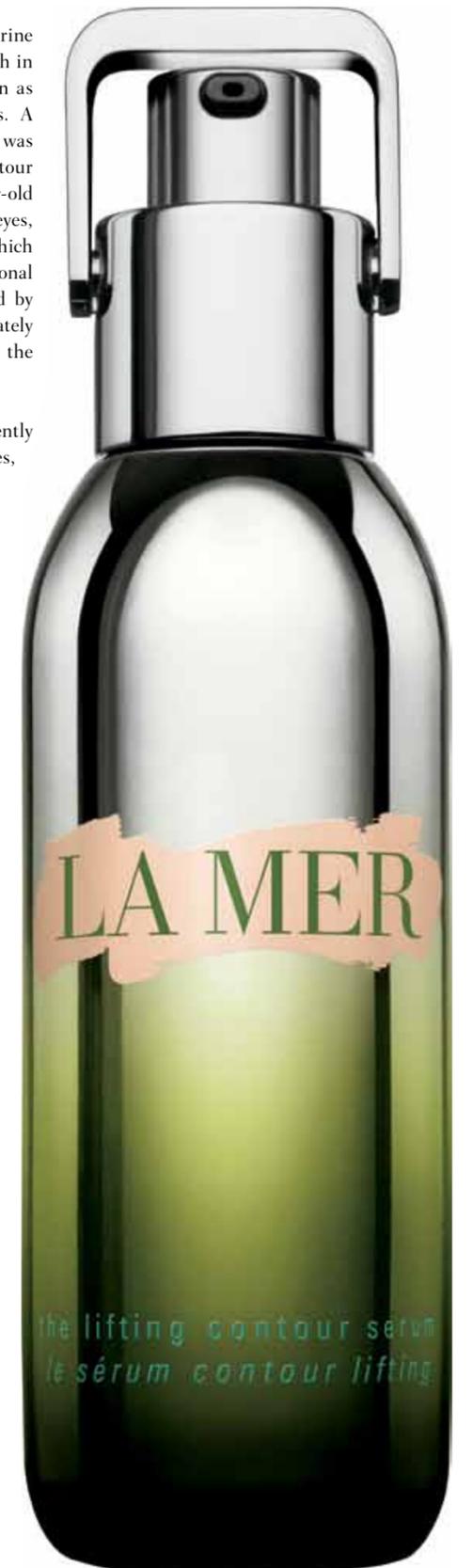
The type of algae incorporated into the product is already used in the medicinal industry in France and is considered a super food in Japan; women actually consume the algae as results proved it made their hair thicker and more shiny whilst making their skin more luminous. 'We've harvested this brown algae and extracted the active

ingredients and combined them with marine peptide and blue algae which is very rich in copper and great for producing collagen as a natural reaction,' reveals Tsimilimis. A significant improvement in the jaw area was noticed after four weeks use of the Contour Lifting Serum on the skin of a 62-year-old across the problematic areas such as the eyes, cheekbone, jaw line and neck area, which are prone to damage due to gravitational force. 'The texture has been described by consumers as addictive and you immediately want to smother your face in it,' claims the skin expert.

As an individual who travels frequently and has been exposed to many cultures, Tsimilimis truly understands the skincare need of men and women worldwide and the Middle East in particular. 'You gain a real insight into lifestyles and cultures, and get a glimpse of how La Mer fits within their lives along with the consistencies and differences between people,' he explains. 'Women in this region strive for the best in life and we see the products as an extension of their lifestyle. I believe our growth thus far is due to personal recommendations, there's a great synergy between the culture here and the brands beliefs.'

For the future, La Mer believes that their consumers' loyalty towards the brand will continue to inspire new products. 'It sounds like a cliché but we really do listen to the skincare needs of men and women everywhere,' says Tsimilimis. 'We have a real understanding of what's missing from listening to our clients and we love finding ways that we can always deliver results. There's a real high expectation from us to continue revolutionising the beauty industry and we know we can exceed expectations.'

'Women in this region strive for the best in life and we see the products as an extension of their lifestyle. There's a great synergy between the culture here and the brands beliefs'



BEAUTY BAZAAR

By Elisar Sasso, Nahda Suleiman, Zoey Coombe

Our selection of items to inspire your beauty routine this spring



CLARINS INSTANT CONCEALER

Clarins have exclusively created a magical concealer that revives and illuminates the eye contour area, tackling those hated dark circles. The key ingredient being caffeine extract, stimulates the skin's microcirculation, diminishing signs of fatigue. clarinsusa.com

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GUERLAIN ROUGE G

Guerlain has created the ultimate woman's necessity, incorporating white gold reflections and an ingenious mechanism, magically revealing a mirror hidden within the Rouge G case. Precious ingredients such as ruby powder, wild mango butter and tiger grass, work together to embellish, smooth and plump up the lips. guerlain.com



NEULASH LASH ENHANCING SERUM

A natural remedy has been born to provide women with luxurious lashes – without needing mascara. This nutrient-rich formula fortified with active eyelash technology, dramatically improves the appearance of lashes in just 30 days. It is created with sodium hyaluronate to boost softness and shine, and a proprietary combination of amino acids to strengthen and protect. neu-cosmetics.com



REVLON NAIL ENAMEL IN BEWITCHED

This silk-protein shield works instantly to help even out the surface of the nail, while rising above colour to automatically smooth away bubbles, streaks and brush marks. revlon.com

DIOR HYDRA LIFE CLOSE-UP

A magic wand has been born to eliminate those irritating pores, through groundbreaking treatment targeting their primary causes. Rather than correcting just the surface, Dior's Hydra Life Close-up hydrates the appearance of pores from within. Now your skin can naturally glow and look radiant, without needing to apply make-up. dior.com



SEPHORA UPSIDE DOWN MASCARA

The new revolutionary mascara by Sephora volumises, curves and lengthens all in one. The innovative 360° dual mascara brush contains three convenient makeup techniques; an open dual brush doubling your lashes volume, closed dual brush to curl and lengthen, and one brush only to coat smaller lower lashes. sephora.com



CLARINS BODY LIFT CELLULITE CONTROL

Bid farewell to that bothersome cellulite you despise, as the renowned brand Clarins has created the first slimming treatment that prevents and corrects the appearance of cellulite. Ingredients including aquatic mint extract and celosia cristata extract, work together to limit the multiplication of fat cells, resulting in that beach body. clarinsusa.com



ACQUA DI PARMA GINEPRO DI SARDEGNA

Contained within a bottle reflecting the elegance of the Italian Mediterranean Sea, the newest addition to the Blu Mediterraneo collection leaves one smelling like a breath of fresh air from the depth of Sardinia's crystal blue ocean. With traces of red juniper, spicy peppery notes and balsamic woods, prepare to be taken on a vivid journey to the Italian coast. acquadiparma.com



DINZ BY CLINIQUE EYESHADOW PALETTE

Rima and Dina Zahran, renowned Dubai-based fashion designers and founders of Dinz, collaborated with Clinique to create the first designer makeup trend for the region. Designed especially for the Middle Eastern market, the eyeshadow palette consists of majestic blues and emerald green hues; perfect for creating dramatic effects. The intense colours and creamy application last all day long without fading and only takes a few seconds to apply. clinique.com

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GLAM GLOW BRIGHTMUD EYE TREATMENT

As a brand used backstage in Hollywood, GLAM GLOW are celebrated globally for their innovative approach to fast-acting treatments. Formulated without chemical compounds such as parabens, sulfates and phthalates, this clearing mask targets and heals problematic skin, fighting all common concerns such as breakouts, uneven skin tone, to dramatically brighten the skin and deliver what it promises; a radiant and glowing complexion. sephora.com





**LA MER
EYE CONCENTRATE**

The eye concentrate from La Mer has been crafted with the DNA of the brand in mind; ferments from the sea combined with magnetic energies are signature ingredients proven to produce astonishing results. With a new form of La Mer's signature Miracle Broth, this concentrated concoction deeply smoothes and hydrates the eye area. Penetrating vulnerable skin with vitalities, the appearance of dark circles and puffiness, along with lines and wrinkles, are prominently improved for a healthy and energised appearance.

cremedelamer.com



**SHISEIDO
BENEFIANCE
WRINKLE RESIST24
EYE MASK**

An age-defense night time moisturiser, this product creates a visible reduction in the appearance of existing wrinkles. Containing a breakthrough ingredient such as the mukorossi extract, which directly inhibits the activity of a wrinkle-triggering enzyme, this advanced formula works while you sleep to promote a silky-smooth texture by morning.

shiseido.com



**PHILOSOPHY
BRIGHTEN UP MY DAY**

Designed to significantly reduce dark spots while brightening up your skin tone and improving the appearance of enlarged pores, this product is a one-stop solution for all your troubling imperfections. It includes a brightening lotion, a brightening essence, and a dark spot and pore whitening peel pen.

philosophy.com



**LA PRAIRIE
ANTI-AGEING EYE & LIP PERFECTION**

Formulated with Cellular Complex, La Prairie's Anti-Ageing Eye & Lip Perfection doubles as a lifting eye-cream gel as well as a protective lip balm. This product is designed to hydrate both the lips and eyes while instantly releasing signs of fatigue, lines, wrinkles and dark circles.

laprairie.com



**PRINCESSE
MARINA DE BOURBON
ROYAL MARINA DIAMOND**

The French perfume house, Princesse Marina de Bourbon, has launched a fresh edition inspired by the heritage of French royal families.

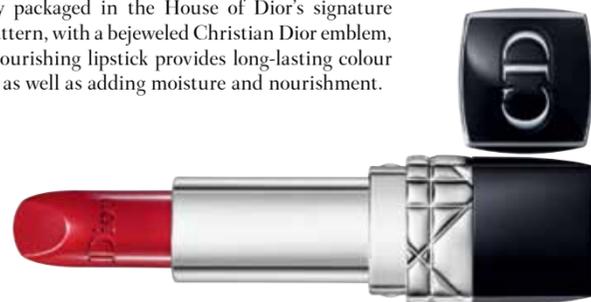
The fragrance consists of red berries, iris and jasmine petals, combined with a floral heart copaiba wood to create the fruity yet musky scent.

The royal crown bottle lid has been adorned in diamonds, inviting the wearer into a celebratory and luxurious world with every spritz.

**DIOR
ROUGE LIPCOLOR**

Luxuriously packaged in the House of Dior's signature Cannage pattern, with a bejeweled Christian Dior emblem, this ultra-nourishing lipstick provides long-lasting colour to your lips as well as adding moisture and nourishment.

dior.com



**LANCASTER
SUN BEAUTY RANGE**

It's no question that this year belongs to Brazil, so what better way to celebrate the World Cup this summer than daring to tan the Brazilian way? Lancaster collaborates with Anglo-Brazilian fashion duo, Clements Ribeiro, to create the motif and skincare range such as the Sun Beauty Velvet Tanning Milk and the Tan Deepener, perfect additions for any sun worshipper's beauty kit. The design of the packaging touches upon Art Deco influences and the vibrant, tropical hues correlate back to Brazil and have been incorporated as the colourful language for this seasons sunbather.

lancaster-beauty.com

RAISING THE GREEN BAR

By Nahda Suleiman

From the heart of Bahrain, one woman is working tirelessly to provide an all-round holistic experience for women in the region. Nahda Suleiman speaks to Reem Al Khalifa about her continual love affair with organic beauty



There is something refreshingly genuine and honest about Bahraini Reem Al Khalifa. Listening to her speak about the benefits and healing properties of all-natural beauty products, one can't help but be enchanted by her passion and dedication towards holistic beauty. As if this weren't enough, she is also hugely curious; constantly questioning the ingredients used in mainstream beauty products and looking for answers about the long-term benefits of plant-based oils. 'I have always been interested in healing ingredients, the way they work felt like it revealed a few cosmic secrets to me, a higher truth. What inspires me is knowledge of a cosmic truth, anything that teaches me a little bit of how our universe works,' she smiles.

It was this fascination and her endless search in beauty counters around the world for natural skin products that compelled her to launch Green Bar – an online venture selling products made out of floral oils and natural ingredients – in 2006. The affable entrepreneur explains that although there were a ton of beauty products in the market, she was not satisfied because of the 'complicated' ingredients. 'I wanted to discover something that would suit the change of weather and environment here

in Bahrain. I struggled to understand why mainstream products were being stripped of their natural essences like colour and fragrance and then replaced with unnatural ingredients. It didn't make sense to me at all.'

Moreover, her decision to launch Green Bar was fuelled by a need to preserve age-old Middle Eastern traditions that involved using natural extracts and rosewater for health and beauty purposes. Incorporating moisturising body oils, rosewater, body perfumes, face elixirs and hair oils, Green Bar's range of products are completely free from preservatives and additives. According to Al Khalifa, these beautifying and detoxifying oils simply rely on the natural goodness of plants to get one glowing from head to toe. 'The ingredients I use are enhanced and not tampered.

Everything in the products work to serve the client, they are not just there for the sake of consistency or to dilute, or to preserve. I should also note that consumers won't be able to find synthetic ingredients in our oils. Everything we use is edible.'

Al Khalifa's Green Bar seems to be a labor of love, in that she will only ever use ingredients that captivate her, before

manifesting it into a blend. 'Everything has to be delicious, everything must have history.' Armed with a degree in Visual Communication, Khalifa believes in constantly telling stories through her products and 'amplifying the romance of the Middle East.'

'I am still an artist in that I am trying to paint a picture for you, and trigger your imagination. It's always about conceptualisation; the products I create are a symbol of a story. What I am certainly strict about is doing it with pure ingredients, for that whole cosmic connection thing,' she explains.

So dedicated towards her craft and passion for ensuring the integrity of her ingredients, Al Khalifa - who likes to call herself a "factory girl" - has a hand in the process of blending and producing all of her oils in the Green Bar range of products. Initially self-taught about the properties of using natural oils, she embarked on a training course in California, with the globally renowned teacher and pioneer of natural perfumery, Mandy Aftel. Al Khalifa describes that study stint as 'life-changing'.

'It was the best thing I ever did for myself. I followed my curiosity and got so much energy from doing something I love.

After the first class with Mandy, who boasted clients such as Madonna and Steve Jobs, I was totally blown away by the teacher and by surrounding myself with those who understand me. Although, I do admit I had a lot of catching up and maturing to do,' she giggles.

So what exactly makes Green Bar stand out from other beauty brands that claim to be all-natural? The ever tactful and diplomatic Al Khalifa quickly points out: 'It's creativity! Everyone bakes a cake, everyone sells coffee. Different people buy into little quirks. Everything in Green Bar is personal; everything is controlled so hopefully the clients will feel the care that we don't outsource much.'

In a market saturated with various types of products that claim to be organic or natural, Al Khalifa's advice is to simply understand the label and ingredients. On a personal level, she says if the components are edible, then the product gets her endorsement. 'Otherwise, my conscience just won't let me. I don't believe in new formulas; they seem dodgy to me and I worry that my cells won't get it.'

Although a staunch advocate of holistic beauty, the modest Al Khalifa does not believe in telling people what to do or use. She prefers to let the products do the talking. 'I like to propose a good idea and if consumers like it, they can be part of it. But I won't tell them to ditch what they are currently using. If you're genuinely keen on going clean and being at one with nature, your beauty rituals can put you in that state of mind.'

Apart from an exclusive partnership with the Kempinski Grand and Ixir Hotel in Bahrain, the Green Bar range of products can also be found in retail outlets across her homeland, Dubai, Oman, Kuwait and Lebanon. Not one to be complacent, Al Khalifa's hopes for the brand is to see it continuously serving. 'I want our retail side to mature, and give clients a space to go to in different countries within the GCC. Eventually, I would like to catalogue and archive many of the healing herbs found in the region, and help people get creative with local ingredients,' she concludes.



TI SENTO
MILANO

Paris Gallery  باريس غاليري

www.parisgallery.com





WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE

By Zoey Coombe

Coffee is celebrated for offering a kick-start to a hectic day ahead, treasured by workaholics worldwide so upon discovering the coffee peeling treatment on the Zabeel Saray menu – an experience that promises to refine and tone the skin - it became difficult to resist something that sounds sincerely therapeutic for both the body and mind. Zoey Coombe visits the award-winning Talise Ottoman Spa to experience the innovative skin treatment



Situated inside the spectacular Zabeel Saray resort on the Palm Jumeirah and hailed as one of the most luxurious sanctuaries within the Middle East, the Talise Ottoman Spa boasts 42 individual treatment rooms and three grand traditional Turkish hammams across two levels. Treatment rooms include the aromatherapy room, the hydrotherapy room, the vichy shower, a floatation bed and pool, sauna and steam rooms, two snow rooms, adventure showers, hot and cold jacuzzis, and hot stone beds. As well as its facilities, the spa menu is extensive and there's a multitude of options for revitalising and rebalancing from traditional Turkish body cleansing to ancient Chinese reflexology; there really is an experience to cater for any disposition.

A friendly atmosphere coupled with generous hospitality welcomes clients who arrive at the spa, creating positive first and ongoing impressions. Guests are lead through the palatial areas of the maze-like vicinity to the changing rooms and onto specific areas for treatment. The decadent Arabian inspired interior design is both consistent and admirable, evidencing an attraction in itself.

The coffee peeling treatment lasts for an hour in total and begins with a brisk five minutes in the steam room to open and stimulate the skin's pores, before a personal masseuse indicates the way to the secluded female treatment area. The high-rise ceilings and vast open space inside the hammam means that a gentle dripping of water can be heard echoing throughout the room and the duration of the treatment, whilst an instant sense of relaxation engulfs the entire body.

The massage therapist proceeds by vigorously exfoliating the whole body with a mitt, and although it may not be the most comfortable part of the process, layers of dead skin are removed to reveal a soft, supple surface ready for re-sculpturing. Jugs of warm water are poured generously all

over the body and as a previous self washes away, your skin feels ready to embark on a stimulating journey of renewal. The whole body is then enveloped in silky foam for a soothing massage, which stretches the muscles and relieves all tension before the focal part of the ritual begins.

The coffee peel procedure consists of a liberal application of roasted and grinded Arabic beans, which cover the skin's exterior from head to toe. The aroma is bold and refreshing, the roasting process of the beans means the sugars, fats and starches are emulsified, caramelised and released to create the delicate coffee oil and unique fragrance; the mind instantly feels invigorated and senses are awakened. The texture of the body mask is coarse although applied gently to prevent discomfort, and the mixture tinges the skin temporarily becoming a few shades darker. The concoction is left on for ten minutes to soak in before the remnants of the masque are quickly and easily removed with a thorough rinse; before you know it, the ritual has come to a bittersweet end. Following any treatment, guests are welcome to enjoy the spa's facilities or continue relaxing in the resting area amongst indulgent pillows and large beds; it can become very difficult to leave this peaceful haven.

As caffeine works as a constrictor to reduce swelling and inflammation, it's no surprise that the appearance of cellulite is minimized immediately following the treatment. Skin instantly feels smooth and is noticeably firmer, and the results remain evident for up to a week afterwards. Overall, the treatment leaves you feeling relaxed, liberating any stress both physically and mentally.

To escape the busy city life of Dubai or to get your caffeine fix, head to the Talise Ottoman Spa for an imaginative and effective experience, fit for the schedule of any businessman or woman with a constant coffee craving.

ENCHANTMENT

A TALE OF TRADITION
ART CENTRAL
IF WALLS COULD TALK
A CULINARY JOURNEY OF SCENTS



A TALE OF TRADITION

By Zoey Coombe



Photographed by Ruta Jurkuvienaitė



Looking past Dubai's glamorous façade, an even more alluring treasure is hidden within the never-ending depths of the sea. Zoey Coombe visits the historical Diving Village in Dubai to investigate the relationship between the people of the Gulf, lustrous pearls and how these Arabian gems once provided the region's main source of income



Offering a diversion from the grandiose skyscrapers, extravagant sports cars and overall bustling city life many have become accustomed to in Dubai, a series of man-made coastal houses nestled within the Diving Village reflect an honest portrayal of a bygone era in the UAE. Every intricate detail of these structures have been hand-made using materials from the national date palm tree; there were no electrical tools used to fix the walls together or synthetic materials to build windows. Founded in 1997, the concept of the Diving Village is one that details the lifestyle of each profession associated to the ancient shoreline industry such as pearl divers, fishermen, blacksmiths and even boat makers.

Upon arrival, visitors instantly recognize the strong bond formed within the community that has settled there. The workers identify with the meticulous routines they share and although others may refer to the location as a tourist attraction, it's clear the craftsmen feel comfortable within this cultural sanctuary.

Demonstrating their skills to those who are keen to learn about the heritage of the region, there are no gaps in information at this living museum; inquisitive guests and their questions are fulfilled directly by the specialists who practice here. This includes Stanley, a senior tour guide at the Diving Village who introduces himself on a first-name basis and who wishes to educate every visitor personally on the subject of pearls and their significance in the region. Stanley initiates conversation by discussing the fascinating way that these gems are formed within living oysters. 'A pearl begins its life as a foreign object such as a grain of sand that accidentally lodges itself in an oyster's inner body, where it cannot be ejected. The oyster begins to emit a substance called nacre. As long as the irritant remains within its body, the oyster will continue to produce nacre layer upon layer until a beautiful pearl appears.'

Pearl diving granted coastal families with a stable income. 'The pearling industry flourished predominantly during the 18th and 19th centuries and the trade was the foundation

for the UAE's wealth before any other industries such as oil submerged,' explains Stanley. 'Due to the introduction of the cultured Japanese pearl in the late 1920s, natural pearls found in the region no longer offered the revenue required for a growing economy. The exciting hunt for the treasure stopped in the 1950s, and is now considered a recreational activity as well as an instrumental part of history that continues to pass down to different generations.'

The Diving Village preserves these pearling traditions for the younger generation through craftsmen such as Nizam, an active boat maker. 'The long voyage at sea began onboard a variety of lateen-rigged dhow boats such as the Al Sam'aa, Al Shahooof and Al Banoosh, which also transformed into a home whilst the 18-20 divers involved were away at sea for up to four months. 'It would take about five men, two months to construct a vessel that ranges from 15-100 metres long, 3-20 feet wide and 2-10 metres tall,' states Nizam. 'We use Burma wood for its robust, water resistant properties and its malleability.'

Sailing across the warm Arabian Gulf, it was the captain's responsibility to scout for areas that were abundant in the 'lulu' pearl producing oysters before anchoring ship. Preparing the divers before they submerged into the depths of the ocean, the captain would distribute the equipment required for them to carry out their duties. The Fetam, a nose clip made from goat's horn or turtle's shell, would block the divers breathing and prevent water gushing up their nose, whilst a weight tied around the ankle would send them plummeting 15-20 metres to the ocean floor. The Al Daa'en was a small net used to collect oysters and was worn suspended around the neck of the diver so they could move their hands quickly, whilst individual gloves were placed on each finger and toe to protect their appendages from sharp coral. 'There was no access to modern equipment such as oxygen tanks, goggles, wet suits and flippers; it was a both strenuous and hazardous profession,' maintains Stanles.

Although the enticement of discovering hidden treasures appears irresistible, many do not realize the risks involved with pearl diving. Dhahi, an ex-pearl diver who is roughly around 70-years-old, lost his hearing during his 40-year pursuit for the pearl. His work currently involves carving the fetam, communicating his profession with hand gestures for people to understand. 'The change in air pressure when descending to the sea bed, would lead to the



ear drums bursting, which unfortunately happened to Dhahi,' explains Stanles. Divers were trained to hold their breath for four minutes and instructed by their captains to return to the surface after three minutes, as drowning posed a key threat for the men. Decompression sickness was highly common and those who stayed in cold water for long periods of time were also likely to catch fatal hypothermia.

Abbas Al Mazam, who returns to the Diving Village each week with near-bursting nets, spends hours demonstrating to an audience, the manner in which to open an oyster using the meflaga (curve) knife to search for pearls. 'The mussel inside the shell has four key areas in which a splitter may look for a pearl,' claims Al Mazam. 'I delicately bend the meflaga down in the crevice to open the shell. I search under the first block, second block, around the stomach and inside the stomach, these are the only areas inside the oyster where a pearl is created.'

Al Mazam recalls the first time he ever found his prize and refers to the moment as 'purely thrilling and fulfilling'. The older the pearl, the larger it becomes and Al Mazam found his biggest at two or three years old measuring around 0.3mm. 'There's not a specific limit on how many pearls you may find in one oyster, it all depends on your luck,' he says. 'Sometimes, I discover multiple pearls such as two in one oyster or other times there may be one larger pearl.'



Whilst the industry came to an abrupt halt in the 1940s, the days of pearl diving are far from over. Cultural awareness combined with historical tradition, allows generations of natives to feel closely connected with one another. Nasser Juma Bin Sulaiman, the director of the Diving Village, firmly believes that heritage is the most essential aspect of a person's identity. 'Tradition should never be lost or forgotten; the younger generation can continue a legacy through remembering what their ancestors achieved,' he says. 'To put it simply, if the history of pearl diving was ever viewed as insignificant, than it would no longer be necessary to wear the Kandura or local dress that remains a symbol of who we were yesterday, today and tomorrow.'

'Tradition should never be lost or forgotten; the younger generation can continue a legacy through remembering what their ancestors achieved'

Nasser Juma Bin Sulaiman



ART CENTRAL

By Elisar Sasso



The eighth edition of Art Dubai which took place this March, welcomed established and emerging artists to the culturally infused city that is Dubai. Breaking a record by being the largest programme to date, Elisar Sasso looks back at the momentous highlights and finds out what made this year's stand out amongst the rest



As March approaches each year, nature slowly awakens, welcoming not only the start of the spring season, but also one of the most anticipated events of the regional calendar, Art Dubai. Co-founded by John Martin and Benedict Floyd in 2007, the fair has grown from strength to strength and has established itself as a key component of Dubai's cultural identity. For the event's eighth edition this March, Art Dubai featured a roster of 85 galleries and 500 artists, making the fair the largest and most dynamic programme to date.

Held under the theme of *Meanwhile...History* at the grand Madinat Jumeirah, the fair focused on noteworthy decades, years and minutes that influenced the perception of the world and history within the Middle East and the Caucasus.

Antonia Carver, director of Art Dubai highlights the importance of the event as a strategic platform to foster a cultural dialogue on a global level. 'The fair has acted as a catalyst, expediting Dubai's role as a bona fide cultural hub for the region and beyond,' says Carver.

A new addition to the fair this year was the introduction of the Modern programme. This distinct feature included 11 galleries, each of which presented a solo or two-person show by an influential modern artist from the Middle East or South Asia, in an effort to connect today's artists with the generation that inspired them. Some of the featured artists included Rasheed Araeen from the Grosvenor Gallery in London and Michel Basbous from the Agial Art Gallery in Beirut.

'This community advises us and contributes ideas, and I think this intermediate and open approach is very much part of the DNA of Art Dubai'

Antonia Carver

following March at Art Dubai. Curated by Nada Raza under the theme of *Bagh O Bahar*, which is Urdu for garden and spring.

'The Abraaj Group Art Prize is a demonstration of our commitment to empowering exceptional artistic talent and fostering the growth of cultural entrepreneurs, especially entrepreneurs from this region' says Frederic

Sicre, managing director at The Abraaj Group. 'We plan to make the Abraaj Group Art Prize more competitive across the years to come, by awarding one prize to only one winner rather than five.'

The largest section of the fair was the contemporary gallery halls, which housed over 70 galleries, including Athr from Jeddah, Galerist from Istanbul and UAE-based gallery Grey Noise. Running alongside the contemporary programme was the dynamic Marker section, focusing on Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Curated by the art collective, Slavs and Tatars, this section presented works ranging from mid-twentieth-century paintings to contemporary drawings. Five art spaces were invited to participate including Popiashvili Gvaberidze Window Project from Tbilisi in Georgia and the YARAT Contemporary Art Space from Baku in Azerbaijan.

The fair also featured a widespread selection of not-for-profit programmes ranging from talks and commissions to residencies and site-specific projects. With an education programme that runs throughout the year, Art Dubai is dedicated to encouraging artistic activities in the region, in addition to the four-day fair.



A key supporter of this year-round education programme is Art Dubai's strategic partner, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority.

A highlight from the not-for-profit programme was the Art Dubai Projects, bringing together 12 local and international artists, who worked alongside UAE/ New York-based curator Fawz Kabra. These 12 artists created installations and performances that engaged and interacted with audiences. Art Dubai Projects was held in parallel to the Artist-in-Residence programme, which consisted of five artists and a curator travelling to Dubai from various countries to spend three months working together in the Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, creating innovative works for the fair.

'We are supported by a community of artists, gallerists and curators; some based locally, others around the world,' explains Carver. 'This community advises us and contributes ideas, and I think this intermediate and open approach is very much part of the DNA of Art Dubai and something that's really at the heart of the fair.'

Sponsoring Art Dubai for the third time this year, Cartier added a sparkling touch to the prestigious fair. Coinciding with the theme of linking the past to the present, the FoundationCartier Pour L'art Contemporain (also known as the Foundation Cartier), showcased two contrasting imaginary cities at Art Dubai – depicting its creation, L'Odyssée de Cartier. In order to portray this juxtaposition, Cartier's white city stood tall alongside a colourful and imaginary city created by the Congolese artist, Bodys Isek Kingelez. Titled the Maman Isek Mabo Bendele, it was created by Kingelez in 2000, comprising of salvage, cardboard and fragile materials. In contrast to this, Cartier created an imaginary white city in a magical world beyond earth, symbolising the jewellery brand's vivid imagination, richness and culture.

Also on display was a selection from Cartier's exceptional creations, which focused on areas situated in the Far East, Africa and China – aiming to create an imaginary voyage of different cultures. The Odyssée de Cartier - Parcours d'un Style collection was presented at Art Dubai, unveiling



80 creations linking two scopes – beauty and creative arts. Gleaming in richness and precious stones, Cartier incorporated diamond-covered dragons to symbolise China; irregular onyx strips in a mesh of accurate-cut diamonds to represent Africa; and a kaleidoscope of shapes and vibrant colours to depict India.

Additionally, Art Dubai has also had a significant impact on the metro stations around the city, transforming the current stations into vibrant artistic hubs. Playing host to a variety of museums, based around the themes of Islamic art, Arabic calligraphy and contemporary art; the initiative will further develop this region's arts and cultural environment. Aimed to be complete by the launch of Art Dubai 2015, these pieces of art scattered across the city will not only add some colour, but also magnify UAE's dedicated vision of boosting the arts scene even more on both the Arab and global stages.

The high calibre of artists participating from around the globe as well as the numerous cultural programmes featured in each edition of Art Dubai, is a growing testament to the fair's position as a focal point to nurture dialogue between members of the international contemporary art community. 'This diversity and global reach is a huge part of our identity and it is what makes Art Dubai a key destination within the arts calendar,' says Carver.

Image Captions:

1-Cartier exhibition, Art Dubai: 8th edition

2-Patron's Preview, Art Dubai 2014

3-Art Dubai Modern, Art Dubai 2014

4-His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum

IF WALLS COULD TALK

By Nahda Suleiman



In a bid to portray an alternative view of Tunisia to the world, French-Tunisian eL Seed uses his native land as a blank canvas, to paint colourful stories of his people. Nahda Suleiman sits down with the artist to discuss his latest undertaking



Sometimes you need someone from outside to tell you how beautiful you are.' These golden words of wisdom remain etched in the mind of eL Seed, a French-Tunisian street artist, as he recounts heartwarming tales from his artistic journey around Tunisia last summer. Over the course of four weeks, eL Seed travelled around his homeland, visiting abandoned locales and small towns, and painting walls with murals using his signature Arabic style of calligraffiti - inspired by the lives of people he met along the way. 'I travelled from north to south, east to west, meeting different people, hearing their stories and then painting about them,' explains the 32-year-old.

The result of this road trip that the artist embarked on - along with a team of six videographers and photographers - has culminated in a book entitled *Lost Walls*, which was unveiled during the eighth edition of Art Dubai this March. According to eL Seed, the publication pays homage to the 24 walls he painted around Tunisia, in an effort to show another side of the country. In a way, the artist shares, this trip was as much about his journey of 'self-discovery', as it was about chronicling the 'rich heritage and culture' of his homeland.

Inspired by the reaction of his biggest project to date, the mural-painted minaret of a mosque in his family town of Gabes, eL Seed says he came up with the idea of the road trip two years ago, but the project was pushed aside due to other commitments. However, there was no turning point that led to his decision to embark on this trip. According to the father of one, this journey was completely spontaneous in nature. 'It was an impromptu decision; I called up my team one day and said, "let's do this!". They were taken by surprise and told me that we weren't prepared, but I insisted and it happened.'

Although eL Seed had some idea of the towns he would visit, there were many places he was visiting for the first time and was astounded by the warmth and hospitality of his fellow Tunisians whom he met during his journey.

'These people were surprised and confused to see us visiting their towns, because no one came to these places anymore. So they were happy to see us. As an outsider looking in, I wanted to remind them of the beauty of the towns they spent their entire lives in, because sometimes people tend to forget.'

On one particular visit to Tunisia's Sahara desert, north-west of the city of Tozeur, eL Seed encountered the fictional home of Lucas Skywalker from the blockbuster series, *Star Wars*. Created by the movie director George Lucas, this abandoned film set covers 10,000 square metres and draws tourists and avid movie fans from around the world, to this part of Tunisia. eL Seed however, was not impressed. 'I found it offensive that we limit this region's cultural heritage to a science fiction film. Have we casually neglected our heritage in favour of an American blockbuster?' the artist laments.

Frustrated by this revelation, he sought to 'vandalise' the area and after seeking permission from a security guard, the artist painted in beautiful Arabic calligraphy the words "I will never be your son", in response to Darth Vader's revelation in the film, "I am your father". eL Seed, who is in the middle of a one-year residency, says the painting has now been erased but the documentation of this story, along with images of his murals are all present in *Lost Walls*. Through the book, he hopes to spread messages of hope among Tunisians and shine a light on a country that is severely underexplored. 'I really hope the book will serve as a travel guide for visitors to Tunisia, who wish to go off the beaten track. Each wall that I've painted on has a special story, and my aim is to show the world the depth and richness of Tunisia's culture, its people and the places.' The artist is quick to point out the book would not have been possible without the sheer warmth of the people he



encountered in Tunisia. Explaining the convenience of being able to practise his art in the Arab world, as opposed to the West, he says he wasn't required to get permission from people, in order to paint the walls. 'All I had to do was knock on people's doors, explain my project and get their consent to paint in their area or houses. Some of them would even offer me tea and food. It's this kindness that really touched me and without these people, I wouldn't have been able to achieve this. *Lost Walls*

is essentially about the human stories of Tunisia.' With a preface written by Jeffrey Deitch, the former director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and the curator of one of the first calligraffiti shows in the 1980s, *Lost Walls* also contains a series of essays from artists and scholars, tackling subjects such as art and legacy, and the social responsibility of those working in this field.

Given the opportunity to do a similar project in Dubai, eL Seed says he would like to paint The Gate Village in the financial enclave of the Dubai International Financial Centre. 'It's just too grey, I want to give some colour and life to that place,' he smiles.

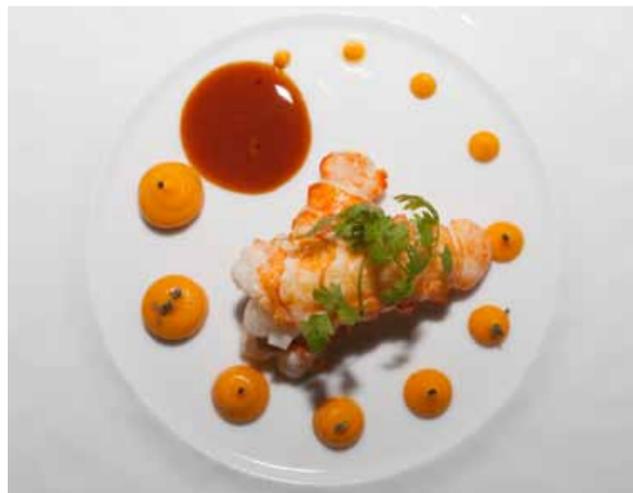
A CULINARY JOURNEY OF SCENTS

By Nahda Suleiman

Chandler Burr, a renowned figure in the business of smells, was in Dubai last month to help launch Tom Ford's latest olfactory offering – the Velvet Orchid. Nahda Suleiman speaks to him to find out more



Standing in the dining room of the swanky Celebrities Restaurant at the One & Only Royal Mirage in Dubai, Chandler Burr, one of the world's renowned fragrance experts, casually swishes a perfume blotter under his nose and instructs the group of 30 guests seated at the table, to do the same. 'What is it?' he asks with a glint in his eye, as he challenges them to deduce the raw material in the scent that has been infused on the crisp white paper. Several guesses later and Burr has his audience engaged in an animated discussion, as he asks the guests to answer various questions related to the pure essence they have just inhaled. The same process is repeated with other raw materials until the entire fragrance is revealed by Burr, who then moves on to educate his audience about the science of that particular scent. What follows after this olfactory experience is the first of five distinct culinary creations; a stunning lobster and celeriac capelleto with ginger cream dots, black truffle slice, and dark rum consommé – an edible interpretation of the fragrance notes in Tom Ford's best-selling Black Orchid.



This extraordinary meeting of both senses, where the nostrils and palate are equally stimulated to lead on to gastronomic ecstasy, is known as a scent dinner, and it is this very concept that was the premise of the launch of Tom Ford's latest olfactory offering - the Velvet Orchid.

'The sense of smell accounts for 95 per cent of what you perceive as taste when eating. You taste only five per cent of your food – the rest comes from the nose. The purpose is to allow people a window into these works of olfactory art. What happens at these dinners is a translation from one human scent to another; a sense of smell into that of taste. It's a way of looking at scent and understanding its nature and structure,' explains Burr, who is a journalist by trade and a former New York Times scent critic.

A concept that took place for the first time in Dubai last month, the scent dinner was led by Burr who was flown in exclusively from the United States, to create an olfactory course made up of raw materials from Ford's portfolio of perfumes, in collaboration with a noted chef from the hotel, Laurent Michael, who interpreted the scent menu and translated it into a culinary experience, with each course inspired by the scent's philosophy and ideas.



As such, the evening was a delight for the senses, as each meal the guests enjoyed, was designed with the ingredients of one of Ford's perfumes in mind, thus paying a tribute to the scents. The most anticipated part of the evening, was when the sumptuous dessert was served. Inspired by the brand's Velvet Orchid, the dessert consisted of a towering dune of peach and mandarin sorbet surrounded by soft cake and fluffy golden meringue.



Pure jasmine tea was poured onto dry ice in the plate beneath, creating a fragrant jasmine-scented smoke that heightened the sense of taste and smell in a delicious and ostentatious finale. Velvet Orchid is the innovative version of the already popular Black Orchid. Whilst it retains the lavish headiness and animalistic touches of the original perfume, the new fragrance is fresh and feminine, with notes of cool citrus, lush

petals, warm honey, and creamy vanilla. Adorned with a gold-toned plaque and neck cord and packaged in a ribbed, folding carton in glossy, purple-black, the scent is encased in a fluted glass bottle, the same design aesthetic that was used for Black Orchid; a dark amethyst coloured glass, complete with signature golden accents.

When Burr was posed the question of which version he preferred, the diplomatic scent critic responded, 'They are both unique in their own right. Velvet Orchid has a loveliness and is filled with more sunlight than Black Orchid which is darker.'

So does cost necessarily equal to quality when it comes to scents? Burr responds by saying that this is not always the case however, 'Tom Ford is 'extremely expensive because the raw materials used are spectacular. Tom makes a conscious choice to do this and by definition, the formula is made of very costly material. If the perfume holds well together, it performs better,' he concludes.



SERENDIPITY

AWAKENING ART
A PALATIAL RETREAT

استلقاء

AWAKENING ART

By Elisar Sasso

From bleak desert conditions to an uplifting art hub, the power of creativity has transformed the Sahrawi Refugee Camp - one of the world's longest warehoused refugee groups - into a place of hope and positivity



Imagine waking up everyday in the harsh desert heat, traumatised by memories of the brutal massacre of your people, dreaming of freedom but waking up to desolation. Picture not being able to step foot on your own land due to a 1000-metre line of over three million landmines. For nearly four decades now, the Sahrawi people of Western Sahara, Algeria, have been living in hope, anticipating a miracle to shed some light and awareness on the Sahrawi refugee camps. The current Sahrawi refugee situation is among the most prolonged ones worldwide, with the people's struggling endeavours remaining the same as it did 40 years ago. A Spanish-based organisation called ARTifariti has utilised the powerful medium of art, transforming these dreary camps into vivacious spaces.

Inspired by the expressive walls in Berlin and Palestine, ARTifariti aims to highlight the ill-fated Sahrawi issue through the influential capacity of art and creativity, as a tool to vindicate human rights. Rather than turning a blind eye and disregarding these campsites left in remnants, ARTifariti saw a window of opportunity – a blank canvas. Created in 2007 by the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and the Ministry for the Arts of Algeria, this life-changing NGO continues to transform these wrecked camps into vibrant works of art. Splashes of colour on the ruined walls not only breathes life into the environment, but also gives the Sahrawi people a sense of hope. If the refugees are unable to experience the joys we experience on a daily basis – then why not bring these joys to them. ARTifariti holds an annual art workshop towards the beginning of each year in the Sahrawi refugee camps, bringing together creatives from around the globe, including the renowned Spanish street artist, Mesa.

The ongoing struggle of the Sahrawi people began in 1975, after they fled from Moroccan forces during the war between Morocco and

Western Sahara, relocating in the Sahrawi refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria. For the last 40 years, close to 90,000 refugees have been living in tents and huts, which offer little protection from rain, the scorching heat and frequent sandstorms. More than half of the houses in the Awserd, Smara and Laayoune camps were demolished due to severe floods, destroying community buildings; hospitals and health clinics; and schools. All that remained were drab ruined walls, struggling to stand tall. How would you spin such a catastrophic situation into something positive?

Agaila Abba, a Sahrawi woman born in the refugee camps in Algeria, expressed her pride in these inspiring events occurring in the sites. Currently pursuing her education, in political science and international studies at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in the USA, Abba has always been an active campaigner for the rights of the Sahrawi people by constantly devoting her efforts to projects like ARTifariti, in order to raise awareness and contribute to making a difference for her people. 'ARTifariti's main aim is to bring artists from all over the globe to hold workshops to teach people in the refugee camps the importance of art. They also want to highlight the Sahrawi issue and human rights through art,' explains Abba.

Another participating artist is the Sahrawi-born Mohamed Sayad, who translates his personal experiences and heritage through his work. It involves a recurrent theme of facial expressions representing a heartfelt array of emotions, particularly highlighting the austere situation of the lives in the refugee camps. 'The arts has given hope to the people living in these camps and has also helped rising Sahrawi artists to express themselves in a unique way,' says Abba. 'I think renewed artists who have been exposed to ARTifariti have been inspired to use art to celebrate their culture and heritage.' As a result of this optimistic exposure to art

and creativity, a brand new art establishment known as Tifariti School was set up in the refugee camps, to offer aspiring Sahrawi artists an encouraging platform to turn their passions into reality. 'The opening of the art school in the camps not only gives the people a chance to be educated about the different types of art, but will also train new aspiring artists to use their talent and art to educate others about their Sahrawi heritage,' says Abba.

ARTifariti is not only a tool for hope and change, but also promotes intercultural relations in an engaging approach. Now with the opening of Tifariti School, aspiring refugees of all ages have the opportunity to turn their dreams into a reality. It's not easy finding a light at the end of a dark tunnel. ARTifariti did much more than merely find a light – it illuminated the whole camp.

For more information visit artifariti.org



A PALATIAL RETREAT

By Elisar Sasso

Hidden deep within Abu Dhabi's Empty Quarter, is the luxurious Qasr Al Sarab, reminiscent of ancient grandeur and rich local culture. Elisar Sasso visits the desert resort and embarks on an enthralling journey through the ages



Amid the infinite depths of the UAE's Liwa desert, lies an exquisite haven of luxury perched on the shoulder of a colossal sand dune. As I admire the desert fauna roaming freely in the distance, the lingering road leading up to the five-star Qasr Al Sarab Resort gradually reveals an Arabesque-inspired fortress, glistening under the sun. Upon arrival, I was warmly welcomed into the opulent hotel lobby that boasts historical artefacts and Middle Eastern inspired architecture. As the hospitable staff catered to my needs, I sipped on a refreshing yoghurt and date concoction – the ideal start to my stay at the five-star palatial haven.

Located just 90 minutes away from Abu Dhabi, this desert resort is surrounded by the Rub al Khali, also known as the Empty Quarter – the world's largest undisturbed body of sand. Its architectural magnificence was inspired by the old forts of the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, providing a luxury oasis for travellers. Translating to Mirage Palace in Arabic, Qasr Al Sarab opened its doors in 2009, and has since offered its guests a serene experience with numerous facilities and culturally enriching activities.

Under the management of Anantara Resorts and Spas, Qasr Al Sarab takes pride in its high-class private pools and outdoor terraces, surrounded by 206 fort-like rooms. There are ten distinct royal villas specifically for luminary guests that resemble mini castles that come complete with a personal pool, terrace and 24-hour butler.

When visiting a resort of such luxury, a trip to the spa is certainly a must. Upon entering, a sensational aroma immediately transports you on a journey into the rich traditions of Arabia. Soothing melodies pervade the air as a friendly face hands over an invigorating cup of herbal tea and dates, preparing you for the most relaxing couple of hours of your life. Walking through the scented corridors, I gaze upon the striking interior, which incorporates natural elements of wood, water and stone, complemented by earthy colours, evoking a sense of warmth.

A recommended treatment to experience is the signature Anantara Spa Massage that will undoubtedly take you to another worldly dimension. The calming voyage begins with a floral foot bath by a professional therapist, followed by a traditional Thai massage,

leaving every inch of your body and soul feeling revitalised. Other popular packages include the Royal Hammam Ritual and the Qasr Al Sarab Retreat – both guaranteed to awaken all five senses. All treatments are infused with Middle Eastern rituals along with tranquil Thai methods, through the use of natural ingredients freshly picked from nearby grounds, such as dates, sand, honey and olives.

From tennis courts and a fitness centre, to numerous swimming pool complexes and even a children's supervised entertainment area, guests are spoiled for choice. An endless array of the world's best cuisines is available at the resort's four restaurants. Whether you are in the mood for a delectable herb infused steak dish, or prefer to experience a traditional Bedouin style dinner of Machboos (rice, meat and vegetables) and Sayadieh (rice and fish), there is something to suit all taste buds. Ghadeer Restaurant transforms from a poolside bar during the day, to a romantic retreat by night, offering a diverse selection of signature dishes such as the mouthwatering mixed grill prepared in the Levant style.



After devouring all of the fine delicacies Qasr Al Sarab has to offer, you can embark on an adventure to familiarise yourself with your surroundings with the help of a guided desert walk, and witness the free-roaming desert fauna including the Arabian Mountain Gazelle and Arabian Oryx.

Choose between a walk during sunrise or sunset, in order to observe the picturesque sky and its enchanting colours, an image that will leave a lasting impression on you.

Guests can visit the Desert Experience Centre and choose from a number of different activities including camel riding, archery, stargazing navigation, as well as desert trekking throughout the concealed Empty Quarter. Additionally, for the culinary types, there

are cooking classes you can partake in, which involve going to a local farm and selecting freshly grown organic ingredients.

After a long day, all that is left is to unwind on your private terrace and observe the mesmerising sunset disappear behind the towering red sand dunes. The guestroom interiors resemble old desert fortresses with handcrafted furnishings, deluxe carpets and delicately embroidered fabrics, reminiscent of traditional Arabian designs.

If you desire a culturally enriching getaway, then Qasr Al Sarab is the place to be. Escape the hectic city life and de-stress in this magnificent desert resort. Get ready to embark on a historical journey through Emirati heritage that is filled with opulence and refined glamour.

For more information visit qasralsarab.anantara.com



ON IMPERFECTION

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THEY ARE MUCH MORE
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