



Design Insights

Five minutes with fair director Cyril Zammit

We talk to fair director Cyril Zammit



Mary Keenan

Added 09:51 | February 8, 2016



An Alev Ebüzyia ceramic bowl will be part of Parisian gallery Gendras Régnier's display.

Source:Supplied

Image 1 of 6

Design Days Dubai is set to return to The Venue in Downtown from March 14th to 18th. Now celebrating its fifth edition, the collectible design fair presents limited edition contemporary pieces from emerging and established galleries and designers from across the globe. Exhibitors from across the world will display alongside designers from the UAE and GCC.

An extensive public programme consisting of workshops, guided tours and a number of special projects will run in conjunction with the fair. We spoke to fair director Cyril Zammit about this year's event...

How many new exhibitors are there this year and how many are returning?

We have 39 exhibitors this year with roughly half of those returning exhibitors and the other half new participants. I find both equally exciting: those such as Carpenters Workshop Gallery (UK/France/USA) and Victor Hunt Design Art Dealer (Belgium) who have returned every year

since Design Days Dubai's launch edition in 2012. These world-renowned galleries always bring with them a cross-section of boundary-pushing contemporary design. And, newcomers J.C.T Haute Couture Interiors (France), Camp Design Gallery (Italy) and Barcelona Design Gallery (Spain) – just three of the international galleries that will share their international debut at the fair this year.

What draws international designers and galleries to Design Days Dubai?

Dubai is a global meeting point and increasingly recognized as one of the world's capitals of art and design. International galleries see Design Days Dubai as gateway to the opportunities of the Middle East. They also tell us they really enjoy the experience, how it's organized and how it develops year on year.

Are there any emerging Emirati designers exhibiting this year that we should watch out for? ☐

We will have 15 Emirati designers participating in Design Days Dubai this year. Established names such as Khalid Shafar, Shamsa Alabbar, Aljoud Lootah, who launched her first full design collection at the fair last year to great acclaim, will be joined by emerging design studio Monogram and Amer Aldour, who will exhibit limited edition design works as part of Tashkeel's Tanween Programme set up to support and promote UAE's emerging talent. In addition to these names, we will have an exhibition, 'WASL', of design made in the UAE – not exclusively Emirati design I might add, but there will certainly be some local names as part of the showcase..

What makes Design Days Dubai the world's most diverse design fair? ☐

It's in the mix of international, regional and local design. This year, we have exhibitors from 20 countries, this number alone makes us the world's most diverse design fair. Add to that international premieres – we were the first to show design from the UAE and GCC on an international level, the first to show Australian collectible design internationally (in 2013 and 2015), Pakistan (in 2014 and returning this year), Taiwan... and a rich and varied public programme of talks, workshops and tours unmatched by any other international collectible design fair; it makes for a very dynamic line-up.

What can someone who has never attended Design Days Dubai expect from the fair? ☐

A fantastic introduction and immersion into contemporary design. The opportunity to purchase something very special for the home as well the chance to meet some of the world's renowned and rising design talents to relay firsthand the narrative behind their work, live performances, guided tours and much more.

What sets the 2016 edition apart from last year?

We will unveil the winning design of this year's Urban Commissions, a competition launched last year for UAE-based designers to submit designs for a shelter that will be made entirely in the Emirates and located in d3.

This year we see the strongest representation of local and regional design, through a record number of design galleries and studios based in the Emirates, GCC and wider MENASA region exhibiting. These include the first participation of Monogram and M.A.D Gallery (both Dubai), Samovar and Loulwa Al-Radwan (both Kuwait), Vick Vanlian and Georges Amatoury Studio (both Lebanon), Kalo (UAE) and Aisha Al-Sowaidi (Qatar), alongside returning exhibitors 1971 Design Space, Aljoud Lootah, Cities, Fatima bint Mohamed bin Zayed Initiative, Fadi Sarriedine, Nakkash Gallery, Shamsa Alabbar and Tashkeel, all based in the Emirates, along with Coalesce (Pakistan), Naqsh Collective (Jordan) and Squad Design (Lebanon). It marks a fantastic achievement for the design industry and great milestone in its development here and is something I'm immensely proud of.



Mary Keenan

