



# Van Cleef & Arpels

Haute Joaillerie, place Vendôme since 1906



**Fascinating Zip**  
Necklace, transformable into a bracelet,  
coloured sapphires and diamonds.



*Amazing Butterfly-Symphony*  
Poetic Complications watch,  
white gold, diamonds, onyx  
and mother-of-pearl marquetry.

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## WELCOME

Although there is an entrenched appreciation of art, the region's knowledge of design is still in its early stages. Hence Design Days Dubai, the Middle East's first design fair dedicated to contemporary and innovative design, will complement the city's Art Week and cement the region's reputation as a hub for the savvy art set.

In association with Van Cleef & Arpels, Brownbook talks to galleries, designers and one of the fair's patrons to hear their views on design and what inspires them. This guide focuses on the importance of the fair at a time when the concept of design is becoming as intriguing to the public as it has always been to collectors, experts and aficionados.

Van Cleef & Arpels, renowned for its creativity and jewellery designs, is a natural partner for Design Days Dubai, and will be showcasing, for the first time in the Middle East, its latest high jewellery collection. Bals de Légende is an awe-inspiring collection of five sets of jewels, magnificent in detail and colour, inspired by the most splendid balls of the 20th century.

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- 16. Nakkash Gallery, a family business with a difference
- 18. Mischer'traxler, an Austrian-based design studio in the process of recreating the mashrabiya

## Summary

### **Smogallery**

Focusing on unique works and limited series, Smogallery exhibits contemporary international and Lebanese designers whose works blur the boundaries not only between art, design and architecture, but also between periods and modes of expression.

### **Van Cleef & Arpels**

Van Cleef & Arpels - the headline supporter of Design Days Dubai - is showcasing its latest high jewellery collection Bals de Légende, for the first time in the Middle East since it was premiered to the world in Paris last year. Alban Belloir, director of Van Cleef & Arpels Middle East and India believes that the design fair is the perfect time for the launch.

### **Rana Sadik**

As patron of the region's first contemporary design fair, Rana Sadik believes that Design Days Dubai will pave way for all sorts of educational opportunities and will make contemporary design accessible to everyone.

### **La Galerie Nationale**

La Galerie Nationale are busy gearing up for the opening of their gallery in the heart of Dubai's art district: Al Quoz's Alserkal Avenue. In doing this, their objective is to create a bridge between Europe and the Middle East in terms of representing the great designers of the 20th century.

### **Nakkash Gallery**

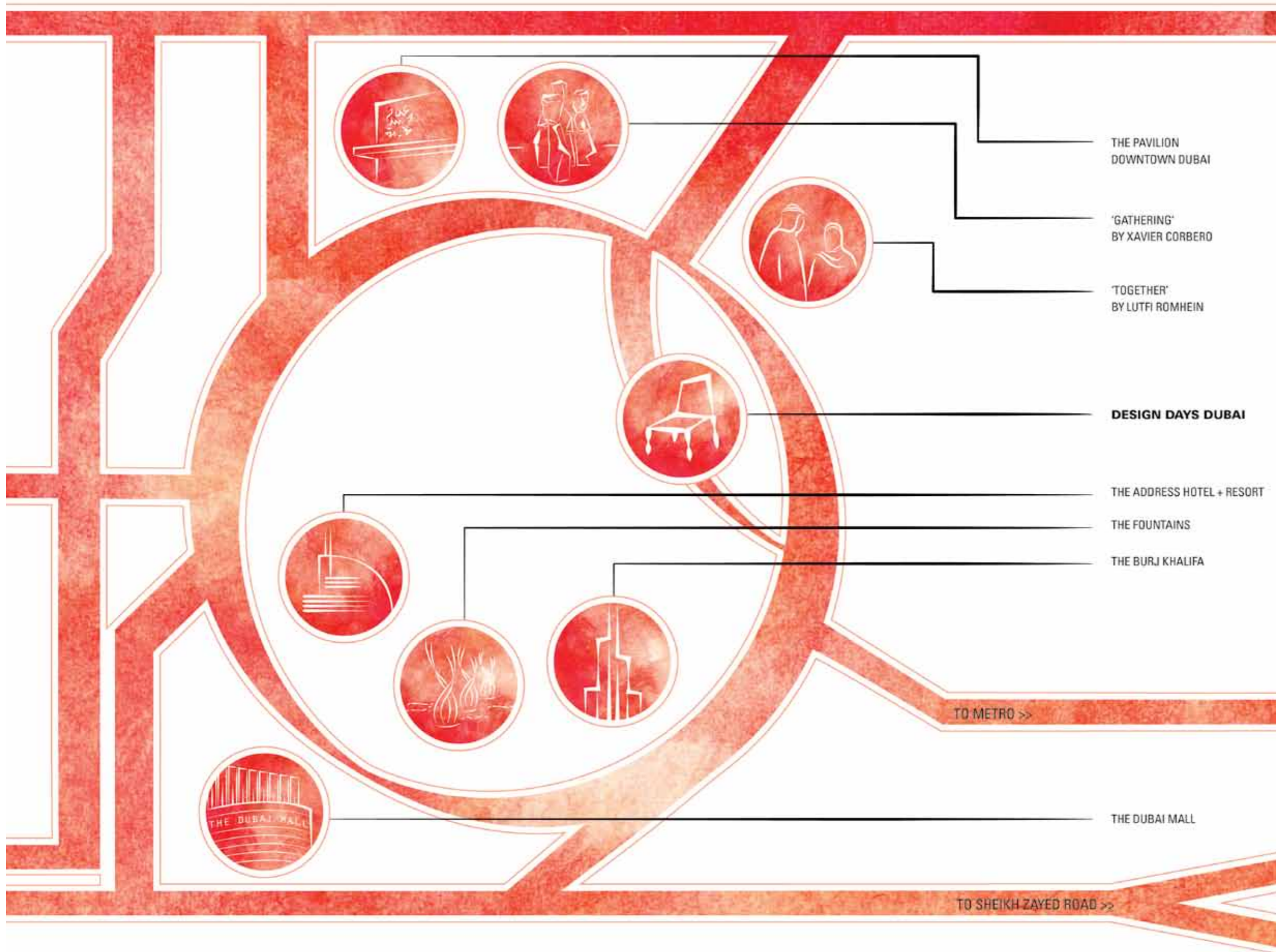
A family-based business, Nakkash Gallery's focus is on refining their client's lifestyle and promoting emerging designers throughout the region. The founders of Nakkash are delighted to be involved with Design Days Dubai as they feel it is a significant platform for design in the Middle East and will be an opportunity for the gallery to showcase its products to a wider audience.

### **mischer'traxler**

The intricate process of mashrabiya, typical to Middle Eastern architecture, is the inspiration behind design team mischer'traxler's installation for the Carwan Gallery exhibition; Contemporary Perspectives in Middle Eastern Crafts at Design Days Dubai.

# MAP

Design Days Dubai will present a strong educational platform at the fair that will continue throughout the year to encourage a future generation of design collectors



THE PAVILION  
DOWNTOWN DUBAI

'GATHERING'  
BY XAVIER CORBERO

'TOGETHER'  
BY LUTFI ROMHEIN

DESIGN DAYS DUBAI

THE ADDRESS HOTEL + RESORT

THE FOUNTAINS

THE BURJ KHALIFA

THE DUBAI MALL

## Sunday 18 March

Arabic Lettering & Arabesque in Product Design  
by Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès & Lara Assouad Khoury (Khatt Foundation)

11am - 1pm and 4.30pm - 6.30pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

What Design can do for the Future?

by: Li Edelkoort  
7pm - 8.30pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

## Monday 19 March

Camel Leather Weaving in coordination with Al Khaznah Tannery  
by: Kwangho Lee

11am - 1pm and 5pm - 7pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

Bliss, Spirituality in everyday life  
by: Li Edelkoort and FN Designs

11am - 3pm  
Price: AED 500  
Location: Al Serkal Avenue, Al Quoz

Mentor sessions; 20min one-to-one

by: Nada Debs  
Time: 12pm - 3pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

The Design Market: Discovering, Collecting & Investing  
by: Rabih Hage

Time: 7.30pm - 9pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

## Tuesday 20 March

Lego Links; Architecture & Design  
by: Meitha Al Mazrooei, WTD Magazine

Time: 11am - 1pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

Furniture-making using Emirati Talli & street materials  
by: Leo Capote & Amaury

Time: 4pm - 6pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

Teaching Design

by: Peter di Sabatino, Constantin Boym, Alexis Georgeacopoulos and Naby Chenaf

Time: 7pm - 8.30pm  
Location: The Pavilion, Downtown Dubai

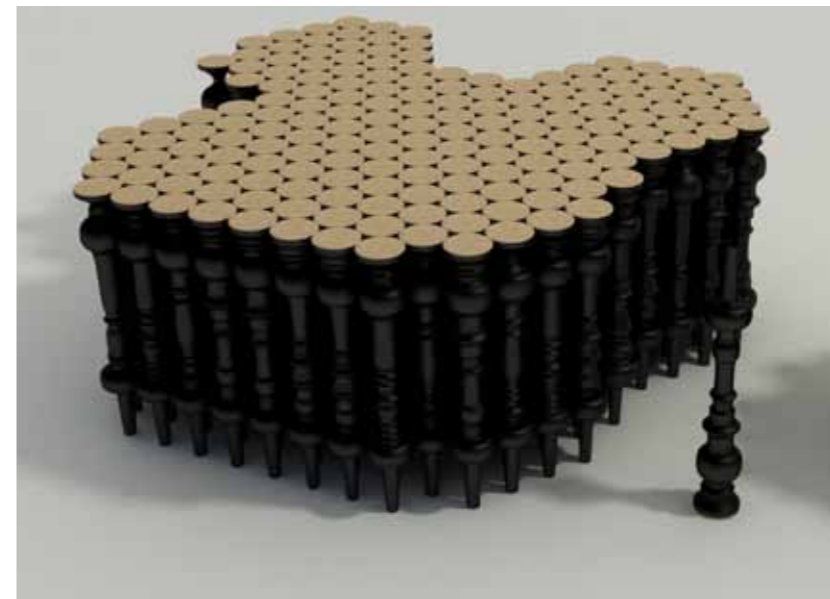
## Wednesday 21 March

Furniture making using Emirati Talli & Street Materials  
by: Leo Capote and Amaury

Time: 11am - 1pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai

Mentor sessions; 20min one-to-one

by: Nada Debs  
Time: 11.30am - 2.30pm  
Location: Design Days Dubai



# Smogallery, Beirut

**Representing some of the biggest names at the fair, Smogallery keeps an open mind when selecting works**

By accident rather than design, architect Gregory Gatsereia decided, after one client too many 'passed up the opportunity of a lifetime' to purchase a piece of art he rated highly, that he should be purchasing the works himself. A connoisseur by nature, he had been acting as a private art consultant to discerning collectors, travelling the world and advising them on artworks.

'Smogallery started because I had this passion,' Gatsereia explains. 'I was not buying much for myself. I would have had an amazing collection of 20th century design if I'd bought all the pieces I'd advised my clients to buy over the years. I was becoming increasingly frustrated when clients didn't react when I showed these incredible pieces. In the end, because I didn't want to lose them, I started to buy them myself.'

Over the years, he started to amass an impressive collection and wondered what the next step should be. 'The idea of showing my collection one day grew in my mind and I reached a point where I felt mentally ready to select the pieces.' The result was the opening of Smogallery in 2011 in Beirut's Karantina district near the port of Beirut. Gatsereia deliberately chose a location on a nondescript road away from the busy city centre and the heavy traffic. 'I wouldn't have done this in the Beirut Central District, I wanted a quiet place – more like a destination. I don't want people to come because they happen to be shopping in the vicinity. If they come it's because they've made the effort,' he says. The name of the gallery – Smo – has no particular meaning. 'I chose it for its simplicity and sound and being unfamiliar, it intrigues – which is certainly the effect of the gallery itself.'

Focusing on unique works and limited series, the gallery exhibits contemporary international and Lebanese designers whose works blur the boundaries not only between art, design and architecture, but also between periods and modes of expression. Current design pieces are exhibited alongside unique pieces and limited editions exclusive to the gallery. 'I wanted to use this space to showcase artists and designers from different backgrounds who realise their potential in a variety of ways. We select artists according to different criteria. What interests me most in art is that it allows us to perceive the world in a different language.'

International artists currently represented by the gallery include Peter Zimmerman, Jan Van Lierde and Raphael Charles, whilst closer to home, Lebanese designers include Georges Mohasseb, Najla El Zein, Anwar Azzi and Charbel Samuel Aoun.

'Smogallery is a space for talented young people to share their knowledge. We are creating an opportunity for exposure, where we can show all areas of art – from installation and performance to exhibition and discussion. Anything that people want to articulate, we want to show. In one corner of the gallery, huge dark fabric clouds are suspended from the ceiling; an installation by Najla el Zein. 'I said to Naja – this is your place you can do whatever you like,' Gatsereia explains, reflecting on his aim for the gallery to become a platform from which young, local designers can find support for their concepts.

Also represented will be Celia Abou Arbid's Butterfly day bed, Majd Bazerji's London Punk Chair, Nada Debs' Diamond Lamp and Georges Mohasseb's Honey Sweet Chair. 'Fairs cannot be underestimated, Gatsereia explains. 'It creates an opportunity for designers to share their creativity with a wider audience.'



## An Enchanting Journey with Jewels

**Van Cleef & Arpels is showcasing its latest high-end jewellery collection for the first time in the Middle East, at the region's first international design festival – Design Days Dubai**

Van Cleef & Arpels has joined forces with the region's inaugural design festival - Design Days Dubai (DDD) - to showcase its latest high jewellery collection for the first time in the region.

The collection, Bals de Légende, which was premiered to the world in Paris last year, is rich in detail and colour and pays tribute to the most splendid balls of the 20th century.

Alban Belloir, director of Van Cleef & Arpels Middle East and India, says he has high hopes for the show. 'Since its creation in 1906, Van Cleef & Arpels has always set a standard in being innovative and magnificent. The luxury jewellery house is always striving for excellence in its poetic inspiration, choice of stones, unique creations and unsurpassed craftsmanship.'

'Our collaboration with DDD is very much in line with our identity. As pioneers in our field, we are very excited about supporting the inaugural contemporary Dubai design fair, which we strongly believe will produce great results. This is an association of excellence, as the best design galleries from all around the world will come together on a common platform, making it all the more exciting,' he tells us.

Five sets of exquisite jewels, inspired by five extraordinary balls will offer visitors to the fair a glimpse at a magical journey that transcends time, he elaborates. 'Our clients always expect to be amazed and discover new stories. Most of all, they want to see beautiful jewels.'

From the Russian Bal d'Hiver in 1903 to the Venetian Bal du Siecle in 1951 and the famous New York Black and White Ball of 1966 hosted by Truman Capote – the author of Breakfast at Tiffany's, a brooch representing one of the graceful dancers from each event has been created for the collection.

Belloir, who has been at the helm of Van Cleef & Arpels' Middle East operations since 2011, is delighted to be a part of this 'great opportunity'. However, he does admit that there have been some challenges. 'With this being the first event of its kind, there is a bit of uncertainty, such as how the visitors are going to react. I am really optimistic though, as well as confident that the event will be a success.'

Van Cleef & Arpels, synonymous with Parisian elegance, prestige and exceptional craftsmanship, has always enjoyed an esteemed relationship with the Middle East. 'Women here have excellent taste and a good eye for jewellery. We are very proud to say that some of our loyal clientele hailed from aristocratic families and the Middle East is strategic for the Maison. We are confident that Van Cleef & Arpels has a promising future here.'

With eight boutiques in the region, including a new one in Abu Dhabi's Etihad Towers, Belloir concludes that Van Cleef & Arpels strongly believes in maintaining an exclusivity for its customers.





## Rana Sadik

**Rana Sadik is a patron of Design Days Dubai. Here she discusses her passion for all things art and design**

'I can't remember,' exclaims Rana Sadik when we ask her to cast her mind back to what first aroused her interest in design. 'It shapes everything around us' she continues, 'but I think I've always had an eye for the unusual.'

The vivacious Iranian-born collector who is one of the patron's of Dubai's first contemporary design fair, then cites an exhibition called Telling Tales at the V&A museum in London as a catalyst for really opening her eyes to contemporary design. 'I'd rate it as one of my top five greatest exhibitions,' she says.

Sadik, who is based in Kuwait, has an innate ability to network, a vast wealth of knowledge about design and of course an insatiable passion for the arts. These are just some of the reasons she was selected as a patron, says Cyril Zammit, the fair's director.

'All our patrons are involved in the world of design, be they collectors, professionals, academics or designers themselves,' says Zammit. 'With their various backgrounds we benefit from their network of contacts to either convince galleries to participate, bring potential buyers to the fair or guide us in some projects. For our inaugural fair, we have chosen people close to us already, from all over the world. Rana and I met a few years ago and we quickly established that we had the same taste in galleries and designers. She commissions design and is also extremely knowledgeable.'

01 Zammit hopes that Design Days Dubai will offer a fresh dimension to the regional understanding of design and will be a new experience for the broader public. 'Visitors will be able to interact with international designers and experts and make informed decisions about choosing collectables and limited edition pieces.'

Sadik agrees that the fair will make contemporary design more accessible to everybody. 'It will also force people out of their comfort zone,' she adds. 'They might see work which they don't understand, but the beauty of a design fair is the way it's laid out. Because it is open; visitors can walk around and not feel intimidated about talking to the designers or the gallery owners.'

'It is a myth that you need to know a lot about design to appreciate it,' she adds. 'If a piece makes you stop, makes you go back, makes you really want to examine it, that's what counts. We don't all know what a polyurethane-injection moulded chair is, and we might feel embarrassed to ask, but what is important, first and foremost, is that it appeals to us. We can do the research afterwards.' Before investing in a piece, Sadik always looks at aesthetics, the functionality of the piece and the materials used, and then asks herself how she can use it in her home.

Of her involvement with the fair she says, 'I am delighted to be a patron. It's not about having a PhD in design, art history and exhibition set-up, rather than believing in the value of what you are involved with. I believe Design Days Dubai will put contemporary design into a cultural context and I am looking forward to every aspect of it.'

01. Courtesy Joris Laarman Studio





## La Galerie Nationale

**We talk to La Galerie Nationale's director, Guillaume Cuiroy about the enduring quality of 20th century design**



Ahead of its opening in the heart of Dubai's emerging art district, the director of La Galerie Nationale in Paris says he is hoping to increase cross-cultural appreciation between the two regions. 'Our objective,' explains Guillaume Cuiroy, 'in having a gallery in Dubai, is to create a bridge between Europe and the Middle East as we represent great designers of the 20th century. We work with a pool of some of the largest galleries specialising in vintage art furniture. We have actually been promoting it for almost 20 years in France and the rest of Europe, but it has really taken off with a vengeance over the last decade. It's become highly sought after. And now we want to share our expertise with a new market of connoisseurs and amateurs, whether they want to buy a statement piece for their home or office, or simply make an investment.'

La Galerie Nationale represents designers from the second part of the 20th century, which Cuiroy states, was a most prolific period of design. The proliferation of new materials and technology allowed a new generation of designers to run wild with their imagination, creativity and vision. The result? 'Design so contemporary, so unparalleled that it has soul,' he enthuses.

'With the evolution of the art scene in the Emirates – Al Serkal Avenue, Art Dubai, Art Abu Dhabi and now Design Days Dubai, we feel the time is right to open La Galerie Nationale in the Middle East. The work of the designers we represent here is timeless. It was modern 40 or 50 years ago and is modern now. Our opening coincides perfectly with Design Days Dubai. I was looking for a local event that would support my promotion of vintage design in the 20th century and the opening of my gallery and the design fair is a perfect opportunity to do both.'

Cuiroy will also be showing representative pieces of 20th century design at Design Days Dubai; Mathieu Mategot's Mondrian coffee table, a set of four armchairs and a table by Warren Platner, a pair of armchairs by Marco Zanuso, a sconce by Jean Royere and a floor light by Fabio Lenci as well as items by Louis Durot, Willy Rizzo, Pierre Cardin and Geoffrey Harcourt. 'My intention is to span a period of design from the 40s to the 70s – to offer, if you like, a comprehensive catalogue of 20th century design.'

'I'm particularly proud to be promoting Mathieu Mategot - a Hungarian French designer and material artist, and one of the most renowned designers of the 1950s.' Cuiroy admits when pressed to select just one designer from the ones he will be showcasing. 'His 'Mondrian' inspired coffee table is a masterpiece. I also hope collectors will fall in love with Louis Durot, who is one of the great designer-sculptors of furniture of the 20th century.' A chemical engineer by training, Durot created exciting pieces from inert materials, imbued with a sense of movement and fluidity with each bend of metal or ripple of resin. 'Actually,' Cuiroy says, 'it's difficult to choose just one designer. I like them all.'

***"We work with a pool of some of the largest galleries specialising in vintage art furniture"***





# NAKKASH Gallery

**NAKKASH Gallery is a family-run design business with the focus on promoting up and coming work throughout the region**

Established more than thirty years ago by Wajih Nakkash, NAKKASH Gallery started life with a team of three employees in a small office in Sharjah. It has evolved over the years into a prestigious art and design gallery in Dubai. 'I set up my gallery because I wanted to add culture and lifestyle elegance to the city,' Nakkash explains. 'There has been a tremendous change in the design scene in Dubai and the younger generation appreciate it so much more because they are exposed to it through travel and the internet.'

Born in Beirut, architect Nakkash established his own interior design firm in Dubai in 1980 followed three years later by the opening of the gallery. The business is truly a family affair. Aya Nakkash, Wajih's daughter is the marketing manager and Omar, his son, is the business development manager. Both were immersed in the world of art and design from a young age and it was a natural choice for them to work in the family business.

NAKKASH Gallery's design ethic follows Wajih's personal preference for mixing up styles such as antique furniture with modern fabrics. 'We always mix and match different aesthetics to avoid monotony - for instance a classic or contemporary accessory with a modern living room set. Our design philosophy has always been - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We try to adopt a holistic attitude, taking into consideration the client's style and the space's purpose. Our focus is to refine a client's lifestyle and to add a distinctive character to all our projects.'

NAKKASH Gallery sources unique and limited-edition art and design pieces from around the world - mixing African ethnic pieces with contemporary furniture, representing designers like Jean Marie Massaud and Philippe Starck; uniting the modern with the classic in a subtle way.

Delighted to be involved with Design Days Dubai, Aya feels that it will not only act as a platform for design in the Middle East, but will be an opportunity for NAKKASH Gallery to showcase its products to a wider audience.

'This is a significant event,' Omar adds, 'where we want to promote young and upcoming designers and show their amazing designs to the world. We hope, through our presence at Design Days, that the public will associate NAKKASH Gallery with exceptional design.' The gallery will be showcasing works from several emerging designers at the fair including Geo Table by Vito Selma and The Invisible Man by Katrin Dekoninck.

Besides an ongoing mission to promote emerging designers and other projects in the pipeline such as NAKKASH Wedding, an online gift registry aimed at helping newly weds to furnish their dream home, and the opening of a new showroom focussing on new trends for outdoor living, the company pays special attention to its customer service. 'Getting to know a person and helping them create their dream home is truly a gratifying feeling,' Wajih sums up. 'Our aim is to guarantee client satisfaction, with an adventure through the interesting maze of interior design.'

***"Our design philosophy is - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts"***



## **mischer'traxler**

**A collaboration between Austrian-based design studio mischer'traxler, Lebanese artisan Roger Tohme and the Beirut-based Carwan Gallery produces inspirational results**

The intricate process of mashrabiya, typical to Middle Eastern architecture, is the inspiration behind design team mischer'traxler's installation for the Carwan Gallery exhibition; Contemporary Perspectives in Middle Eastern Crafts at Design Days Dubai.

In conjunction with Roger Tohme, a specialist wood craftsman from Beirut, Katharina Mischer and Thomas Traxler from Austria have taken the technique of mashrabiya - hand-carved wooden fretting for window screens - and translated it into a sideboard called 'gradient mashrabiya' composed of a network of more than 650 distinct pieces of manually carved wood. From rectangular slats to refined decorative elements, all stages are visible within the one object, becoming progressively more defined, detailed and fragile, but at the same time more three-dimensional.

They have focused on exposing the many steps of production to make the craftsman's work visible and therefore comprehensible to the viewer.

Carwan Gallery, developed the concept for this exhibition in Spring 2011, deciding to expand the vocabulary of traditional crafts through modern vision and uses. Directors and founders of Carwan - Pascale Wakim and Nicolas Bellavance-Lecompte - commissioned designers from the Middle East and beyond to create a series of limited edition objects. They had a brief to explore new avenues in design and to showcase the modern conceptualisation of traditional Middle Eastern craft techniques by international designers.

Vienna-based studio mischer'traxler, one of the designer teams commissioned by Carwan for this project, was formed in 2009 and concentrates on developing and designing products, furniture and installations with a focus on conceptual thinking. Balancing handcraft and technology, the studio's approach aspires towards the creation of new objects, materials, concepts, systems and production methods that respect sustainability and the relevance of nature.

The design team and the gallery met a year ago and discussed the idea of this performance. Mischer and Traxler had not been to the Middle East before, and spent a lot of time at the start of the project looking at images of the region, reading about it, looking at all kinds of arabesque patterns and learning about mathematically arranged tiles. 'Mentally we were quite often in the Middle East,' Mischer laughs. 'Probably being physically away helped us to keep our fantasy fresh and imagine another way of using the traditional craft.'

Certainly the piece they have designed has wholeheartedly embraced the essence of the region whilst applying a fresh and inspired perspective to a traditional technique.

01. Courtesy Rami Chahine



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### ***Brownbook Magazine***

A Middle Eastern publication which documents stories of people, places and narratives - from Tehran to Casablanca - that would otherwise remain unheard.

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