

GRAND DESIGNS

The only design fair in the Middle East and South Asia, Design Days Dubai is set to bowl thousands of visitors over with never before seen works from across the globe

WORDS LYNDSEY YORK

Extraordinary designs will be on display from March 18-21 in a custom-built venue at the base of Burj Khalifa in Downtown Dubai, the city's blooming lifestyle destination, billed as 'The Centre of Now.'

With creations from 29 galleries spanning all six continents, Design Days Dubai, now in its second year, has established Dubai as a hub for the world's cultural community. The fair is an absolute must-visit for inquisitive minds eager to embark on a journey of discovery.

Cyril Zammit, Fair Director of Design Days Dubai can't wait to see the exhibition space on the opening morning, enthusing, "With so many materials and styles displayed together, it will surely make for a striking and interesting experience for our visitors."

Mr Zammit is also excited by the new lab concept, explaining, "Four designers will create unique works 'live', throughout the opening hours of the fair, each using thought-provoking materials, such as UAE-dived pearls, recycled waste materials from constructions sites, and shredded magazine paper."

Aside from a public programme of panels and workshops held by leading design professionals, other highlights this year include a private guide service where a tour of the space with a design professional will offer tips on where best to invest, while introducing visitors to the designers to discuss special commissions, both for individuals or corporations.



Turning Low Table
La Galerie Nationale



Holly Vessel
Sarah Myerscough Fine Art



Molecular Chair
Industry Gallery



Cabinet Tronchi
2021 Gallery



Taj Mahal Table
Art Factum Gallery



Taj Mahal Table
Studio Job



Noize Chair
Colectivo Amor de Madre



Prickly Lamp
Broached Commissions



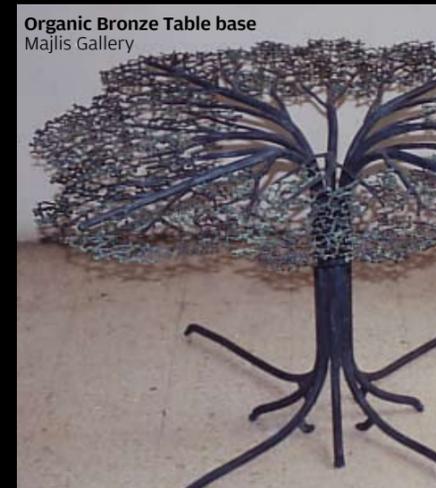
Mutant Tables
Perimeter Art & Design Gallery



Cooper Family
Stilwerk Design Gallery



Wall hanging Bibliotheque
Salon 94



Organic Bronze Table base
Majlis Gallery

Most importantly, Design Days Dubai, says Mr Zammit, has been created to encourage learning about all aspects of design. "We want it to inspire the next generation."

With limited-edition design having fast become a more popular and safe investment both regionally and internationally, we speak to three of the world's top galleries who will be participating in the Dubai fair. When it comes to giving out advice to novices, they're all unanimous: "Buy what you love!"

R 20TH CENTURY, NEW YORK

Mr Meyers is one of the gallery owners at R 20th Century, New York, which represents a distinguished group of historical and contemporary designers whose work is among the most innovative and finely crafted of their time.

The gallery was founded in 1997 by Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman who shared a goal of promoting a closer study, appreciation and preservation of 20th and 21st century design. Meyers and Snyderman have garnered a wide audience and international acclaim for their groundbreaking exhibitions, publications and lectures and for their commitment to preserving history through their archives, library and private collection.

Why did you decide to get involved in Design Days Dubai?

As soon as we heard the fair was beginning, we agreed to participate. We were very interested to explore the cultural community in this part of the world, which was new to us.

Why is Design Days Dubai an important platform?

It is important for the globalization and growth of the design market to have a fair of this caliber in Dubai.

What works you will have on display and why have you chose to exhibit these specific pieces?

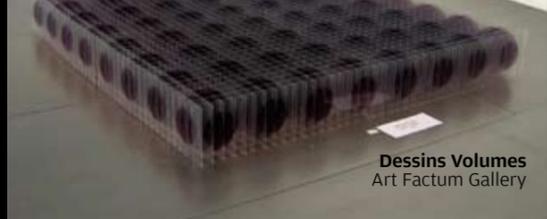
We are bringing the work of several designers from our stable – incredible artisans creating works that are set apart by the ways in which they bear the mark of the artists' hand. David Wiseman, a young designer from Los Angeles, works in porcelain, metals and crystal to create his exquisitely beautiful forms. Jeff Zimmerman, based in New York, is one of the virtuoso glass artists working today. His works explore scale and technique in extraordinary ways. Wendell Castle was one of the fathers of the American studio craft movement and he developed techniques for working with wood that are still used today. He also began experimenting with carving plastics by hand to create sumptuous sculptural shapes.

Do you think we can expect to see any emerging trends in the design world at Design Days Dubai and, if so, what are these?

Again, I think the emerging trends we will see are related to the globalization of design.

What sets your gallery apart from other designers?

We put a lot of energy into preserving the history of



Dessins Volumes
Art Factum Gallery



Chair
R 20th Century

design. With the contemporary designers that we represent we want to foster a relationship for the long-term and help them build a lasting legacy.

Are there any Arabic designers that have caught your eye recently?

Last year at Design Days Dubai we met Nicolas Lecompte and Pascale Wakim from the gallery Carwan in Beirut and began a collaboration with them to exhibit the Zigurat boxes designed by Oeuffice. The response to them here in the States has been fantastic.

What are you most looking forward to when you visit Dubai?

To meeting new people and having the opportunity once again this year to be exposed to the wonderful culture of the city.

What tips can you offer a first-time buyer of limited edition design?

Buy what you love, before it disappears.
www.r20thcentury.com



Fragmented Crack Coffee Table
Based upon



"The White Edition" Big Table in gel-coated fiberglass-reinforced plastic, with removable and reversible center sections. Originally designed by Wendell Castle circa 1970 for a Rochester, New York office. Current limited edition of 8 plus 4 APs. Designed and manufactured by Wendell Castle, Rochester, New York, 2006-2011. Photograph by Sherry Griffin/R 20th Century

BASED UPON

Ian Abell is the co-founder of London based gallery Based Upon, which he set up with his twin brother Richard in 2004. A team of artists and designers creating highly acclaimed, large-scale artworks, architectural surfaces, and sculptural furniture, Based Upon's work is often inspired by natural and urban landscapes, exploring these themes through the use of archetypal forms and patterns, which weave together personal, social and historical narratives.

"Many of our pieces," says Ian "are the result of a journey in which we map a location or personal history, taking physical casts of the landscape and recording photography, film and sound."

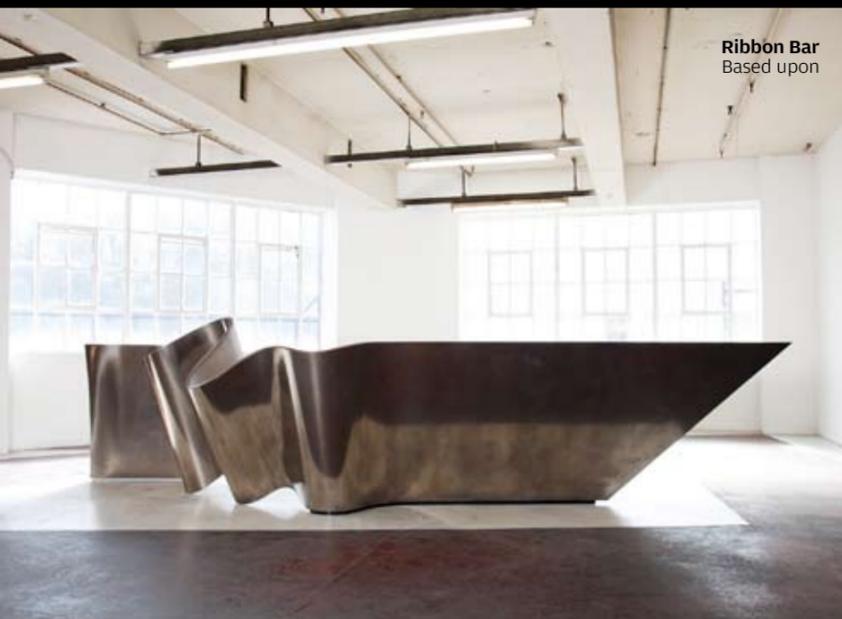
From family histories to the vision and heritage of commercial and public organisations, Based Upon have created commemorative works for the headquarters of some of the world's most treasured brands as well as bespoke artworks, furniture and installations for the world's finest superyachts, homes and palaces."



HL901
R 20th Century



Remembering knightsbridge
Based upon



Ribbon Bar
Based upon

Why did you decide to get involved in Design Days Dubai?

It's an emerging region on the contemporary design scene and one rooted in ancient, intricate handcraft techniques. We've done some landmark projects in the region. In 2008 we were commissioned to create a large artwork to celebrate Lusail a new city in Qatar and a series of portraits of traditional Qatari life for the VIP suite there. We also created a 10m x 3m artwork based on the Dubai Skyline for the penthouse of Dubai's World Trade Centre. Last year we were commissioned to create a work for the Abu Dhabi Foreign Ministry based on a map of the world. We were introduced to the region by Sheikh Majed Al Sabah when he hosted us to show us the ancient arts and crafts techniques and we then collaborated with him to create a limited edition Chanel bottle. We also have a number of collectors and friends who are patrons and advisers to Art Dubai and Design Days Dubai.

Why is Design Days Dubai an important platform?

The creative world thrives on insights and perspectives that challenge the status quo. For many years now the design scene has been dominated by Western Europe and the USA. It is exciting to see the shift as the world east of Western Europe joins centre stage.

Can you tell us a bit about the works you will have on display?

We are showing some of our most well known classics

(the Twist Table, the Plum Blossom cabinet and Remembering Knightsbridge), and some new work created specifically for this show. A series entitled "nature the creator, man the editor" reflects on the idea that all that is truly beautiful is already out there. As designers and artists, if we are open to it, we can capture it and frame it rather than trying to mimic or improve it. This is based on the Islamic tradition that such is the divine beauty of God's creation that any attempt to represent it figuratively is to demean it.

Do you think we can expect to see any emerging trends at Design Days Dubai?

The global nature I referred to earlier is significant. I also believe we're moving toward a real appreciation of handmade work. A focus on craft over industrial design brings with it an appreciation of the preciousness of imperfection and the beauty in the unintended, the accidents and the natural. The blur between what is design and what is art continues to grow.

What sets your gallery apart?

We are unique in that we're a gallery representing our own work; everything is handmade in our studio. As well as the pieces on show, we do a lot of bespoke commissioned work.

What type of audience does your gallery attract?

Although we're based in London, only about 20 per cent of our work ends up in the UK. We have significant work in the Middle East, India, USA, China and Russia. We have created feature pieces for brands like Dior, Tiffany & Co, Mulberry and Fortnum & Mason and have done a significant amount of work on some of the world's largest and most acclaimed yachts.

What do you think of the design scene in Dubai?

I was last in Dubai about four years ago. The design scene was in a very nascent stage and I am really looking forward to seeing how much it has changed. I believe that it is moving very quickly – as we have come to expect from Dubai.

Are there any Arabic designers that have caught your eye recently?

I like the work of Khalid Shafar and, of course, Niloufar Afnan who worked at Based Upon last year before returning home to Beirut.

What work of art in your home is your most prized possession and why?

A 2.5 metre by 2.5 metre piece I made to commemorate the birth of my first child. It's a representation of her hand as it was when she was one week old with mementoes inlaid into hand carved lines.

www.basedupon.com, ian@basedupon.com



Table from massive working bench
J+A



Manta armchair
Nakkash Gallery



Giselle Table
Nakkash Gallery



Alien
Nakkash Gallery



NAKKASH GALLERY, DUBAI

Established in 1983 and headquartered in Dubai, Nakkash Gallery is at the forefront of interior design. Gallery owner Mr. Wajih Nakkash describes their client base as adventurous buyers who have come to rely on them for items that are both unique and high quality. The gallery's eclectic furniture, both classical and contemporary, appeals to fun-lovers who enjoy both entertaining and being entertained.

Why did you decide to get involved in Design Days Dubai?

Design has never been at the forefront of the culture in this region, which is a misfortune: if applied correctly design can improve all aspects in any field. Design Days Dubai is a great platform to promote both furniture design as well as the abstraction and concept of design in the region. Nakkash Gallery wants to be part of this movement.

Why is Design Days Dubai an important platform?

Design Days Dubai is unlike any other fair in the region and has become an important collectable design fair in the Middle East; an opportunity to present our products to a broader audience.

Can you tell us a bit about the works you will have on display?

Our diverse selection includes Alien by Jonas Jurgaitis, a sculpture which combines technological creativity so that one can sit on it and feel comfortable; Giselle by Anna Neklesa, a table that combines the fragility and strength of ballet to express the beauty of the Russian soul and Falconry Club Chair by the Nakkash team which depicts the national symbol of the UAE. Creating furniture through local heritage inspired the team to honour falconry.

What sets your gallery apart from other designers?

Our limited-edition art and design pieces are sourced from all four corners of the world. Nakkash Gallery aims to produce environments that have versatile character that can unite the contemporary and classic in a subtle way.

What type of audience does your gallery attract?

Our goal is to make every one's home/office/ restaurant more functional and aesthetically pleasing. We don't sell furniture and accessories; we sell a lifestyle.

What do you think of the design scene in Dubai?

It has greatly improved but it still needs more worldwide design companies to improve the standard and design knowledge.

What tips can you offer a first-time buyer of limited edition design?

Buy something you like, not what you think you should like! First time buyers shouldn't feel pressured into buying something they are not sure about. Design is subjective. It is also important to find out the story behind the piece.

www.nakkashgallery.com



Falconry Club Chair
Nakkash Gallery