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Presenting 100 design visionaries – established icons, changemakers and emerging voices – from the Middle East and North Africa

AAU ANASTAS ♦ ABBOUD MALAK ♦ ABDALLA ALMULLA
 ♦ ABDULRAHMAN AL MUFTAH ♦ ABEER SEIKALY ♦
 AGATA KURZELA ♦ AGI ARCHITECTS ♦ AHMADREZA SCHRICKER
 ♦ AHMED BUKHASH ♦ AISHA AL SOWAIDI ♦ ALI MOHAMMADIOUN
 ♦ ALINE ASMAR D'AMMAN ♦ ALJOUD LOOTAH ♦ ALTIN ♦ ALTQADUM ♦
 ANARCHITECT ♦ ANNE HOLTROP ♦ ARNAUD BEHZADI ♦ ASTET STUDIO ♦
 AZAZ ARCHITECTS ♦ AZIZA CHAOUNI ♦ BADIE ARCHITECTS ♦ BOKJA DESIGN
 ♦ BONE ♦ BOO DESIGN STUDIO ♦ BOUCHRA BOUDOUA ♦ BRICKLAB ♦ CARL GERGES
 ♦ CIVIL ARCHITECTURE ♦ DAR ARAFA ARCHITECTURE ♦ DAVID/NICOLAS ♦ DIMA SROUJI
 ♦ DINA NUR SATTI ♦ DON TANANI ♦ DR. THOMAS MODEEN AND MAYSAA AL-MUMIN ♦ EBUR ♦
 EDITIONS LEVANTINE ♦ ETEREO ♦ FADAA ♦ H+A ♦ HALA SALEH ♦ HALL HAUS ♦ HIBA SHAHZADA
 ♦ HRH ANOUD KHALID MISHAAL BIN SAUD ♦ JASSIM ALSADDAH ♦ KAMEH ♦ KARIM + ELIAS ♦
 KARIM NADER ♦ KHALED ALAWADHI ♦ KRISTINA ZANIC ♦ L.E.FT ARCHITECTS ♦ LA BOTTEGA UAE ♦
 LAURENCE LEENAERT ♦ LINA GHOTMEH ♦ MA STUDIO ♦ MARC DIBEH ♦ MARY-LYNN AND CARLO MASSOUD
 ♦ MARYAM AL-HOMAID ♦ MESHARY ALNASSAR ♦ NADA DEBS ♦ NAJLA ELZEIN ♦ NAQSH COLLECTIVE
 ♦ NEBRAS ALJOAIB ♦ OMAR AL GURG ♦ OMAR CHAKIL ♦ OMAR NAKKASH ♦ PALLAVI DEAN
 ♦ PAOLA SAKR ♦ RABAH SAEID ♦ RANIA HAMED ♦ SAHEL ALHIYARI ♦ SALEM CHARABI
 ♦ SALIMA NAJI ♦ SALWA SAMARGANDI ♦ SAMER SAADEH ♦ SAMER SELBAK ♦
 SAMIR BANTAL ♦ SAYAR & GARIBEH ♦ SHADASKARI ♦ SHAHIRA FAHMY ♦ SHAIKHA AL SULAITI
 ♦ SIZAR ALEXIS ♦ STEPHANIE MOUSSALLEM ♦ STUDIO KO ♦ STUDIO MUKA
 ♦ SUMAYA DABBAGH ♦ T SAKHI ♦ TAREK SHAMMA ♦ TARIK AL ZAHARNA ♦
 TARIQ KHAYYAT ♦ VERA DIECKMANN ♦ VERHAAL ♦ WAIWA ♦ WATAD STUDIO
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AAU ANASTAS PALESTINE aauanastas.com

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Above: artist studios on the mezzanine area of AAU Anastas' Wonder Cabinet in Bethlehem. Below: tables from Etereo's Carbon collection

AAU Anastas' pioneering work ranges from large-scale architectural projects to furniture design (under the Local Industries tag) and workshops pairing Palestinian artisans with global creatives. Co-founders Elias and Yousef Anastas are advocates of the sustainable use of stone to foster resilient cities, particularly in Palestine – a belief that now rings truer than ever. Their research is the basis of a mixed-use project created with London-based Groupwork + Amin Taha, in an unlikely location – Winford, UK. Although AAU Anastas' work has been showcased in prestigious museums such as the V&A and Vitra Design Museum, this permanent residential/art space will express their creative vision to the full.



2

ETEREO

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
etereodesign.it

Dubai studio Etereo is led by Italian-born architects and designers Mirko Sala Tenna and Stefania Digregorio, who blend their native heritage with Middle Eastern influences. Their love of materiality has seen them decorate the Rubino Penthouse in Dubai's Burj Khalifa in luxurious leather and marble, and kit out Mersini, a beach-chic restaurant with an azure-tiled bar on the Greek island of Schinoussa. They are also expanding into furniture design with Faraglioni, a range of cast-bronze and "molten" glass pieces inspired by the rocks of Capri.

3

Right: Attaché, a former equestrian club converted into a multi-use destination in Riyadh by Bricklab.
Below right: Dima Srouji's Charts for a Resurrection exhibition

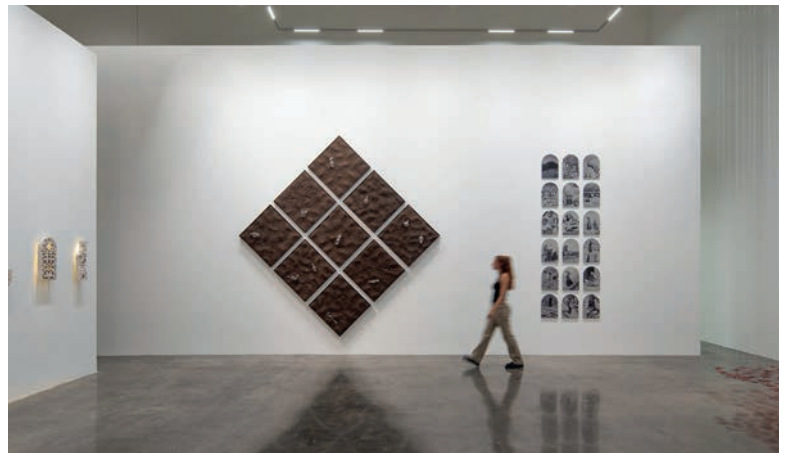


AZIZA CHAOUNI CANADA, MOROCCO azizachaouniprojects.com

Moroccan architect Aziza Chaouni takes a deeply moral approach to her craft, in response to issues created by climate change. "I strive to design for maximum social and environmental impact," she says. Accordingly, she's created an award-winning affordable anti-seismic housing prototype for communities affected by the 2023 earthquake in the High Atlas region near Marrakech; it uses mortarless compressed-earth bricks. She has also recently designed the Ifrane Craft Exhibition Center in the Atlas Mountains, adapting a 1930s bus station as part of her laudable mission to rehabilitate old buildings.

BRICKLAB SAUDI ARABIA brick-lab.com

"Understanding the relationships between places, objects and people forms the basis for our research for any given project," say brothers Abdulrahman and Turki Gazzaz, who founded Bricklab in 2015. "This allows us to address wider philosophical questions concerning the human condition relating to both ethics and aesthetics." Whether they are reimagining Riyadh's old industrial district as a cultural hub or interpreting patterns and textures from glass panels in Jeddah's Modernist buildings for a five-metre-tall installation focused on Saudi Arabia's oil boom era, the duo harness design as a tool to document change.



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DIMA SROUJI UNITED KINGDOM, PALESTINE
dimasrouji.com; hollowforms.studio

Palestinian architect and artist Dima Srouji currently leads the studio Underground Palestine, part of the MA in City Design at London's Royal College of Art. Often working with glass, text, plaster casts and film, she collaborates with artisans and anthropologists to create her emotionally charged works, which include a recent solo show, *Charts for a Resurrection*, exploring archaeological excavations conducted by Palestinian women in the 1900s. Srouji is also the founder of Hollow Forms, a glassware brand that celebrates craft skills in her homeland.

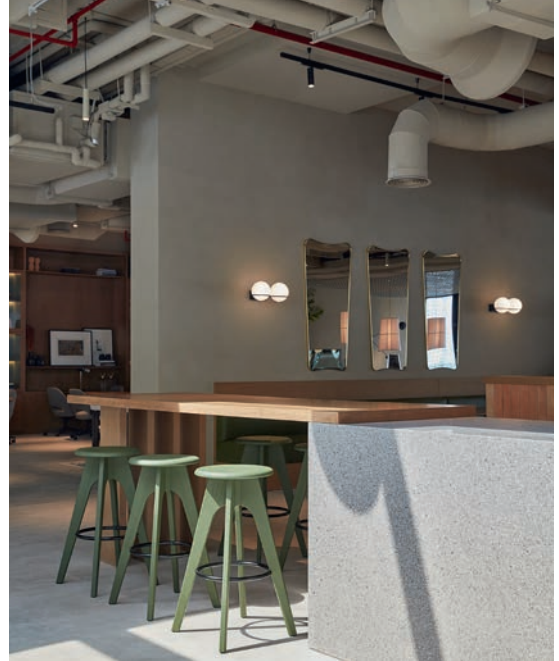
LAURENCE LEENAERT MOROCCO *lrnce.com*

Laurence Leenaert is the founder of LRNCE, a Morocco-based lifestyle brand that works with local craftspeople to create colourful ceramics and soft furnishings. The Belgian designer is also an accomplished artist, and this autumn had her first solo show in Milan. Under 9 Moons, at the city's Cadogan Gallery, represented a new departure: the paintings on show had a more pared-down feel, and were made using natural pigments that were left to dry in the sun. Inspired by the sights of Marrakech, they exude Leenaert's signature spontaneous style.

**NAJLA EL ZEIN**

THE NETHERLANDS, LEBANON
najlaelzein.com

"My work explores themes of connection," explains Lebanese-French designer Najla El Zein, "whether related to the body, femininity or human relationships, with a focus on gentleness, softness, and warmth." There's a playfulness to the result: her large-scale sculpted limestone benches, for example, look like larger-than-life noodles out in the public realm. Conveying emotion through tactile, fluid forms, El Zein's intuitive design process emphasises collaboration with artisans working in stone, glass and ceramics. Her latest work, Group of Five, is a stone seating sculpture that explores group dynamics, while Ensemble, an experimental glass series that captures emotions in the present moment, pushes material boundaries to encourage reflection.

**RANIA HAMED**

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *vshd.net*

Rania Hamed's architecture and interiors, created with her Dubai and Montreal-based studio VSHD, possess a Zen-like simplicity, reflecting her choice of Japanese design as a source of inspiration; other influences include traditional Arabic housing and Brutalist style. The latter is to the forefront at Soub, a new Dubai café awash with retro references (think Panton-esque curves and flashes of chrome). Opening soon are Moon Slice, an artisanal pizzeria in Dubai with a serene neutral palette, and Fold, a Jumeirah concept store that skilfully adapts a 1970s villa.

Left: embroidered, block-printed tablecloth by LRNCE. Above: UPSIDE co-living space, Dubai, by Rania Hamed. Below: Us, Her, Him by Najla El Zein



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NADA DEBS LEBANON, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
nadadebs.com

Lebanese designer Nada Debs is celebrated as a connoisseur of craft – from weaving to marquetry, all manner of artisan skills make their way into her modern-meets-traditional creations. Seeking to “give a voice to those who keep our culture alive”, she has recently collaborated with Dior on handmade pewter, walnut and mother-of-pearl holders for its La Collection Privée fragrances, and unveiled Swirlmania, 25 variations of her classic Swirl table that showcase specialist craft techniques. Next, she will open her new studio-showroom in Alserkal Avenue, which will fuse industrial chic with natural materials.

MARY-LYNN & CARLO

LEBANON *marylynncarlo.com*

Beirut-based siblings Mary-Lynn and Carlo Massoud design whimsical furniture and objects that are guaranteed to lift the spirits. “Our philosophy is to create an environment where people can escape from the realities of life into a playful world of colours, reconnecting with the innocent part of their unconscious,” they say. Currently working on an illuminated mural for a Beirut restaurant (a city they consider their “big lab”), they have also recently launched the Shiitake concrete-and-foam floor lamps, part of The Elephant Project, their collection of colourful oversized furniture.

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Right: Baloo, a buffet made of reinforced concrete, by Mary-Lynn and Carlo

Agata Kurzela's Game of Life installation, inspired by traditional Sadu weaving. Below: the Afkhami Virtual Museum by Ahmadreza Schricker

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AGATA KURZELA UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *kurzela.com*

Polish-born, Dubai-based designer Agata Kurzela launched her eponymous studio in 2020 and blends modern creativity with technological savvy (she's a trained engineer, architect and urban planner). Her versatile work spans architecture, interior design, installation and product design, and she's recently won awards for her sleek, steel-clad Government Offices in Abu Dhabi, an adaptation of a heritage officers' club. Next year she'll unveil the Kempinski Residences The Creek apartment complex in Dubai and a major museum project in Abu Dhabi.

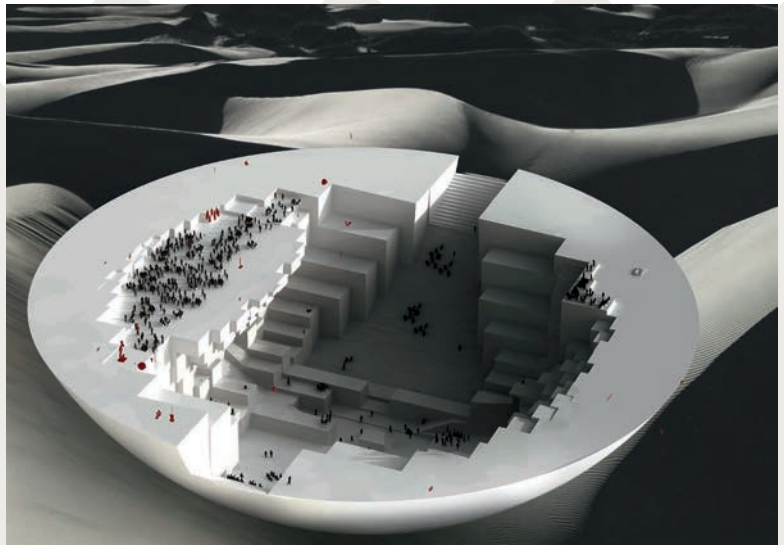


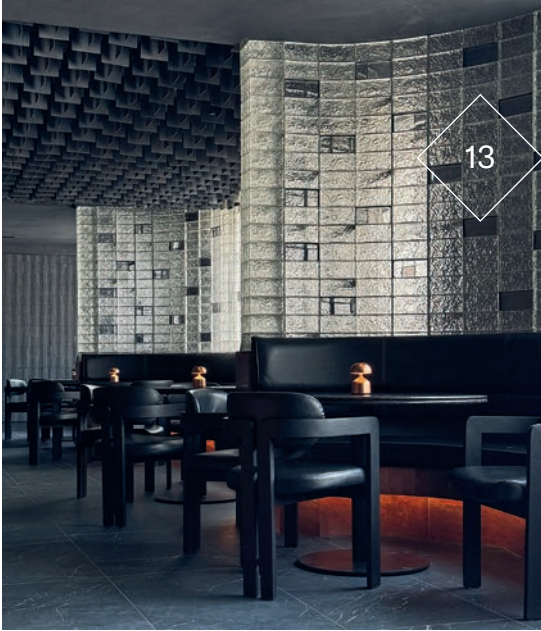
AHMADREZA SCHRICKER

UNITED STATES, IRAN
asanorth.com

Ahmadreza Schricker's experimental New York-based architecture practice ASA North is known for its Aga Khan Award-winning Argo Contemporary Art Museum & Cultural Centre in Tehran; it undertakes everything from private homes to urban planning, and is carving out a niche creating innovative museums, notably the world's first virtual museum, for art collector Mohammed Afkhami. Schricker – whose radical vision reflects his stints at Herzog & de Meuron and OMA – is currently planning a textile museum and theatre in the desert region of Kashan, Iran, and the Mies van der Rohe-inspired Dastan Cultural Station art museum in Toronto.

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AZAZ ARCHITECTS SAUDI ARABIA azazarchitects.com

Led by young architect Shahad Alazzaz, Riyadh-based Azaz Architects is redefining Saudi Arabia's design landscape. Recent standouts in the Kingdom's capital include a space-age redesign of boutique bakery Chunk, and Love of Brick, a residential project that utilises decorative brickwork to give Moorish motifs a fresh spin. Its latest venture, the Japanese "speakeasy" Kimyona (its mocktail menu includes a no-groni), has a darkly glamorous interior which mixes backlit glass bricks, walls clad with stacks of Chinese ceramic roof tiles, and graphic inlaid marble floors to dazzling effect. Inspired by analogue photography, the space takes guests on a journey from a Zen-like gallery, bathed in bright light and minimal tones, to a dimly lit dining hall reminiscent of a photographer's darkroom. It's picture-perfect.

ABDALLA ALMULLA UNITED ARAB EMIRATES mula.ae

By juxtaposing tradition with modern innovations, Dubai designer Abdalla Almulla's studio, Mula, looks to the future. This year he has worked with watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre to create 30 Sunsets, an installation at Dubai Mall celebrating Ramadan. The timber design drew inspiration from the symbolic nature of sunsets. Chiming with his focus on sustainable materials, Almulla has also designed Of Palm, a pavilion made of substances derived from palm trees. "It challenges us by using this native material in an innovative way, from the architecture to the food offerings," he says.



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ANARCHITECT
 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
anarchitect.com

Anarchitect's portfolio follows a "locally rooted" approach, with a commitment to adapting existing buildings and a keen focus on materiality. "With regeneration and a respect for locality, climate and culture, we believe design can lead to a future that surpasses sustainability," says founder Jonathan Ashmore. The latest addition to its catalogue of hospitality projects is Bab Al Shams' desert pool villas, which appear to emerge from the landscape. The studio is currently working on the interiors of a private duplex in the Lana Residences in Dubai and a modern home in the heart of Riyadh.

Top: Kimyona, a restaurant in Riyadh designed by Azaz Architects.
 Left: 30 Sunsets sculpture by Abdalla Almulla for watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre



LINA GHOTMEH LEBANON,
FRANCE linaghotmeh.com

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Viewing architecture as a tool to shape a better future for all, Lina Ghotmeh's buildings are sensitive to history and materials, deploying sustainable finishes and craft techniques. She's widely known for her work with Hermès, notably its Ateliers Hermès workshop in Normandy, and the 2023 Serpentine Pavilion in London, which was inspired by the French concept of convivial dining. Next, she will create a contemporary art museum in AlUla, arranged as a series of garden pavilions in the desert.



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SAHEL ALHIYARI JORDAN sahelalhiyari.co

Jordanian architect Sahel AlHiyari's work is characterised by simplicity and clean lines. "It evokes an archetypal presence that permeates its apparent abstraction, giving rise to transcendent qualities that surpass temporal trends," he says. His recently completed B.Kanaan Residence in Amman pays tribute to Jordan's early Modernist architecture with its monumental geometric volumes, which are clad in hand-chiselled barrel stone. Inside, soaring double-height spaces celebrate local craftsmanship and feature hand-chiselled gypsum wall panelling.



Above: B. Kanaan Residence by Sahel AlHiyari. Left: Olympic Village housing, Paris, by Lina Ghotmeh. Right: Salem Charabi's Karmstol woven chair

SALEM CHARABI DENMARK salemcharabi.com

Danish-Egyptian architect Salem Charabi leads a workshop-based practice near Copenhagen, blending local materials with a poetic sense of exploration. Inspired by Danish cabinetmaking and midcentury designer Ole Wanscher, Charabi's work reflects a deep curiosity about cultural connections and artisanal practices. His pieces (think lattice-backed sofas and hand-carved tea carts) focus on meaning through making, highlighting the similarities between global craft cultures.



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BADIE ARCHITECTS EGYPT *badiearchitects.com*

“My design philosophy draws inspiration from the unpredictability of nature, where no two patterns are the same, and every detail holds a sense of wonder,” says Egyptian architect Mohamed Badie. This reverence for the natural world can be observed in the bold forms of projects such as Esca Cueva in Cairo, a dining venue that evokes a curvaceous cave; its undulating structure was achieved by blending traditional craftsmanship with new-age fabrication methods. “In this digital age, we have embraced cutting-edge technologies to pioneer new design possibilities,” he explains. Next up is a wellness retreat in El Gouna that focuses on spiritual health and nature-based experiences.



Architect Mohamed Badie photographed at Esca Cueva



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ALTQADUM OMAN, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES @altqadum

Led by Marwan AlBalushi, Abdulrahim Alkendi and Najd AlBalushi, design studio Altqadum puts an experimental spin on Oman's past. "Our philosophy is inspired by our name, which in Arabic means 'progress'," explains AlBalushi. Its newest project, the Flame Café in Muscat, is "a theatrical take on a coffee-shop experience" with a curtained bar; next, it's transforming the 2004 Dubai Star Building "to create a sense of openness and light", and designing two mosques. "We're questioning traditional typologies and exploring how such spaces can shape modern community life," says AlBalushi.

Top: Masjid Bab Al Salam by Altqadum. Opposite, from top left: Frames eyewear store by Meshary AlNassar; Cobogo House by Jassim AlSaddah; 0.5 Editions chairs by Kameh



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DAVID/NICOLAS

ITALY, LEBANON,
UNITED STATES
davidandnicolas.com

With studios in Milan, Beirut and San Francisco, David Raffoul and Nicolas Moussallem create elegant yet witty furniture and interiors rooted in "cross-cultural experimentation" and craft traditions. Their new projects include a showroom for A&S Chronora, Rolex's pre-owned dealer in Beirut, which "evokes a sense of travelling through time". Featuring finely detailed timber panelling and emerald-green seating, it feels suitably luxe. They have also launched the statement Ratio Kitchen with Marsotto, clad in marble and lava-stone, and a Dubai store for luxury e-tailer Ounass, which emulates a private home.

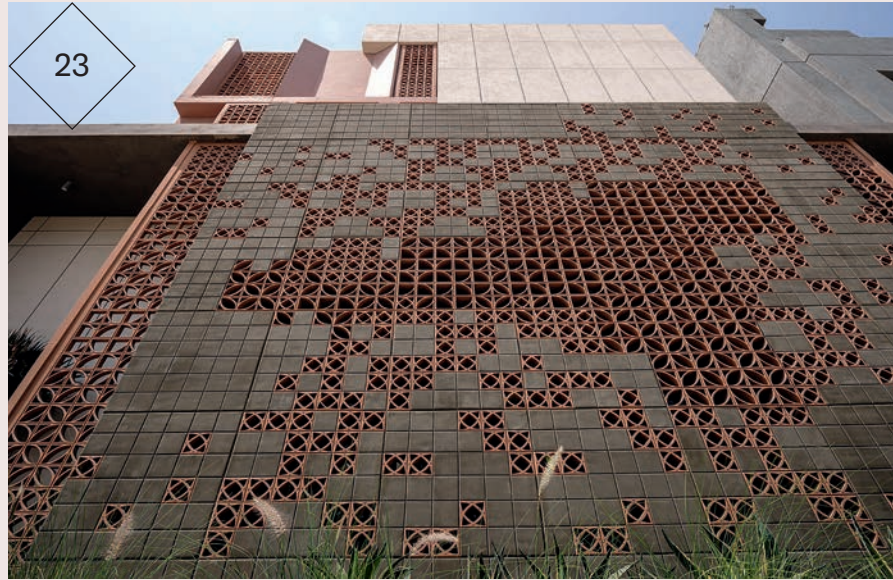


MESHARY ALNASSAR
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES,
KUWAIT mesharyalnassar.com

Buildings, interiors, products and landscapes – nothing is off limits for multi-talented Kuwaiti designer Meshary AlNassar, whose serene aesthetic takes inspiration from his local environment, the sculptures of Constantin Brancusi and midcentury Scandinavian style. His recent hits include Doha eyewear store Frames, which teams curvaceous lines with gleaming stainless-steel surfaces. Also in the works are a luxury villa that seamlessly integrates natural landscapes for an indoor-outdoor lifestyle, and a Dubai home that focuses on traditional materials, colours and building methods.

JASSIM ALSADDAH KUWAIT babnimnim.com

Architect Jassim AlSaddah's Kuwait City practice Babnimnim has an intriguing name – a play on Arabic words that mean a small, intricate door. It reflects his mission to create refined spaces on every scale, which he pursues with partner Tareq Hashim. Having recently finished the futuristic Mamluki Lancet Mosque in Kuwait, AlSaddah has also unveiled the Cobogo House residential complex in the Funaitees region. Its cubelike forms are adorned with *mashrabiya*-inspired cobogo tiles, designed in the 1920s to filter sunlight and provide ventilation. The resulting dappled patterns in the interior spaces are a breathtaking sight.



KAMEH UNITED ARAB EMIRATES kameh.space

Masterminded by an anonymous creative, Dubai design atelier Kameh creates “perfectly imperfect, hand-sculpted” pieces which are all crafted locally, and combine functionality with the elevated beauty of art. Its most recent collection, Kameh 0.4, is inspired by children's drawings and features balloon details; next year it will become the first UAE brand to show at the Collectible fair in New York with its 0.5 collection, a set of five ashwood chairs made using artisanal wood-burning techniques.





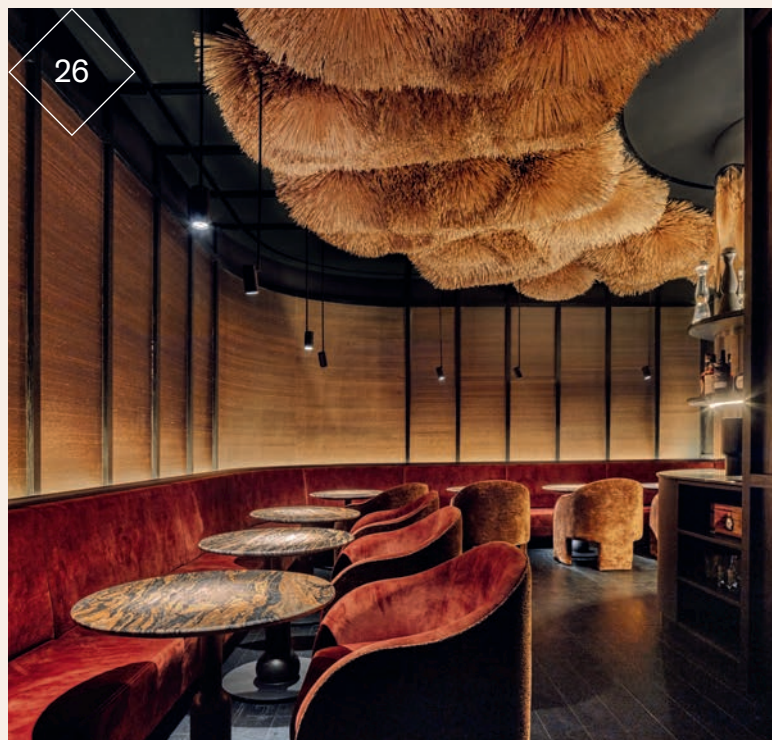
OMAR CHAKIL EGYPT
omarchakil.com

Native materials and local crafts are key for Omar Chakil, whose furniture and objects in Egyptian alabaster have an otherworldly beauty. He has recently won praise for the pendant light he created with Yasmina Makram for the Nakhla store at the Grand Egyptian Museum, which is half Saturn, half sun. This year, reflecting his commitment to slow design, he has been researching biophilic concepts and creating a unique furniture series for a Venetian palazzo. Coming soon are a solo show at Galerie Gastou in Paris and a furniture collection entitled Colorama.

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ASTET SPAIN *astetstudio.com*

Established in 2018 by two architects turned interior designers, Spanish-born Oscar Engroba and Jordanian Ala Zreigat, Astet is a “multidisciplinary atelier” with a flair for Instagram-worthy bar, restaurant and hotel designs. Describing themselves as “foodie architects”, the pair take their cue from the cuisine when creating a dining space, as with their celebrated Leña chain (already in Marbella, Madrid and Dubai; coming soon to Miami, Barcelona and Ibiza). Other hot projects include the La Cabane Beach Club in Marbella for Dolce & Gabbana, and chic Aethos hotels in Lisbon, Madrid and the Italian Alps.



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Above right: Leña restaurant in Dubai by Astet. Right: Ouroboros wooden side table from Don Tanani's Moruna collection



DON TANANI EGYPT
dontanani.com

Cairo gallery Don Tanani, founded by Alia and Tamara El Tanani, champions a modern design language that channels Egyptian heritage and craft. It creates limited-edition pieces by local designers, including lead talent Lina Alorabi. Wood is its signature material: witness the new oak armoire from the Duality collection, inspired by the sun god Ra, which is inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and the DT Lifestyle accessories collection, which features a vase inspired by Tutankhamun's funeral mask. In 2025, it will launch the DT2 collection, which explores how “moments of cultural collision” shaped Ancient Egyptian art and design.



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BOUCHRA BOUDOUAMOROCCO bouchraboudoua.com

Vintage carpets, traditional pottery and even paint marks discovered on a mud wall are just some of the inspirations for Moroccan ceramicist Bouchra Boudoua's joyful vessels and Cubist-style artworks. Based in Marrakech, she learnt her craft from local potters, with whom she still collaborates. This year, she's been dedicating her time to painting and working with clay in new ways, recently exhibiting a series of large-scale ceramics in Doha. She has also shown her "abstract naturalist" paintings and sculptures in a solo show at Loft Art Gallery, Casablanca.

Left: ceramic painting by Bouchra Boudoua, part of her solo show in Casablanca. Below: the Signature Villas at The Ritz Carlton Residences, Al Wadi Desert resort, Ras Al Khaimah by H+A

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H+A UNITED ARAB EMIRATES h-a.global

Human wellbeing is at the centre of Dubai architecture and interiors studio H+A's practice. Led by Stas Louca and David Lessard, who between them have a wealth of experience designing for healthcare, hospitality and lifestyle, its latest project is the Signature Villas at The Ritz Carlton Residences, Al Wadi Desert resort in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE. The eight villas are designed "to synchronise with the flow of the sand dunes" and feature sustainable natural materials such as limestone and rattan, inspired by the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi.



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WATAD

SAUDI ARABIA @watadstudio

Architects Dana AlAmri and Yahia Kandil founded Jeddah-based design practice Watad in 2017. Combining vernacular architecture with contemporary needs, its projects are grounded and grand all at once.

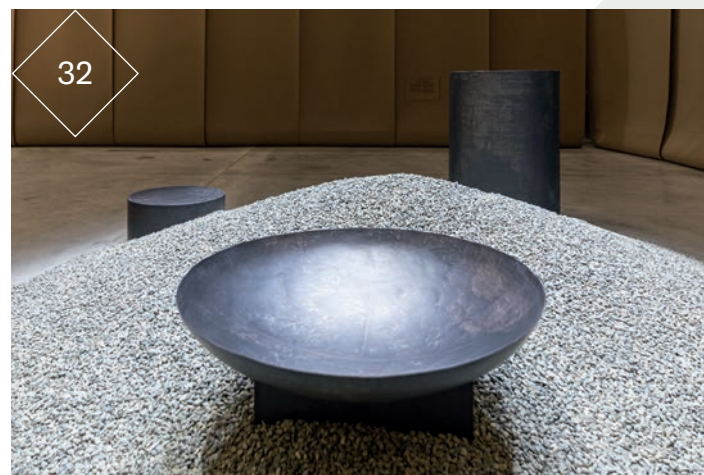
“We believe that tradition can add meaning and soul to a space or neighbourhood,” say the duo, who, after working on a range of UNESCO world heritage sites, are now focused on residential and leisure projects around Saudi Arabia. “We continue learning from traditional buildings and local builders with ancestral know-how to create projects that interact better with our environment.”

**LEFT ARCHITECTS** UNITED STATES, LEBANON *leftish.net*

Research-focused practice LEFT Architects is led by Makram El Kadi and Ziad Jamaeddine, whose mission is to “recentre Islamic architecture’s spatial practices and rituals into mainstream discourse”. It also foregrounds issues such as conflict, climate change and material resources. In this spirit, it has recently designed a “winter room” extension for a Beirut home that embraces an old pine tree as part of its design, building on studies of the city’s vanishing green landscape. Meanwhile, the Pratt House at Vassar College was reworked into a multi-faith space that rearticulates spiritual practices in a modern way.

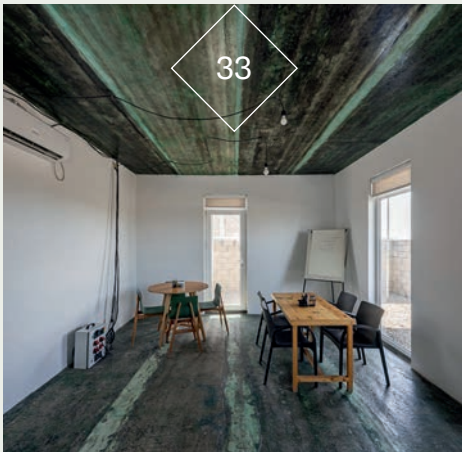
**TARIK AL ZAHARNA** UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
tzed-architects.com

With his practice T.ZED Architects, Tarik Al Zaharna champions “a new language in the region that reflects the birth of a novel, contemporary architectural movement”. Craftsmanship is key, particularly in terms of masonry and joinery, as is a bold aesthetic: his colour palettes are often darkly beautiful. His recent design for Chez Wam, a French-style bar-restaurant in Dubai, makes the case, with its dark timber, black tilework and sultry lighting; on a larger scale is The Muse 22, a hotel-inspired apartment complex with a Modernist feel in Jumeirah Garden City.



ZAV ARCHITECTS IRAN
zavarchitects.com

Founder Mohamadreza Ghodousi's passion for involving communities in his "resilient and adaptable" public projects lends them a joyous spontaneity – and serious green credentials. For evidence, look to Type-less, or the Center for Handy Skills, an education centre on Hormuz Island off the Iranian coast; it's built from locally discarded concrete, cement blocks and scaffolding. Then there's the Dr Beski Science Foundation in Gonbad-e Kavus, Iran, a versatile community hub for learning, exhibitions, co-working and more. Its triangular form with unfinished façades mirrors the rough cement walls typical of local buildings.



TARIQ KHAYYAT UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *tkdp.one*

Formerly head of region at Zaha Hadid Architects, Tariq Khayyat established his boutique architecture studio tkdp in 2018 with partner Xiaosheng Li. Since then, it has flourished, with its guiding principle of creating synergy between buildings and their surroundings. The Fold for Huna, in Dubai's Jumeirah district, exemplifies this approach: its 28 low-rise townhouses, inspired by a field of tulips, overlook a pedestrianised walk designed to foster street life in a traffic-heavy city. Coming next is Tower M, a Dubai residential high rise with contours reminiscent of agate gemstones.

ÉDITIONS LEVANTINE LEBANON *editionslevantine.com*

Founded by Suzanne Anhoury, Guilaine Elias, Dalia Hussein and César El Hayeck, Éditions Levantine is a multidisciplinary studio focused on limited-run furniture and lifestyle products. Born in Gemmayze, Beirut's historic quarter bustling with artisans, jewellers and all manner of creative businesses, the atelier draws inspiration from the region's landscape to create contemporary designs with a sense of playfulness, often expressed through colours and silhouettes. Think chairs inspired by waves and trays with patterns referencing a beautiful sunrise etched onto their surfaces.



From top right:
H residence by Tariq Khayyat; Type-less education centre by Zav Architects; Matar low table by Éditions Levantine. Opposite page, from top: The Muse 22 apartments by T.Zed Architects; Djerba, Prototype 366 by LEFT Architects, Islamic Arts Biennale

SUMAYA DABBAGH

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
dabbagharchitects.com

Sumaya Dabbagh, founder of Dubai studio Dabbagh Architects, was one of the first female architects in the UAE to design a mosque – the Mosque of the Late Mohamed Abdulkhaliq Gargash in Dubai, which, in contrast to traditional mosque designs, prioritises clean simplicity. This reflects Dabbagh's pared-down aesthetic, which is also on show in her ongoing project to expand Abu Dhabi's Al Ain Museum, located on an ancient heritage site beside a fort and an oasis. The project not only restores historic buildings, but also adds streamlined new structures in local materials.

**SAYAR & GARIBEH** LEBANON, FRANCE *sayargaribeh.com*

Stephanie Sayar and Charbel Garibeh are known for their playful furniture and objects, which “teeter between the functional and sculptural” and are inspired by Lebanese culture. Fascinated by the potential of materials, they have recently staged their first solo exhibition at the R& Company design gallery in New York, presenting their Broomlithic furniture – carved Lebanese stone pieces with fibre bristles that pay tribute to the humble household broom. Both materials, they say, “are part of the common thread of human resilience... Broomlithic captures our optimistic state of mind”.

Above: Sumaya Dabbagh at her installation at the Sharjah Architecture Triennial. Below: Sayar & Garibeh's Broomlithic collection



WAIWAI

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, JAPAN
waiwaidesign.com

When Waiwai co-founders Wael Al Awar and Kazuma Yamao aren't redeveloping Mina Zayed, Abu Dhabi's port, into a design district, or transforming the historic core of Bukhara, Uzbekistan, into a cultural hub, they are tackling climate change.

Their latest project is Barzakh, a pavilion shown at Abu Dhabi Biennial in November, constructed from waste plastic, palm fibre and brine – the latter used as a binding agent. "Desalination on a large scale means that brine is often pumped back into the Gulf, damaging the marine ecosystem," says Al Awar. "This project invites us to think again."

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WISSAM YAFAWI LEBANON *yafawidesign.com*

Contemporary comfort is the hallmark of interior designer Wissam Yafawi's work; he believes that every project should be as unique as its owner, and creates spaces that "bridge the gap between tradition and modernity". By integrating sustainability into his designs, he aims to contribute to a brighter future. Having recently restored a Grade II-listed London townhouse by fusing historical charm with eclectic modern touches, Yafawi will next be found decorating a modern chalet in Verbier and kitting out a vibrantly colourful Beirut hotel.

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From top: a modern chalet in Verbier by Wissam Yafawi; Otaru International Information Centre by Waiwai

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SHAD ASKARI UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, SWEDEN
@sainteriorstudio

Shad Askari is the founder of SA | Design Studio, whose interior-design philosophy is rooted in minimalism and innovation. "I believe in crafting spaces that feel open, calm and purposeful," he says. His latest project emphasises the point: Padel Club, a sports club-meets-café in Dubai, is sleek and unfussy in neutral tones. Coming soon are Pie Haus, a Bauhaus-inspired eatery, and a contemporary flower shop in Abu Dhabi. "I prioritise sustainability on every project," adds Askari. "I'm passionate about sourcing materials locally and repurposing scrap for new designs."



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ABBOUD MALAK

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
studiom.co

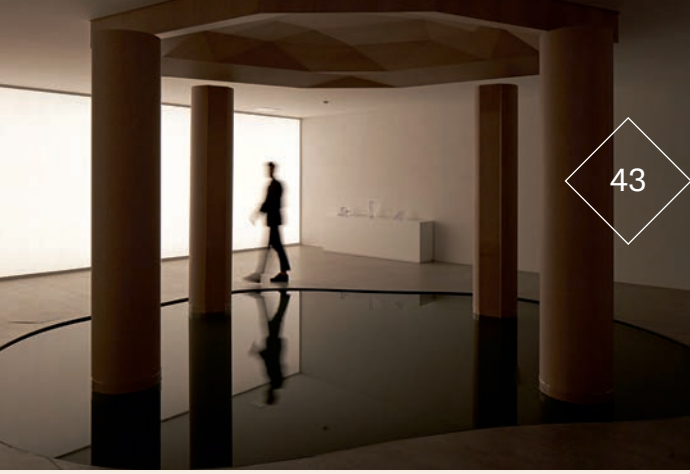
Dubai designer Abboud Malak's practice, Studio M, embraces architecture, interiors and furniture design and has a minimalist, East-meets-West ethos. His style is shown off to exquisite effect at Uchi, a 1960s-inspired Japanese restaurant in Dubai where the décor features rosewood and walnut veneers and a whisky-inspired colour palette. He has also recently completed an apartment in the One at Palm Jumeirah by Omniyat: a "sophisticated take on seaside living", it combines European and Brazilian design principles. Next on his agenda are several premium coffee shops and a modern penthouse in Dubai Marina.

**BOO DESIGN STUDIO**

LEBANON, QATAR
boodesignstudio.com

Led by life and work partners Amanda and Jo Booabood, this studio aims to create joyful objects that foster emotional connections. From Lebanon to Qatar, the duo takes inspiration from the diversity of cultural narratives surrounding them to craft pieces that are modern but with traces of the past. Their latest product is a stackable coffee set that playfully nods to the rich heritage of the Arab world.

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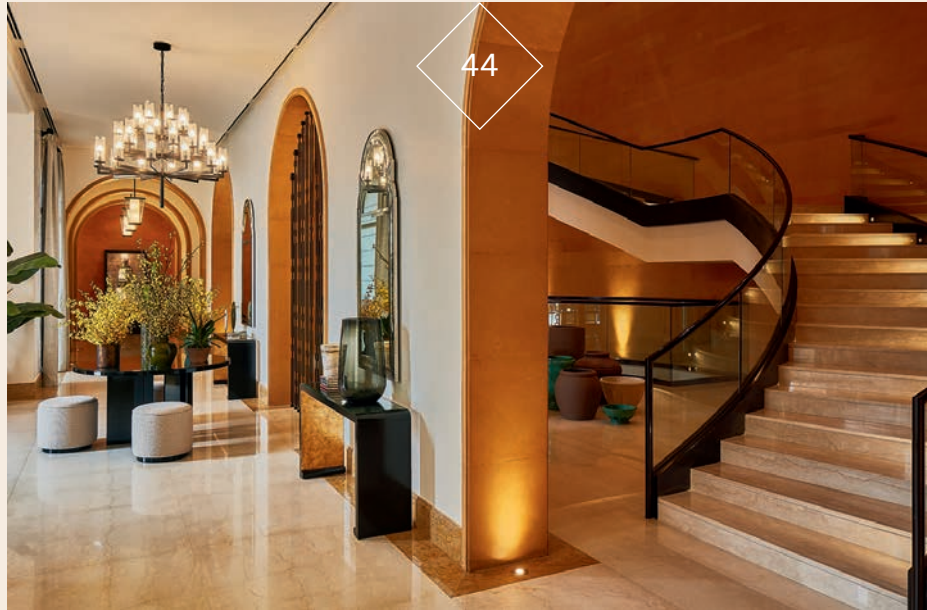
43

HIBA SHAHZADA JORDAN hibashahzada.com

Amman-based architect Hiba Shahzada has a unique way of approaching projects: she likes to make paintings of a potential space before translating them into more traditional design documents. As a result, her spaces have a sculptural quality; *Reverie*, for example, an indoor water pavilion she designed in Doha. A dome-like structure floats as if by magic above four freestanding columns, its faceted interior casting reflections on a calm pond. Of course there is no magic, but a feat of craft and engineering that keeps the dome in place; it still feels otherworldly.

**HRH PRINCESS ALANOUD
KHALID MISHAAL SAUD
ABDULAZIZ AL SAUD**
SAUDI ARABIA ainteriors.com

At her Riyadh interiors studio A Interiors, Princess Alanoud harnesses her passions for art and travel to craft spaces that present Saudi Arabia's heritage in a modern guise. "Working with Saudi artists, we combine the old with the new," she says. Recent projects include a chic neutral-toned Riyadh villa that's an ode to the materiality of wood, marble and granite, and the harmony of geometric forms; and a farmhouse on the edge of the city's desert that melds nature-inspired tones with traditional textiles and *mashrabiya* details.



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CARL GERGES LEBANON
carlgerges.com

"Lebanon is very fortunate to have an abundance of incredible artisans and designers who are constantly overcoming adversity through their hard work," says Carl Gerges, who sees every project as an opportunity to provide Lebanese creatives with both commercial and creative breaks. Case in point: model and activist Nour Arida's Paris pad, which saw him collaborate with a raft of Levantine artisans. "I deeply respect their knowledge and together, we find innovative ways to reinterpret their craft and push the boundaries of design." His latest project, a new music studio in AlUla, Saudi Arabia, was inspired by ancient Nabatean architecture and is built entirely from rammed earth.

From top left:
Hiba Shahzada's
Reverie installation
at Design Doha; a
private residence by
Princess Alanoud.
Opposite page, from
top: Abboud Malak's
residence in the One
at Palm Jumeirah;
Boo Design Studio's
Tassels collection

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ALTIN TUNISIA @altin_studio

Altin – aka life and work partners Yasmine Sfar and Mehdi Kebaier – creates sculptural furniture and lighting inspired by Tunisia. The Tunis-based couple, who honed their style while working in the design industry in Paris, have won plaudits for their debut collection, Orbite, which is crafted from palmwood, metal, sea-rush and clay (the name Altin means clay or earth in Arabic). With its organic-meets-futuristic forms, the collection is made by skilled local artisans. “We’re embracing the fusion of the ethereal and the material,” the duo say.

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AGI KUWAIT, SPAIN
agi-architects.com

International architecture practice AGI, led by Harvard-educated Joaquín Pérez-Goicoechea and Nasser B. Abulhasan, reinterprets Mediterranean architecture from a modern perspective, “in search of an understanding between Islamic culture and Western lifestyles”. A case in point is its new Yal Living housing complex in Messilah, Kuwait, a tiered structure adapted to a narrow seafront plot. It makes innovative use of brick and curved, shading elements. Another recent design is the striking white Pixel House in Kuwait, whose “pixelated” ceramic-and-aluminium lattice façade filters light while enhancing privacy.

ABEER SEIKALY JORDAN *abeerseikaly.com*

Jordanian-Palestinian creative Abeer Seikaly describes herself as “an interdisciplinary thinker and maker”. Her recent work celebrates indigenous weaving: Meeting Points 2.0 is a prototype temporary shelter and “three-dimensional tapestry” in wool and plant fibres, made with Bedouin women. She’s also created *ālmamar*, an interactive exhibitions and events space, in an abandoned house in Amman. Sensitively restored, it showcases the potential of disused spaces. “I believe that by working with materials, spaces and people, design becomes a dynamic process of discovery,” she says.

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From top: Yal Living housing by AGI; Abeer Seikaly’s Meeting Points 2.0 prototype; Palm Tree Fibres artwork by Abdulrahman Al Muftah

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ABDULRAHMAN AL MUFTAH
QATAR *abdulrahmanalmuftah.com*

It was the “selfless nature” of design and its ability to solve problems that inspired young Qatari creative Abdulrahman Al Muftah to pursue a career in the field. Adopting a studied yet experimental approach, he designs with longevity in mind. Inspired by ritual objects – particularly within the context of Qatar – he has embarked on a journey to revive lost wellness practices, which he is reimagining for the modern world. Currently in the works is a birdhouse for native species in his home country, and a project that aids artisans worldwide to preserve their crafts.



**DR. THOMAS MODEEN AND
MAYSAA AL-MUMIN**

QATAR *architectsindependent.com*

Based in Doha, the founders of interdisciplinary studio Architects Independent met in London. Today, the husband-and-wife duo's work transcends the boundaries of traditional practice, integrating architecture, interior design, product design and sculpture. From handcrafting to 3D-printing techniques, their experimental approach often begins with questions of why something is important before defining the object itself. "This process often results in unexpected outcomes," explains Modeen. From "wearable artefacts" inspired by walks around Doha to a "secret fruit bowl" that conceals its contents, each piece is as inventive as it is whimsical.



KHALED ALAWADHI KUWAIT *fortytwelve.com*

Specialising in hospitality and retail projects, Khaled Alawadhi is one of Kuwait's most exciting talents. His elegantly restrained interiors feature custom details, fine craftsmanship and one-of-a-kind furnishings. The Black Out café in Doha showcases his signature style, with its expanses of natural stone, concrete, tile and wood. Most recently, he has turned his hand to residential design with the AB Penthouse, an homage to moody grey tones – notably, a glossy veined marble that extends across walls and floors.

Photo: Eile Abi Hanna (Stephanie Moussailem)

BONE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *bone.studio*

Life and work partners Achraf Mzily and Natalie Mahakian describe Bone as "a nomadic studio that defies conventional design boundaries". The Dubai-based duo's approach strips design to its essentials, emphasising form and materiality. Recently completed projects include warehouse-style creative hub CMLPX in the city's new Arts and Culture District, and canal-side restaurant Onda, which forgoes traditional table layouts for tiered rows of leather banquettes for a theatrical see-and-be-seen vibe. Villa A, a private residence in Dubai, skilfully blends earthy rawness, lush courtyards and sculptural elements to create a cohesive abode that defies the clichés of high-end homes in the emirate.



**AHMAD BUKHASH**

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
archidentity.ae

Ahmad Bukhash leads Dubai practice Archidentity, which translates the vernacular of the Arabian Gulf into modern, minimal buildings. His projects “embody the spirit of place through reinterpretations of traditional archetypes”. Among his latest projects are AM House in Dubai, a striking white Modernist villa; and the MS Masjid mosque, also in Dubai, a sustainable, pared-down take on a traditional Islamic sacred space. It features *mashrabiya* details that cast intricately patterned shadows as the sun shines through its soaring archways.

STEPHANIE MOUSSALLEM LEBANON *stephaniemoussallem.com*

Beirut designer Stephanie Moussallem creates furniture and objects that spark joy and “capture the essence of Mediterranean life”, whether that means sunny coastal landscapes or dynamic urban environments. Her recent designs include the colourful Primavera sideboard for Lebanese non-profit organization House of Today: the walnut- and velvet-clad piece depicts Beirut’s coastal horizon in spring, and its brass door handles are shaped like flying sea birds. Moussallem is also working on several interiors projects in Lebanon, the UAE and Europe that “merge craftsmanship and bold colours”.

From top: AM House by Ahmad Bukhash; Stephanie Moussallem’s Dupond et Dupont bedside tables. Opposite page, from centre left: Dr. Thomas Mudeen and Maysaa Al-Mumin’s Sadu String cabinet; Terra restaurant, Abu Dhabi by Bone



SIZAR ALEXIS SWEDEN, IRAQ *sizaralexis.se*

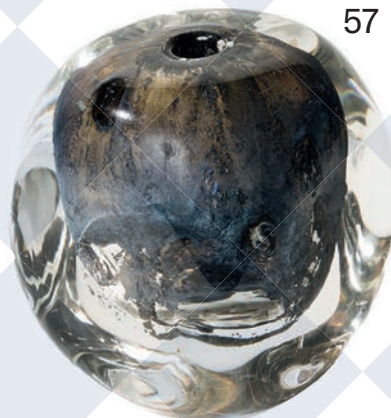
Swedish-Iraqi designer Sizar Alexis's furniture is bold in shape and sombre in hue, lending it an almost totemic quality. His designs reflect his cross-cultural upbringing and evoke memories of his native Iraq. His latest design, the angular Kursi chair for French online platform Monde Singulier, is inspired by the geometry of architecture and comes in natural, white or black pine (the last version is burnt and oiled to achieve its inky finish). He's also undertaking a research project on ancient Iraqi *mudhif*, or reed houses.

**SAMIR BANTAL** THE NETHERLANDS *oma.com*

Director of Dutch architecture studio OMA's think-tank arm AMO, Moroccan-born architect Samir Bantal heads the studio's projects in Qatar, including the Auto Museum currently in progress, and the Countryside exhibition, which debuted in New York in 2021. "The sequel addresses new themes, expanding on Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, as this is where 80 per cent of the world's population will live in a hundred years," Bantal says. Having worked with the late Virgil Abloh, Bantal's work also explores the influence of Middle Eastern pop culture on society. "I feel that it will be embraced globally," he says.

T SAKHI ITALY, LEBANON *tsakhi.com*

Based in Venice and Beirut, T Sakhi is led by Lebanese-Polish architect Tara Sakhi, who co-founded the studio with her sister Tessa in 2016. It designs spaces and objects that focus on social interaction and sustainability. "A driving force of our creative process is the recuperation of discarded materials," says Sakhi. The studio has recently transformed Dubai's Alserkal Avenue cultural hub into a "multi-sensory urban sanctuary" that promotes biodiversity; it has also created Jurat, a series of Murano glass vessels that incorporate waste metal from local factories to striking effect.



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VERA DIECKMANN

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
xo-atelier.net

As an engineer who focuses on architecture and interiors, Vera Dieckmann has a versatile skill set. Since founding XO Atelier in 2018, her collaboration with lighting brand Lasvit has established her as a formidable product design talent. She also creates stylish restaurants and retail spaces, including a new Dubai tea shop and café for UAE brand Avantcha. This “futuristic sanctuary” in monochrome hues boasts a bespoke “tea experience table” in polished steel as a centerpiece. Dubai’s Face Flex facial yoga salon is similarly futuristic, with neon lighting inspired by the movie *Tron: Legacy*.

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From left: Avantcha tea shop by Vera Dieckmann; St. Regis Riyadh by Kristina Zanic. Opposite page, from top right: Samsung store in Seoul by Samir Bantal/AMO; Tessa Sakhi’s Monolith Whispers collection

KRISTINA ZANIC

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
kristinazanic.com

Australian Kristina Zanic founded her eponymous design and architecture firm in Dubai 12 years ago, and is something of a global nomad: she has lived in five countries and has travelled to over 75 others. As a consequence, her work is infused with cosmopolitan flair. “Design acts as a cultural bridge, preserving unique identities in a rapidly globalising world,” she says, explaining her regionally relevant yet globally resonant schemes. With the award-winning hospitality projects St. Regis Riyadh and St. Regis Red Sea under its belt, Zanic’s firm is working on projects across the Middle East, among them a bold reimagining of paint specialist Jotun’s Dubai HQ.



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**LA BOTTEGA**

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

labottegauae.com

From reimagining an Arab-inspired summer house by the sea to masterminding a stylish five-bedroom penthouse at Delano Dubai (the city's latest lifestyle hotel on Bluewaters Island), Sahar Al Yaseer and Cristina Gallenca, the team behind UAE-studio La Bottega, are experts at storytelling. For example, in the Delano's penthouse, they've brought the brand's Miami DNA to Dubai, fashioning a seamless indoor-outdoor experience in the sky. "Our collaborations evolve into dynamic partnerships where we're able to push the boundaries of design, blending timeless elegance with innovation," they say.

**YASMINE GHONIEM** AUSTRALIA ysg.studio

Multidisciplinary designer Yasmine Ghoniem, who is of Egyptian-Australian heritage, is known for her charismatic style and runs her studio YSG from Sydney. "My interiors transplant you back in time and propel you into the future, but never feel 'of the moment'," she says. This year, she's completed a plethora of homes in Australia, Dubai and Saudi Arabia (including a jewel-toned Sydney townhouse with glittering "black diamond" kitchen tiles), and developed her Real Majik rug collection with Tappeti. She's also designed Superfreak, a Sydney restaurant featuring 1970s-inspired avocado shades.

**STUDIO KO** FRANCE, MOROCCO studioko.fr

Since establishing Studio KO in 2000, Olivier Marty and Karl Fournier have carved a niche creating interiors with a sense of place. They appreciate classic materials and sensual contrasts – rugged with refined, light with dark. "For us, the future doesn't lie in new technical materials, but in new ways to use noble, timeless finishes," they explain. Their latest project, the Japanese restaurant Bar des Prés in Paris, is moodily sophisticated: behind its midnight-blue façade lies a richly textured space with marble counters, patterned carpets and banquettes embroidered with peacock feathers.

RABAH SAEID

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
 styledhabitat.com

Dubai-based American-Sudanese designer Rabah Saeid is the founder of Styled Habitat, known for its expressive, sensual interiors. “We’re dedicated to weaving emotions into spaces, sculpting elevated experiences that draw you in and linger long after you’ve left,” she says. Saeid’s newest openings are The Bungalow, the immersive Dubai home of The Rug Company, which is inspired by 1970s Palm Springs glamour; and a serene, gallery-like Dubai showroom for timber flooring brand Nordic Homeworx. She’s also designing a spa for a luxury skincare label.



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Below left: Rabah Saeid’s Dubai office.
 Below: Haus Dari seating by Hall.
 Haus. Opposite page, from top right: Mo Jacobsen residence by Yasmine Ghoniem, Melbourne, Australia; Bar des Prés, Paris, by Studio KO

OMAR AL GURG UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *modumethod.com*

The name of Dubai designer Omar Al Gurg’s studio, Modu, is short for “modular”: its furniture and objects are inspired by heirloom pieces, but are also practical for everyday. A master of multifunctional design, Al Gurg uses interactive elements to “create a fun way of living”. This year he’s collaborated with Cosentino on Dinna, a space-saving dinnerware carrier; and with Vacheron Constantin on Among The Pillars, an installation celebrating palm trees. Shown in the watchmaker’s Dubai Mall boutique, it was constructed using eco-friendly finishes derived from date seeds and palm fronds.

HALL.HAUS FRANCE *hall.haus*

Formed by four designers with a shared passion for democratizing design – Abdoulaye Niang, Sammy Bernoussi, Teddy Sanches and Zakari Boukhari – the “Hall” in Hall.Haus’s name represents the urban space where they grew up, while “Haus” stands for Bauhaus. Blending Modernist influences with hip-hop culture and their shared African heritage, the studio dreams up smart, sustainable urban design solutions. Its Olympic bench, for example, counteracts anti-homeless furniture on the streets of Paris, championing accessibility and inclusivity. Hall.Haus’s design residency in AIUla earlier this year focused on reimagining communal, *majlis*-inspired seating for public spaces.

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HALA SALEH EGYPT
tdfplus.design

Cairo designer Hala Saleh is the founder of Cairo studio TDF+. A mechanical engineer and interior designer, she has a flair for adapting heritage buildings, and has recently completed her own villa in Katamaya Heights. It follows midcentury design principles, pairing them with a distinctive eggshell-blue palette. This unconventional choice is typically assured. “My home stands as a challenge to design norms in Egypt,” she says. “By promoting a narrative of cultural richness, I encourage others to embrace bold choices.”

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ARNAUD BEHZADI FRANCE, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
arnaudbehzadi.com

“Having been born in Iran but grown up as a Parisian, my work has always been influenced by a fusion of cultures,” says architect Arnaud Behzadi. After completing the design of his own Paris home, he has also recently opened an office in Dubai, and is developing the city’s new Mirth Tower, a 25-storey residential complex inspired by desert oases and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Next year, look out for Pavyllon, his Dubai eatery for chef Yannick Alléno, and Doobie’s, a 1980s-influenced restaurant-lounge in Paris.



TAREK SHAMMA EGYPT, UNITED KINGDOM
tarekshamma.com

Having trained with both Zaha Hadid and David Chipperfield before setting up his London studio in 2015, Egyptian designer Tarek Shamma has an impeccable pedigree. His interiors are characterised by rich layers of materials and geometric patterns; they reference various design eras and are crafted by skilled artisans (Christian Louboutin is a fan – Shamma has created both a home and boutiques for the shoe designer). Recent projects include the Yalla Nile, a 50-metre commercial riverboat inspired by Egyptian history. Shamma has also recently revealed his first furniture collection inspired by building blocks.





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X ARCHITECTS UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *x-architects.com*

For over two decades, Ahmed Al-Ali and Farid Esmaeil, the co-founders of Dubai-based studio X Architects, have been busy finding new ways to preserve forgotten landmarks across the UAE. One example is Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa in Al Ain: built in 1958, this heritage building was close to collapsing when the studio was entrusted with transforming it into a community space. By restoring the existing structure and incorporating modern design elements, such as a new extension with louvred partitions that connects the interior with the courtyard, the duo have given this historic home a new purpose.

NAQSH COLLECTIVE JORDAN
naqshcollective.com

At a time when safeguarding regional heritage seems more crucial than ever, Amman-based Naqsh Collective, founded by sisters Nisreen and Nermeen Abudail, offers a poetic response. Their work, steeped in Palestinian tradition, reimagines ancient craft techniques for the modern age, creating pieces that tell stories of home, history and diasporic yearning. The duo's 2024 showcase at Design Doha offered a shining example: a bridal chest from the Jhazek Ya Shams collection celebrated the flora and fauna of Palestine through rich green marble adorned with brass inlay, and was inspired by traditional embroidery.

AISHA AL SOWAIDI QATAR
aishaalsowaidi.com

Nostalgia has always played a central role in Doha designer Aisha Al Sowaidi's work, and manifests in unexpected, fun ways: from mirrors inspired by childhood toys to colourful glass *midkhans* (Arabic incense burners) shaped like fairytale characters and contemporary *majlis* concepts born from memories of get-togethers at her family home. It should come as no surprise that in Al Sowaidi's role as director for Qatar Museum's Liwan Design Studios and Labs, she has transformed a midcentury building that once housed Qatar's first girls' school into a bustling co-working hub for Doha's creative community.



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From top: Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa by X Architects; bridal chest by Naqsh Collective. Opposite page, from top: Hala Saleh's Cairo home; Arnaud Behzadi's Paris home

MA STUDIO UNITED KINGDOM*mastudio.works*

Led by friends and former architecture classmates Selma Akkari and Rawan Muqaddas, London-based MA Studio balances a minimal aesthetic with the warmth of elements from the past. A prime example is its recently completed Common Breads bakery in Victoria, London, which celebrates a centuries-old Levantine bread called *kaak*. The duo repurposed a historic building, retaining its original façade and creating a poured floor inspired by sesame seeds; wooden details and chequered tiles reflect the bread's warm caramel tones. "It's a taste of Beirut in the heart of London," they say.



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KARIM NADER LEBANON,
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES,
FRANCE *karimnader.com*

Beirut architect Karim Nader's buildings respond to their locale in a way that lends them real emotional impact. His Tower of Earth concept, for example, reinvents the standard skyscrapers of the Riyadh skyline in materials attuned to the earth: lacelike brickwork, rusted metal and a palm oasis in the lobby. It's inspired by archaic mud villages. Nader is currently restoring the Immeuble de l'Union, a Modernist Beirut landmark from 1952, as a residential/office complex. "The future of design is about returning to the roots of design," he reflects.

EBUR FRANCE, LEBANON, IVORY COAST *studioebur.com*

Drawing on African, Middle Eastern and European influences, Paris-based Ebur is giving time-honoured craftsmanship a sleek, contemporary edge. Founded by Racha Gutierrez and Dahlia Hojeij Deleuze, the studio debuted *Le bruit de la mer*, a furniture collection inspired by seaside memories, in 2023. This year, they expanded the series, layering silk, velvet and intricate wood marquetry on fluid, sculpted forms that evoke a Mediterranean dreamscape. Under way is a series of architectural projects in Paris that will debut in late 2024.



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Above: Common Breads bakery by MA Studio offers a taste of Beirut culture in London. Below: Ebur's Visconti velvet armchair

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SALWA SAMARGANDI SAUDI ARABIA @sal_architects

The founder of SAL Architects, Salwa Samargandi adopts a holistic approach to regenerating urban sites in her home country. Her work on a historic mosque in AlUla preserved its distinctive architectural features while improving accessibility and fostering community interaction. Through sustainable designs like this and her deep commitment to cultural safekeeping, Samargandi is advancing awareness of Saudi Arabia's heritage, gaining recognition both locally and globally.



Photos: Felix Speller (MA Studio); Marwan Harmouche (Karim Nader); Abdulrahman Bayashout (Salwa Samargandi)



ALINE ASMAR D'AMMAN

FRANCE, LEBANON
cultureinarchitecture.com

As a regular collaborator of the late Karl Lagerfeld, architect Aline Asmar d'Amman has close links with fashion. She maintains a strong relationship with Chanel, and has recently created Le Petit Salon, a private events space, at Le19M, the brand's hub for craftsmanship outside Paris. It's furnished with designs made by artisans working in the building. In Venice, Asmar d'Amman is restoring Palazzo Donà Giovannelli as the new Orient Express Hotel. "I'm driven by the conviction that beauty can change the world, or at least make us change worlds," she says.

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Below: a tapestry by Bokja for Hôtel de Crillon. Opposite page, from top: Siyadi Pearl Museum in Bahrain by Anne Holtrop; Karim+Elia's Iota II installation

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BOKJA LEBANON *bokja.com*

"Craftsmanship has always been, and will continue to be, our focus," says Huda Baroudi, who co-founded Bokja alongside Maria Hibri in 2000. "We strive to keep it alive, while collaborating with artisans to find new approaches." Combining vibrant fabrics and diverse techniques is key to making the Beirut-based collective's pieces so recognisable. Commissions come from across the globe, with fantastical works making an appearance in Azza Fahmy's new high-jewellery boutique in Riyadh, and a tapestry inspired by Beirut's public gardens adorning London's Meat The Fish restaurant. "Each Bokja piece becomes a vessel, bringing to the surface issues of a local identity – and its impermanence," says Hibri.



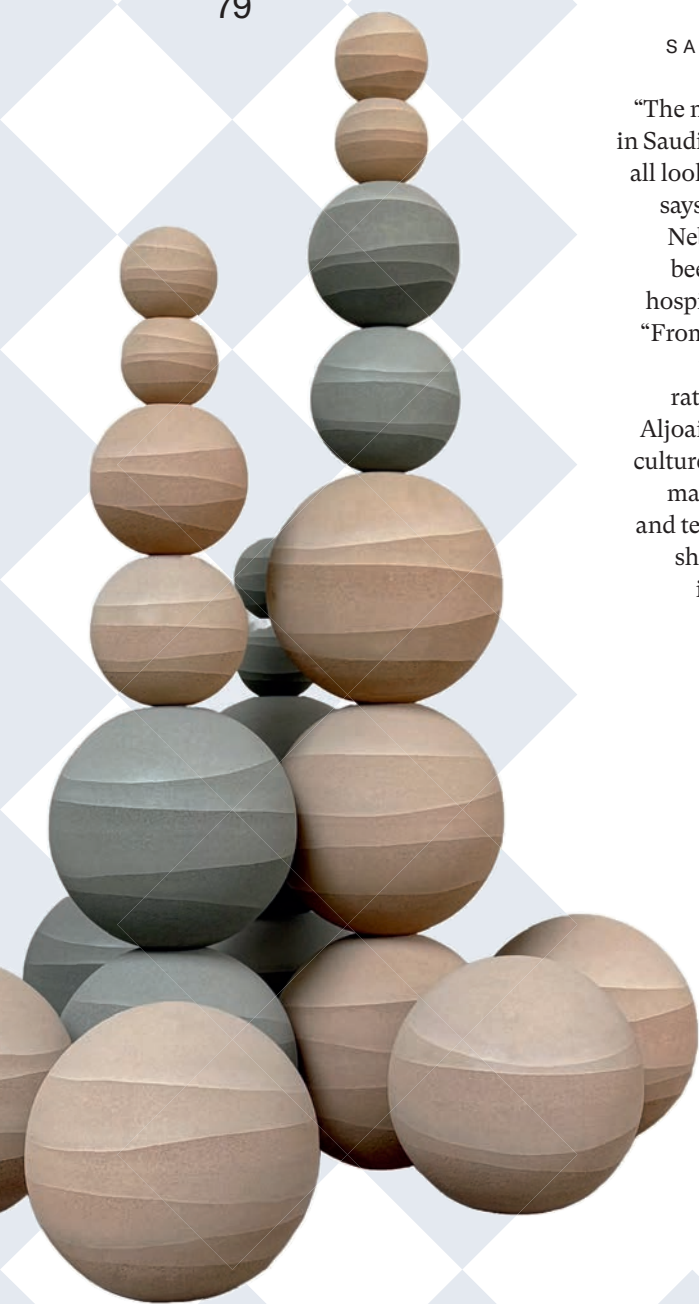

ANNE HOLTROP BAHRAIN, THE NETHERLANDS

anneholtrop.nl

Architect Anne Holtrop is known for his fascination with striking material effects. Recently, he has renovated the historic Siyadi Pearl Museum in Muharraq, Bahrain, adding a new gallery incorporating textured plaster and silver-leaf finishes. “Silver is a very responsive material, and in the region’s salty air, it will patinate and darken,” Holtrop explains. “My work centres on the relationship between matter and space, under the influence of climate and geology; I am interested in the process all matter undergoes from one state to another.”

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NEBRAS ALJOAIB

 SAUDI ARABIA *nebrasaljoaib.com*

“The most exciting thing about design in Saudi Arabia right now is how we are all looking to our past for inspiration,” says Riyadh-based interior designer Nebras Aljoaib, who since 2015 has been creating exclusive homes and hospitality concepts in the Kingdom. “From spatial blocking to decoration, we are dialling into our heritage rather than just importing trends.” Aljoaib’s route to incorporating Saudi culture involves extensive use of noble materials, from brass to rich stones and textiles. For an upcoming project, she is developing marble furniture in collaboration with Artemest’s master craftspeople in Tuscany.

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KARIM + ELIAS UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *karimelias.com*

Dubai duo Karim + Elias – aka Karim Tamerji and Elias El Hage – are leading the revival of rammed-earth construction with their geometric objects sculpted from desert sand. The pair enhance the material with warm pigments, shaping it using custom moulds. Earlier this year, they presented *From This Earth* in Diriyah, KSA, a series of screens constructed from 1,400 handcrafted spheres. As part of November’s Tanweer Festival, they unveiled *The Desert Relic*: this permanent installation in the town of Mleiha, an archaeological treasure in Sharjah, features totemic sculptures scattered throughout the landscape.



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YASMINA MAKRAM EGYPT*yasminamakram.com*

Cairo, a city where history and modernity collide – often overwhelming the senses – serves as the backdrop for Yasmina Makram's eponymous studio, which this year showcased the HA-BEIT'A Pavilion at Cairo Design Week 2024. The inviting space was both avant-garde and authentic, providing a serene urban retreat. Makram's upcoming projects include an Art Deco-inspired Nileside apartment featuring fluid lines and arches; futuristic offices in Saudi Arabia for an Egyptian firm; and a clubhouse in West Cairo that takes inspiration from Saharan landscapes.

Above: the HA-BEIT'A Pavilion at Cairo Design Week by Yasmina Makram. Opposite page, centre right: Toby's Estate cafe, Dubai, by Verhaal. Below: Tidal Translations wall installation by Paola Sakr

STUDIO MUKA UNITED STATES *studio-muka.com*

LA-based Studio MUKA honours both Eastern and Western philosophies, crafting spaces with purpose and meaning. Led by architects Neda Kakhsaz (who was born in Tehran) and her life-and-work partner Zabiye Mustafa (of Uzbek and Afghani heritage), its work spans architecture, interior design and product design, and celebrates diversity and multiculturalism. "We see a future in which designers come together to create new concepts for living sustainable, cultivated lives," the duo say. This approach can be seen in the studio's upcoming projects, including a new-build residence on an Ojai olive orchard in California.



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ALI MOHAMMADIOUN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES *eplusa.ae*

The founder of Dubai-based studio E PLUS A Atelier, architect Ali Mohammadioun is making a mark with soulful residential projects that combine spatial and landscape design with the more decorative aspects of making a house a home: curating art and design that is not only in sync with his client's tastes, but which also celebrates craft. "In every project, we try to foster a sense of harmony between architecture and the surrounding environment," says Mohammadioun. "That often means working with other regional creatives and artisans." The result? Bespoke homes across Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East that are rooted in their local contexts, but have a global style.

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VERHAAL UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, SOUTH AFRICA
verhaal.studio

Based in Dubai, Sydney and Cape Town, Neydine Bak and Dewald Struwig, co-founders of Verhaal, specialise in restaurant interiors that are elevated but make visitors feel instantly at ease. Brimming with playful artisanal details (think brass-inlaid floors, curved, polished-plaster walls and Alexander Calder-esque mobiles), their cheerful spaces are a celebration of craftsmanship. They're the sort of interiors we'd love to live in, so we were delighted to learn that the studio is also working on a clutch of residential interiors, including a whizzy Abu Dhabi villa with a stairwell lined in multicoloured marble. Also in the works is the jolly-sounding Dubai restaurant Jungle Club, which promises to be "a fusion of natural beauty and fine dining".



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PAOLA SAKR LEBANON, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
paolasakr.design

Based in Dubai, Lebanese designer Paola Sakr creates homewares with a whimsical feel. "My pieces often stem from a feeling, a story or a spark of inspiration from the natural world," she says. Her experiments with materials yield eye-catching results: the spirals of her Sūrya stoneware vessels, for instance, or the glowing resin Odd Inside lamp, inspired by the Beirut expat experience, which is intended to be placed on the edge of a surface. What's next? Hand-carved wooden frames for new photography platform Alternative Archivists, and colourful trinket trays in sand-cast aluminium.



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From top right:
Souq Waqif rug by
Maryam Al-Homaid;
Hotel Al Moudira
by Zeina Aboukheir.
Opposite page, from
top: Sun Path, Rajab
to Shawwal 1444
pavilion by Civil
Architecture; a Dubai
residence by
Omar Nakkash



MARYAM AL-HOMAID QATAR maryamalhomaid.com

Doha's rapid architectural transformation prompted Qatari designer Maryam Al-Homaid to document its iconic landmarks, many of which no longer exist. She did this first through photography, and later via playful, "pixelated" woven rug designs. While inspired by local weaving techniques such as Sadu, Al-Homaid also looks beyond the region to Latin America and Central Asia for references that inform her graphic design vocabulary. "This approach allows me to reflect a global tapestry of influences," she says.

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ZEINA ABOUKHEIR EGYPT

moudira.com; [@immobilia.cairo](https://www.instagram.com/immobilia.cairo)

Italian-Lebanese designer Zeina Aboukheir has devoted decades to creating an authentic oasis of slow living in Egypt, combining her vision for a holistic Nabatean village with an ever-growing network of craftspeople, artists and local design brands. Her passion project, the iconic Hotel Al Moudira in Luxor, caught the eye of an entrepreneur who charged Aboukheir with turning her design eye to renovating a series of apartments in downtown Cairo, which promise to bring renewed lustre to a skyscraper which was once the tallest building in the Middle East. See the results in our Escape section.



MARC DIBEH LEBANON

marcdibeh.com

Timeless simplicity is central to the approach of Beirut designer Marc Dibeh, who is currently juggling an array of architectural and interiors projects in Lebanon and beyond. Top of the bill are two jewellery boutiques – in Achrafieh for Maria Mouwad and in Riyadh for L'Atelier Nawbar – and River Club, a new bar/restaurant in Washington DC; Dibeh is also developing a new furniture line, to bring his sleek aesthetic to a wider audience.



CIVIL ARCHITECTURE

BAHRAIN, KUWAIT *civilarchitecture.org*

“We cannot say how our work will shape the future because we are more interested in dismantling the notion of ‘the future’ as the goal that the architectural economy works towards,” says Civil Architecture’s co-founder Ali Karimi. Architecture as a civil service is how he defines the studio’s approach, with each project offering context and a better understanding of the Gulf. With its latest works shown at the Islamic Arts Biennale and Design Doha, the studio is now working on a mangrove nursery and visitor centre for the Saar settlement in Bahrain, which contains the country’s historic burial mounds.



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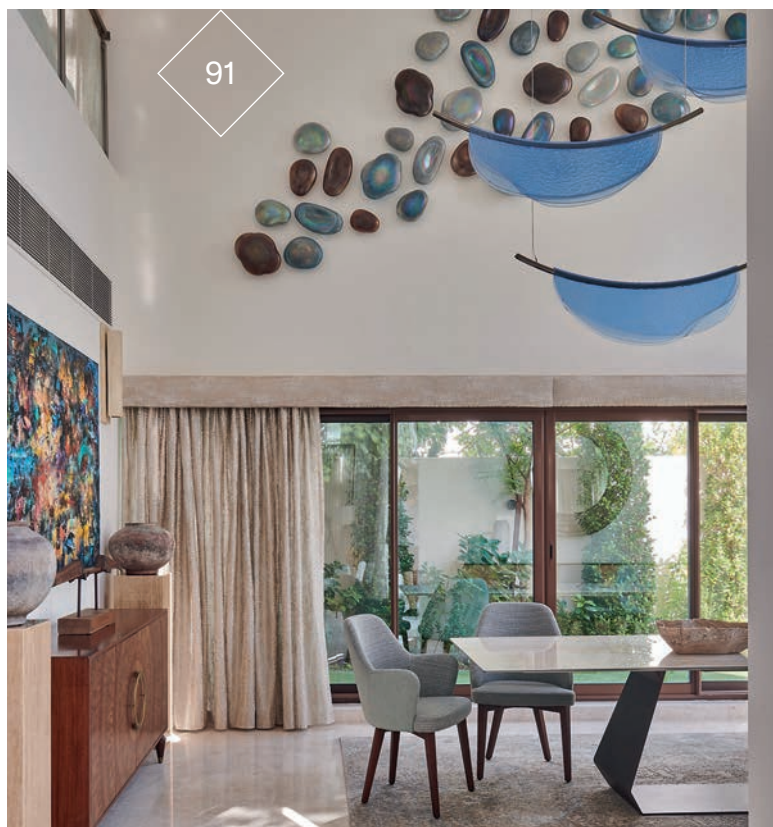
OMAR NAKKASH UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
nakkashdesignstudio.com

Rather than following a particular aesthetic, Dubai designer Omar Nakkash takes a “human-centred” approach to his work, so every project has its own character. “We emphasise sustainability and innovation, aiming to create environments that have lasting positive impacts on both individuals and communities,” says the founder of Nakkash Design Studio. His recent projects include a redesign of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce, his largest commercial project to date, and a duplex penthouse with a “Japanese sanctuary concept” in One Za’abeel, a luxury residential tower in the city.



SAMER SAADEH LEBANON
fabracastudios.com

Lebanese creative Samer Saadeh’s passion for bringing soul and beauty to something as precise and technical as lighting design led him to establish Fabraca Studios. “My inspiration to pursue a career in lighting stemmed from my fascination with how light can transform spaces and influence emotions,” he says. This year, his Lightsabre track system illuminated London at Common Breads, an upscale Levantine bakery near Buckingham Palace. His advice to others pursuing a design career? “Always design with intention. It will enrich both the creative process and the end result.”



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SHAHIRA FAHMY EGYPT
sfahmy.com

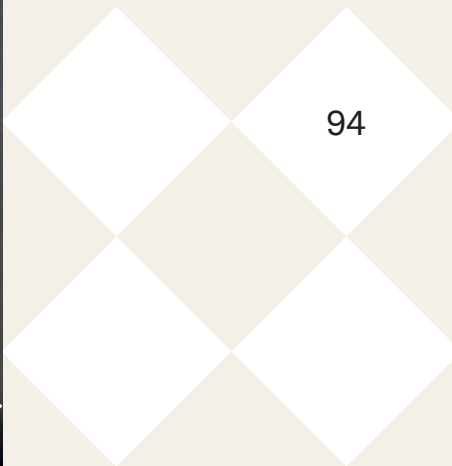
“The most audible voice in any project is the materiality,” says Egypt-born architect Shahira Fahmy. “When you are working on a historic site, your job quite literally becomes that of someone translating the past.” At the forefront of regenerating AlUla Old Town, a 12th-century mud-brick settlement in Saudi Arabia, she completed Dar Tantora, an eco-hotel built on old ruins, earlier this year. Recently she has finished a private residence, also in AlUla, which intertwines original mud-brick foundations with the knowledge of local artisans and builders to bring a traditional home back to life.





PALLAVI DEAN
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
designbyroar.com

Embracing AI innovation while also prioritising local production, Dubai designer Pallavi Dean is as sought after for creating headline-grabbing public spaces as she is for designing distinctive private homes. Her studio, Roar, has recently developed an evocative interior for the Ajman Ruler's Court, inspired by the region's desert dunes. Similarly impactful is the National Academy for Childhood Development in Abu Dhabi, a pioneering space for parents and professionals. The curvilinear interior takes its cue from water ripples (a symbol of childhood development) and pearl diving, an emblem of Emirati culture.



Right: Sharing the Earth installation by Salima Naji at Arab Design Now, Doha. Below: table from the Wahaaj collection by Shaikha Al-Sulaiti. Opposite page: a residential project in AIUla by Shahira Fahmy



SALIMA NAJI MOROCCO *salimanaji.com*

Finding new ways of developing low-cost, sustainable architecture is at the heart of Moroccan architect and anthropologist Salima Naji's career. Her magic formula? Collaborating with local masons to develop earth-friendly construction practices. In 2023, she restored the historic fortress of Agadir in Morocco, which since a devastating 1960 earthquake had remained a painful memory. At the 2024 Arab Design Now show in Doha, she presented Sharing the Earth, a cave-like structure made on-site using the traditional adobe technique. Instantly cooling, it revealed how leaning into old construction models could benefit the planet.



SHAIKHA AL-SULAITI QATAR
@shaikhaalslaiti

Since her first appearance on this list in 2021, Shaika Al-Sulaiti has gone from envisioning luxury homes to being the design lead at Doha Design District, masterminding projects that bring new Qatar-based talent into the spotlight. This doesn't mean she has slowed down her own endeavours: at Milan Design Week 2024, she unveiled a collection of Mondrian-esque tables in colours that mimic stained-glass windows from traditional Qatari houses. "I'm currently working on rug designs inspired by the hand-crafted plaster decorations you see on walls and ceilings of old regional dwellings," she adds.

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DAR ARAFA ARCHITECTURE EGYPT dararafa.com

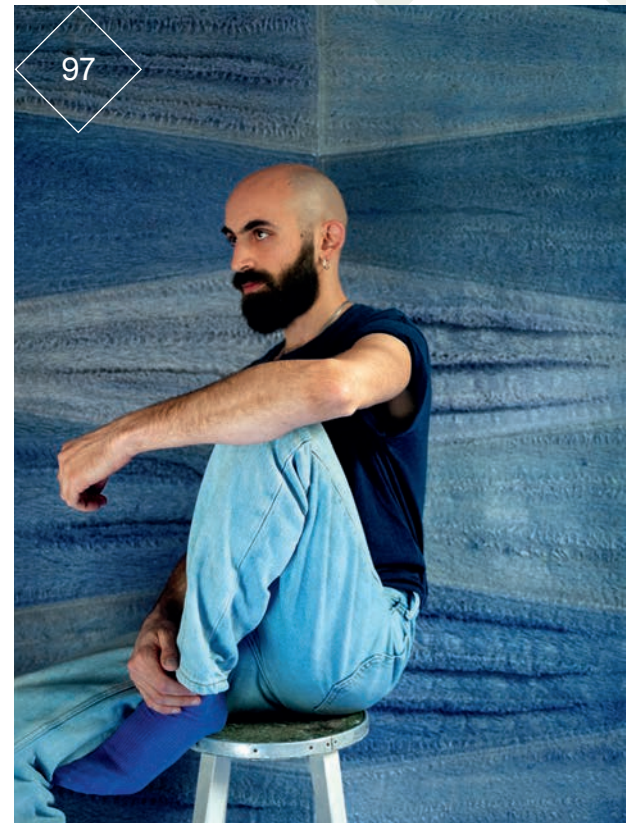
Led by Egyptian architect Waleed Arafa, Dar Arafa Architecture focuses on reviving the rich legacy of Egyptian and Islamic architecture by “writing a new, original chapter”. The twice-nominated Aga Khan Award honoree has recently completed a cultural centre and student dormitory in Paris, named Maison d’Egypte, that revisits the essence of Egyptian architecture, and is also working on a mixed-use building which is part of the wider regeneration of historic Cairo. “It is our belief that studying the past – rather than blindly imitating it – is of utmost importance to usher in an original future for architecture,” Arafa says.

Above: Citadel of Cairo: Seat of Design Power installation at Cairo Design Week by Dar Arafa Architecture

SAMER SELBAK FRANCE, PALESTINE samerselbak.com

Inspired by his Palestinian heritage, Samer Selbak’s Loofah Project centralises indigenous plants within his design practice, sparking conversations about sustainability, heritage and occupation. Using loofah fibres dyed with natural pigments, his pendant lights and room divider have been shown in Paris and Doha. “Coming from Palestine and growing up in a politically charged reality, I’ve watched the different generations of my family hold on to their heritage while finding new ways to keep it alive,” the designer says. Selbak is now evolving his Loofah series with a new special-edition blue Reef panel inspired by the freedom of the Mediterranean Sea. It was displayed at Dubai Design Week. “I wanted to create a monochromatic colour palette using one type of natural dye to achieve different hues,” he explains.

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DINA NUR SATTIUNITED STATES *nurceramics.com*

Inspired by pre-colonial African societies, Brooklyn ceramicist Dina Nur Satti's clay works are a tribute to cultural exploration and preservation.

Reminiscent of Sudano-Sahelian architecture, her contemporary ritual objects are a means for the designer to unearth pre-Islamic histories. Her latest project is a milk offering vessel commissioned by the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archeology in London, with new works to be showcased in a group show at Dubai's Efte Gallery in January. "My goal was to connect our ancient Nubian civilisation with the present to emphasise that indigenous traditions live on," she says.



Left: Decoration One store in Aqaba, Jordan, by FADAA. Below: sofa from the Falaj collection by Aljoud Lootah

**FADAA** UNITED STATES, JORDAN *fadaa.space*

Environmentally responsive design is the passion of New York and Amman-based studio FADAA, which is led by Bisher Tabbaa and Sarah Hejazin. Their new Aqaba boutique for lifestyle brand Decoration One began with an investigation of the site's ecology: realising that seafood waste in Jordan's only coastal city was abundant, the duo turned it into cement to create a "bio-brick" *mashrabiya*. Coming next are a concept store for Jordanian coffee brand Al Ameen that reinvents earthen architecture, and a park in Amman that addresses the city's lack of green space.

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ALJLOUD LOOTAHUNITED ARAB EMIRATES
aljouldlootah.com

Celebrating the tenth anniversary of her eponymous studio, Emirati designer Aljoud Lootah draws inspiration from the UAE's cultural landscape, melding traditional craftsmanship with minimalistic forms. "My heritage and culture are the first things that drive all of my designs," explains Lootah, who recently unveiled Falaj, a range of products including seating and tables, at the new Editions fair at Dubai Design Week. It was inspired by Oman's ancient Aflaj irrigation channels. "Its paths hold within them the poetry of survival and the rhythm of ancient hands carving earth," says the designer.



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