

Genesis crystal bowl by Michael Rice. Courtesy Van Cleef & Arpels

Natural Design: finalists for the fourth edition of the Middle East Emergent Designer Prize announced

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The four finalists for the 2016 Middle East Emergent Designer Prize were revealed yesterday at Van Cleef & Arpels' flagship boutique at Dubai Mall. Now in its fourth edition, the prestigious prize is the result of a partnership between the fine jewelry maison, Tashkeel creative hub, and Design Days Dubai and is awarded annually to an up and coming regionally based designer.

An overwhelming number of artists responded to the Prize's open call to the public to conceive and submit a concept based around the theme of Nature and drawing upon organic materials and forms that can be sourced in designers' local environments. However, four proposals stood out to the jury.:

Anjali Srinivasan's vehicular lens is a contemporary pod comprised of multiple lenses, which manipulate light and space with allusions to a flower pod. The up and coming Indian artist with a background in ceramics and design worked with Dubai Design Week last year for a project that was shown at D3.

Marta Krivosheek, an Abu Dhabi-based designer who is originally from Slovakia, lends an architectural perspective to the competition, and has imagined a contemporary Minimae Chair inspired by Shasha, (traditional Gulf fishing boats) in surprising combination with soap bubble experiments and steam wood bending technique.

Michael Rice has taken the ancient geometric forms of seashells as a starting point and envisioned a complex crystal bowl that blurs the bounds between design and fine art. Rice, who is Irish, serves as Associate Professor of Studio Art in the American University of Dubai.

Ranim Orouk, was born in Syria, grew up in Dubai and received her Bachelors Degree in Architecture from from the American University of Sharjah just last year. Her elegant riff on a traditional chandelier is an ode to the luminosity and texture of a school of jellyfish.

Four years in, the level of education, technique, and vision associated with the 2016 finalists' entries reflects the region's growing ability to generate young home grown designers whose works are produced from locally sourced materials in Middle-East based workshops, and are part of a UAE design hub that is rapidly gaining international attention.

Cyril Zammit, fair director of Design Days Dubai said, "Since the establishment of the Middle East Emergent Designer Prize in 2013, we have been constantly impressed with not only the growing number of submissions and applicants over the years, but the quality of design produced, which continues to highlight the level of talent in the region."

This year's winner will be announced at the fifth edition of Design Days Dubai on March 13 where his or her concept will be highlighted in the midst of the popular event that paved the way as the Middle East and South Asia's first design fair. In addition, she or he will receive Dh30,000 to to produce his or her unique concept, and will then be flown to Paris for a five-day trip to attend courses at the L'ECOLE Van Cleef & Arpels, an exclusive school devoted to the legendary house.

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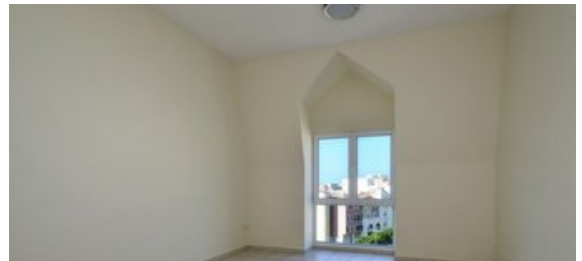
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