

# Design

Middle East

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from the Gulf,  
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DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

## Design 2023 / AWARDS FORUM Middle East

### V for Victory

The biggest celebration honoured the industry's best firms, projects, and game changers. The Design Middle East Awards 2023 were held at the Sofitel Dubai The Palm and created a history in its own unique way. Over 110 firms nominated and we received hundreds of nominations.

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A living room system designed to define the domestic landscape in a fluid, flexible manner. Antonio Citterio's first concept for Cassina is a modular sofa that symbolises everlasting beauty and flair.



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MALDIVES

SIRRU FEN FUSHI

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DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

**H**ow do I express the emotions we all felt at the Design Middle East Awards 2023? We broke our own record by receiving hundreds of nominations from over 110 companies. We threw our biggest party ever, filling every available space in the ballroom to celebrate with as many as possible. It was a great show that saw the leaders and greatest professionals from many walks of the industry.

We believe in doing something new each year, therefore our incredibly awesome #DesignPhotobooth was the most popular Instaspot during the event, and you can see some giggling faces in our gallery section in the magazine.

We also held the Design Forum 2023, the top mind-engaging and networking event, on the morning of the awards ceremony. The major experts in the field presented their perspectives on crucial industry topics such as— What COP 28 means for the design and architecture industries and another enthralling conversation was on Could AI produce buildings more effectively than humans? Both sessions drew large crowds and kept the audience interested until the very end.

We couldn't have done it without the industry support, so accept our heartfelt



thanks for everything you did to make both of these events our biggest successes yet.

This month, I'm crushing on Cassina's crimson Esosoft sofa, which deserves your attention as well.  
Happy Reading

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# Design

Middle East



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## Al-Futtaim IKEA celebrates circular sustainability by unveiling its 30m community table during Dubai Design Week

**A**l-Futtaim IKEA, the region's leading Swedish home furnishing retailer, unveils a 30m-long community table to celebrate Dubai Design Week. Made out of used furniture that would otherwise go to the landfill, the table will be open for public use from November 7th to the 12th in Dubai Design District. Not only is the community table a bold piece of art, but it is also functional, well-designed and signifies Al-Futtaim IKEA's unwavering dedication to the Year of Sustainability, Innovation and the path leading to COP 28.

Thoughtfully designed and curated by IKEA designers and co-created with Adimas Bayu, an illustrator and upcoming doodle artist, along with Grade 5 and Grade 6 students of the Universal American School, this initiative is a testament to the Swedish retailer's vision of using only renewable or recycled materials to offer fresh solutions to customers, extending the lifespan of products and materials.

Al-Futtaim IKEA has a vision and ambition in the markets it operates in – the UAE, Qatar, Egypt and Oman; to inspire and enable more than 70 million people to live a better everyday life within the boundaries of the planet by 2025. It also aims to become a circular climate positive business by reducing more greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than the IKEA value chain emits by 2030. The recently concluded Dubai Design Week served as an ideal platform to showcase the retailer's vision.

Vinod Jayan, Managing Director of Al-Futtaim IKEA in UAE, Qatar, Oman and Egypt said: 'At Al-



The table has a story to tell. It aligns with the core themes of conserving energy, preserving water, reducing food waste, and safeguarding biodiversity.

Futtaim IKEA, sustainability is one of the most important pillars that sets the foundation for what we do. We're on a mission to make sustainability accessible to all, ensuring that sustainable living is not a luxury but a choice everyone can afford. For example, by changing to IKEA LED bulbs, we save 80% energy as compared to conventional bulbs. By using IKEA showers and taps, we can save up to 40% water with the special inbuilt aerator.'

The community table is a great example of raising awareness among consumers on the importance of sustainability and the role they can play in contributing towards a circular economy. It encourages

consumers to think about the life cycle of products and the value of reusing and recycling materials.

"As we craft this community table, IKEA's mission is crystal clear: we're championing Circularity. Our approach for designing and developing IKEA home furnishing products is to ensure that they integrate good function, beautiful form of long-lasting quality, while also securing sustainability and low price. We want to not only encourage people to protect the planet but also fosters a sense of community amongst artists. Together, we worked to inspire others to craft affordable, creative pieces of used and unwanted furniture," he continued.

## Gaggenau's Galleria unveiling celebrates Emirati artistry in spectacular style

**G**aggenau marked its appreciation for Emirati artistry by inaugurating the Gaggenau Galleria at Anantara Business Bay. This special occasion showcased Gaggenau's unwavering dedication to design and the preservation of excellence, seamlessly blending their rich legacy with the opulent heritage of Emiratis.

The Galleria paid homage to Emirati artists featuring Afra Al Suwaidis exquisite sand sculptures representing each of the seven Emirates, Asayel Abdullas captivating plexiglass paintings portraying Emirati Heritage and Salmah Al Mansooris thought provoking collection exploring the influence of environment on identity. Among the attendees were Emirati VIPs, esteemed government representatives, influential media personalities and trusted clients. The esteemed visionary HE Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi graced the event as a guest of honor.

The event beautifully showcased a blend of heritage and modernity through each exhibits expression. These artworks stand as a testament to Gaggenau's support for emerging Emirati women artists, while also highlighting their commitment to the people and culture of this nation.

Furthermore, Her Highness Lubna expressed her admiration for Gaggenau by revealing that she has been a Gaggenau customer for the last

two decades. She also accentuated the value of endorsing budding Emirati artists, spotlighting new talents in the Emirati arts domain and lauding their exceptional contributions.

Irem Yalzar, Head of Marketing, at Gaggenau emphasised how craftsmanship has remained at the core of the brand throughout its 300 year journey.

She highlighted the alignment of Gaggenau's legacy with the incredible heritage of the UAE, solidifying the brand's presence in the country.

Tomas Alonso, CEO of BSH Middle East, added his perspective, stating: "The country's success is owed to its visionaries, its artists, and its leaders. That's what brings us here today, to support these incredibly talented Emirati women artists and their unique creations that represent the promising future of Emirati culture."

The event signifies the start of a lasting bond between Gaggenau and the UAE founded on admiration and deep respect, for the rich and iconic heritage of the Emirati culture.



# Building & Enhancing!

**Gareth Cain**, STUDIO DESIGN DIRECTOR AT DSA, DISCUSSES HIS NEW ROLE, HOW SUSTAINABILITY HAS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS, CHALLENGES IN A PROJECT'S LIFESTYLE, AND HOW HE SEES HIMSELF CONTRIBUTING TO DSA'S SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE. BY ROMA ARORA



**W**ith over 20 years of global industry experience, how have you seen this field evolve with the times?

Honestly, if I look back to the start of my career and reflect on the changes that I thought I'd see by now, I'd have to say I'm a little disappointed.

I recall first using a 3D printer at university in 2001. 22 years later and I'm reading articles on how 3D printing is set to revolutionise the construction industry, and wondering why it hasn't already? Although in fairness I also thought that by now every home would have a 3D printer and we would be downloading and printing most of our consumer items.

I recall studying Buckminster Fuller's prefabricated bathrooms from the 1920's and only using them myself for Student Housing projects 85 years later. Now it's more than 100 years later and we're still seeing modular volumetric construction fabricators struggle in an industry that seems to resist change.

It's great to see that BIM adoption finally seems to be standard now, I think it was 2006 when I started using Revit, the industry has been slow to take advantage of BIM but I do worry that there is such a monopoly when it comes to the software. I was impressed with the leap forward the industry took when it comes to digital collaboration when COVID-19 struck.

Most recently, I see fear among some architects over the role of AI in the design industry, there are legitimate concerns of course, but I see it as an opportunity for designers to re-frame their role. We have become slaves to an insatiable need for CGI renders. The time taken to produce those often stifles the time available to research, challenge briefs, and explore ideas. AI has the potential to free us, it can provide the proof of concept that clients and the public want and give us time to rediscover the roots of our profession.

#### **How do you define your new role at DSA?**

So I'm fresh back to Dubai last week after having spent the last few years setting up an office in Riyadh. My new role at DSA is as a studio design director and I'm here to help make some strategic changes to help the studio to grow to the next level in the evolution of the firm. DSA have some incredible projects, partners and clients and a huge pool of experience and talent. I can't give away too much yet since I'm only in my second week. What I can say is that I want to structure the growth of studios in such a way that they nurture the development of specialist knowledge collectively. We need to make the best use of our individual talent and experience but be structured to naturally grow beyond that.

#### **What are your favourite areas of work, commercial, fit-out, hospitality, art installations, or something else, and where do you find inspiration?**

I've been fortunate enough to work across many sectors during my career, all those you mention and more, and have always found a challenge to enjoy in any project. I'd have to say I generally prefer Architecture to fit-out and my favourite stage of a project tends to be the massing stage. You've interrogated the brief, studied the site, identified opportunities and constraints and it's time to start creating volumes. Cutting masses to create view corridors, hollowing them out with courtyards, puncturing them, stacking them, cantilevering them, folding planes to shade spaces, I feel if you get those big moves right early on, everything you do from there is enhancement. You can always go back to a good white massing model if the project takes a wrong turn later.

#### **How have your prior responsibilities as a university studio tutor and part-time lecturer shaped your current leadership principles?**

It's interesting the experiences that shape you, this was early in my career but yes, if you have to teach something to someone else, you greatly enhance your own understanding of it. I was fortunate to have that opportunity early on and now mentorship in the studio is something really important to me, because it helps both sides of the relationship.

#### **What would you describe as your defining project—the one where you said, "Okay, I can do this"?**

I recall experiencing that 'I can do this', feeling of confidence for taking on projects myself shortly after I first arrived in Dubai. I was working on a concept for a mixed-use project in Beirut. I was staying in a hotel at that point, it was the weekend and I felt a bit cooped up and decided to take my laptop and butter paper sketches down to work at the bar. I was happily modelling away when someone approached and asked what I was doing, I replied simply that I was designing a building. That somehow felt arrogant to say at first but it was true, and it felt good to say so. This random stranger was intrigued, so I explained the concept and each time they went to the bar or the bathroom they came back to check in and ask more questions. By the time I was done there was a well fleshed out building and I guess at that point I really felt like an architect.

#### **How has the definition of sustainability evolved throughout your career?**

The first book I ever read on the subject was Design for the Real World by Victor Papanek. It was published in the 60's or 70's. It didn't use the term sustainability, which came much later but in response to the same issues covered in the book. Things >>>

Gareth approaches his work with a distinct viewpoint, driven by a passion for hands-on concept design and a dedication to providing excellent solutions.

like planned obsolescence for instance. The book urged designers to put aside ego and focus on people focussed design solutions that use resources responsibly. The author believed that industry was too resistant to change and that legislation was too slow but that designers had the power through their design choices to make a difference.

Now the problems we face are so much greater and in the face of growing public awareness and frustration, change must come from all levels if were to have any hope of averting climate disaster. Events such as COP 28 show how prevalent this is in the public mind today. As a designer though I often think back to that book as being something of a moral compass to navigate design decisions.

### **What are you working on currently?**

It's early days and my role is more about running the studio but I'm going to be involved with a number of huge hospitality and mixed-use projects with familiar clients from KSA as well as projects here in the UAE. Today I visited a zoo where we're working on something really unique as well as some typical buildings and habitats. I'd done some animal care buildings years ago in the UK but I was designing for domestic animals, nothing like what you need to design for a pride of 400lb Lions! We have a great team of specialists involved for that though and I'm looking forward to being able to take my family along when it's all done.

### **What other activities and endeavours keep you engaged, aside from your architectural projects? How do outside interests influence your approach to architecture?**

I have three young daughters and being back in Dubai with them happily keeps me very busy outside of work. My girls influence all aspects of my life, including

my approach to architecture. Imagining how they might interact with a space offers a perspective that wasn't available to me before starting a family.

### **How do you approach challenges and complexities that arise during the project lifecycle, and how does your team ensure successful project completion?**

A key part of dealing with challenges on projects is how they are approached by the project team. You have to be empathetic; everyone has their roles and responsibilities on a project and often people are under considerable pressure, that can sometimes

An architect with over 20 years of professional experience, the last 12 of which were spent in the Middle East. Gareth passionately believes in the importance of diversity in design experience, which he has pursued throughout his career.



### **As you think about the future, where do you see yourself and DSA, especially in terms of the architecture and your contribution?**

I see myself facilitating strategic growth and by that I don't just mean deciding what areas of the business to grow or just hiring more people, but creating structures that are set up for growth. Setting up communities within DSA to share experience and nurture talent that provides even greater value to our clients and helps us to continue to deliver excellent projects. I see myself contributing to a

make things adversarial. It's easy to get drawn into defending your area of responsibility and looking to 'win' in a situation. Instead, you've got to look for the win-win opportunities for the project and for everyone involved.

studio culture that builds on DSA's reputation as a great place to work. I see a whole raft of initiatives to help improve every aspect of our studio and being proud of my contribution to it. .



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# Striking a Perfect Balance!



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**ALEX ESTEVEZ**, co-founder of **Mermelada Estudio**, discusses design aesthetics, his long-term collaboration with CB2, highlights of the collection showcased at Downtown Design, and his expansion plans for 2024 and beyond. **BY ROMA ARORA**

**Tell us about your background – what motivates you to keep inventing in this ever-changing sector, that is largely dependent on client expectations?**

Our design studio was founded by three partners, all of whom have studied product design in esteemed institutions in cities such as Valencia, Barcelona, London, and Milano. Prior to embarking on our independent venture, we gained valuable experience by collaborating with various design studios. Over the past 14 years, we have specialised in product and most recently interior design, working on a diverse array of projects and partnering with a wide range of companies.

Our motivation stems from our shared passion and the belief that creativity in design is akin to a boundless journey. Unlike mathematics, where there may be only one solution, in design, possibilities are endless. We relish the idea of continually revisiting similar products, always uncovering fresh perspectives.

Admittedly, our sector is everchanging and heavily influenced by client expectations. As designers, striking a balance is crucial – understanding the market while maintaining our distinctive signature and style.

**TOP**

Mermelada Estudio was founded over 10 years ago by Laura Blasco, Juanmi Juárez, and Alex Estévez

**BOTTOM**

Alex Estévez, co-founder of Mermelada Estudio





**For its first time at Downtown Design, CB2 presented 'Statement Makers by CB2' collection in collaboration with Mermelada Estudio. This collection features designs that fuse innovation with elegance, resulting in refined furniture with a carefree character.**



This is **Raine outdoor lounge** chair with boucle sunbrella cushions. The black powder coated iron frame makes a stunning statement.

**Brief us on your collaboration with CB2 and the unique products you create for them.**

Our collaboration with CB2 began 12 years ago when both of our companies were relatively young. Since then, our partnership has been marked by mutual learning and growth. Right from the very beginning, we felt like an integral part of the CB2 family, and today, our relationship has become a strong strategic partnership.

Upon reflection, it becomes apparent that both teams share numerous commonalities, such as passion, exacting standards, meticulous attention to detail, and a shared penchant for dreaming big. It's this shared attitude that has propelled us to our current status. We take immense pride in what we've created together and witnessing CB2's rise as a significant global player in the world of design.

**How would you describe your design aesthetic, and how do you plan to cater to the desires of GCC audiences with traditional demands and a modern touch, given that you will be servicing expats from around the world?**

Our design aesthetic can be described as simple and sculptural, always striving to strike the perfect balance between shapes, materials, textures, colours,

and intricate details. It's also a continuous exploration of blending various concepts to forge new design languages. One of the dichotomies we particularly enjoy exploring is that of tradition and modernity. This is where we believe our design resonates with GCC audiences.

During our visits to Dubai, we are constantly awed by the remarkable architecture and cutting-edge technology coexisting with the beauty of Middle Eastern traditions. We like to stress how important it is to remember the richness of our legacy when constructing the future. The designs that feel uniquely modern but also conjure memories of the past are our best.



**What are the challenges and highlights of working with clients from the GCC?**

One of the challenges we encounter is the continuous learning process required to gain a deeper understanding of our clients' needs and consistently meet their high expectations. On the positive side, we find that people in the GCC region are open to placing their trust in new players in the design industry, provided that we maintain transparency, offer top-notch quality, and deliver service that aligns with their high expectations. Another noteworthy highlight is their appreciation for the intriguing blend of tradition and modernity, which is integral to our creative process.

**What are the design highlights of your collection to be showcased at Downtown Design?**

Our Downtown Design capsule is a meticulously curated selection of pieces that we've created for CB2. Over the course of our 12-year partnership, we've had the privilege of designing >>>

**Babylon Torrento** grey marble bistro table: White and grey veins wave across the grey marble top and down the rounded solid marble base in a gorgeous display of natural beauty.



nearly 300 different collections with CB2. If I were to spotlight a few standout items, I would draw attention to the Raine outdoor chair, Babylon table, and Matra chair. These pieces, in particular, exemplify the full spectrum of our studio's potential and distinctive style.

### What are your expectations from this event?

Our primary aim is to seize Downtown Design as a remarkable opportunity to engage with GCC audiences, providing them with a deeper understanding of our studio's work and design philosophy – especially in relation to the collaborative pieces we've crafted alongside CB2.

### There's a lot of focus on sustainability now. How has that evolved?

Sustainability has evolved significantly over time. The industrial revolution, which commenced nearly 300 years ago, marked the beginning of this journey. Initially, the primary focus was on learning how to efficiently and quickly produce goods. Today, we find ourselves at a different juncture, where the emphasis has shifted towards sustainable production.

The industry as a whole is becoming increasingly conscious of sustainability, and this is indeed a positive development. Designers, engineers, manufacturers, retailers and consumers play pivotal roles in making sustainability a reality. In our studio, we are committed to being environmentally conscious and actively consider sustainability in our work.



**Luca white marble** coffee table: Set atop a tubular polished stainless steel base, the rectangular white river marble slab top adds a luxurious feel for a sophisticated tabletop.

### What are the boundaries of design?

It's a great question, and one that remains open to interpretation. As long as humanity continues to evolve, as civilisation advances, and as technology progresses, there will always be new frontiers to discover and explore. The ever-changing landscape of design is inherently exciting in this sense, as it is a realm without fixed boundaries.

### Where do you see your future taking you, particularly in terms of general design and the direction of CB2?

Our hope for the future is to continue on a creative journey that leads us to bigger achievements and new frontiers in design. We aspire to maintain our unwavering passion, to dream always bigger, and to undertake more extensive and exceptional projects. With

CB2, we aim to continue our shared learning and growth year-by-year.

### What opportunities or growth plans do you see in 2024 and beyond?

As a product design studio, we maintain a steadfast commitment to our collaboration with CB2, where we exclusively design retail products. This collaboration is at the core of our work.

However, we are also exploring alternative avenues for expansion. We are always involved in designing and crafting limited-edition design pieces in collaboration with local artisans that can be acquired directly from the studio, as well as undertaking special commissions. Most recently, we've also introduced our interior design branch, a development that amalgamates various aspects of our studio's expertise. •

# Libera

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**Libera** is a modular and adaptable lighting system that represents a major breakthrough in the field of linear lighting. Libera does not conform to a linear illumination model but enables creative freedom in composition and a personal interpretation of light. The three components of the system, the light rod, joint and base, are integrated seamlessly to create a unified whole. Each part is carefully crafted with formal intent. Libera can be used freely in any indoor setting, from offices to homes.





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# FORUM 2023

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# ENGAGING minds



**T**he who's who of the industry attended the Design Forum 2023, as the leading industry veterans participated in one of the major networking, mind-engaging, and knowledge-sharing platforms.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is home to awe-inspiring

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE LEADING NETWORKING AND MIND ENGAGING PLATFORM— DESIGN FORUM 2023

architecture, exceptional designs, and creativity that beyond words.

Dubai will host the COP 28 Conference. The UAE COP 28 is an excellent opportunity to rethink, reboot, and refocus the climate agenda. Climate technology, the global stocktake, sustainability, and other critical agenda items will be covered.

The Design Forum 2023 will provide attendees with an opportunity to network and explore some intriguing industry subjects such as how COP 28 will affect the design and architecture in the region and secondly, should designer and architects be worried of AI?

Plus, a fireside chat to discuss the rapid changes in fit-out and design industry.

**The Design Forum 2023 gave attendees the opportunity to network and discuss some interesting industry topics, such as how COP 28 would effect design and architecture in the region, and if designers and architects should be concerned about AI.**



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FIRESIDE CHAT

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Goretti  
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MerieauManaging Director &  
Partner  
MMAC Design  
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Steinhauer

Director, RSP

## What COP28 means for design and architecture industry? |

**C**OP28 is clearly a big occasion, with far-reaching ramifications for a variety of sectors. The emphasis during COP conferences is on sustainability and climate change mitigation. This could raise the demand for sustainable design and architecture practices in the business.

Our panellists discussed their expectations for this conference, which will have a greater impact on the industry, such as stricter regulations, which architects and designers may need to adapt to comply with; innovation and technology, conferences promote the use of innovative technologies; renewable energy integration, with a greater emphasis on incorporating renewable energy sources; Green Building Certifications; COP outcomes can influence the adoption and recognition of green building certifications; & more.



The panel was moderated by Bhakti and she focussed on changing trends in the design industry and how principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle can make a difference. She quoted: "Every project has opportunities to adopt these principles and the designers can convince the clients to accelerate towards circular economy, net-zero, and decarbonisation. The panellists discussed on environmental product declarations, green building certifications and their experiences in practice. Further the panel discussed on smart technologies, automation, role of renewable energy, return on investment and their experiences on adopting innovative technologies for measurable impacts."

Noelle agreed that there is a greater need for more awareness and urgency in creating buildings that are more resilient to the effects of climate change. She commented: "Optimism for

increased collaborations across other sectors, as well as collective efforts from government sectors, important stakeholders, industry leaders, and the design community, will result in significant change."

COP28 represents a pivotal moment for our world, as we address the pressing issue of climate change. The design and architecture industry plays a critical role in mitigating the environmental impact of our built environment. Krystal said: "It's our responsibility to rethink, redesign, and reimagine the structures and spaces that shape our lives. COP28 underscores the urgency for sustainable, resilient, and eco-friendly design solutions. We have the opportunity to lead by example, inspire others, and work towards a future where our industry not only adapts to the challenges of climate change but actively contributes to a greener,

**"Optimism for increased collaborations across other sectors, as well as collective efforts from government sectors, important stakeholders, industry leaders, and the design community, will result in significant change."**



more sustainable world. Together, we can turn the aspirations of COP28 into tangible, transformative designs that benefit both people and the planet."

Rita anticipated that COP28, like its predecessors, would establish aggressive targets for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainability. She said: "For the construction industry, especially in growth hubs like Dubai and UAE, this may translate to stricter regulations, incentives for green construction, and increased demand for sustainable fit-outs. The event is expected to spotlight the urgency of addressing climate change and could lead to increased emphasis on sustainable practices in the construction sector."

Rita further stressed: "Decisions made at COP28 alone cannot save us from climate change, but they play a pivotal role in mobilising global action. Collaborative international efforts can expedite the shift towards sustainable practices and set the trajectory for meaningful change. However, individual and local actions, including those in the construction industry, will be critical to actualising these goals."

Christian believes architecture and design professionals play an important part in this process. "It is imperative that buildings and infrastructure be designed to resist extreme weather events and other climate-related disasters," he said.

Ralf shared his thoughts and summed up: "Government, industry stakeholders, the architect and design community, and educational institutions may work together to develop a more resilient built environment in the future."





Design  
Middle East

**FORUM  
2023**

**Firas  
Alsahin**

Co-Founder and Design  
Director  
**4SPACE (Moderator)**

**Dr Chadi  
Chamoun**

Director of Innovation  
and Development  
**Bond Interiors**

**Enayat  
Ghaedi**

Associate Director  
**RMJM**

**Justin  
Wells**

CEO  
**Wells International**

**Rasha Al  
Tekreeti**

Co-Founder  
and Creative Director  
**Waru**

FIRESIDE CHAT

## Could AI create buildings more effectively than humans? |

**A**I has the potential to dramatically improve the efficiency and efficacy of various areas of the building design and construction process, but it is critical to understand the technology's current limitations and ethical implications, which our panel will highlight and explore.

Without a doubt, artificial intelligence can improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of building design and construction operations. However, it is unlikely to replace the requirement for human invention, monitoring, and adaptation in the construction industry.





## The future of design isn't merely about smarter algorithms but harnessing AI to foster human connection, sustainability, and beauty in our built environments.

Firas moderated the panel discussion, emphasising the importance of embracing technology rather than resisting it. "Our discussions underscored the myriad possibilities, from generative design and optimising sustainability

to enhancing user experiences. The fusion of creativity with AI isn't about diminishing human innovation but amplifying our capacity to envision and execute groundbreaking projects. As we navigate this evolving landscape, addressing ethical considerations and ensuring inclusivity remains paramount. The future of design isn't merely about smarter algorithms but harnessing AI to foster human connection, sustainability, and beauty in our built environments. At this pivotal intersection of technology and creativity, one thing is clear: AI doesn't replace the architect's touch—it enhances it." Enayat supported AI as well, but was adamant that AI in the industry is changing the way we plan,

execute, and manage projects. And, as the usage of AI grows, it becomes increasingly important for businesses to adapt to this developing technology.

Justin stated that while AI is making a significant contribution to the market, human ingenuity and uniqueness would be more valued, and we would pay a bigger premium for human intellect.

Dr. Chadi emphasised the innovation and technology that Bond Interiors is using to build, as well as how AI should be used positively where possible.

Rasha stated that while AI can have a positive impact on the industry, expecting it to replace humans and their intelligence is unrealistic.

FIRESIDE CHAT

## Manu Abraham

Managing Director  
Aujan Interiors

In addition, we had a one-on-one conversation with Manu Abraham, Managing Director of Aujan Interiors, about his journey, obstacles, and how they are implementing cutting-edge technology, training sessions, and sustainable practices to stay ahead in the fit-out and design sector.

He emphasised the importance of using methodologies to guarantee that design concepts correspond with financial restrictions and project feasibility. He also emphasised project deadlines, budget constraints, and the importance of executing quickly while limiting rising material costs. Manu also discussed how material prices fluctuate due to global variables and what procedures are in place to preserve budget predictability in such instances.

He further added how the ongoing training for the team and updates in sustainability practices results in a great success.



GALLERY

DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023





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# Design 2023 / AWARDS / FORUM

Middle East

TARAF  
DEVELOPMENT

M  
CasaMilano

RAK  
CERAMICS

Numai  
Real Estate

HAVELOCK ONE  
Consider it done

UNIVERSAL

سیدار  
SEDAR  
Since 1992

AUJAN  
INTERIORS

CHATELS & MORE

## V for Victory

The biggest celebration honoured the industry's best firms, projects, and game changers.

PHOTOGRAPHY FAROOQ SALIK

The Design Middle East Awards 2023 were held at the Sofitel Dubai The Palm and created a history in its own unique way. Over 110 firms nominated and we received hundreds of nominations. Our systems were overwhelmed, and the Inbox was flooded with nominations from old and new acquaintances, as well as those just starting out in the field. This was the biggest and finest celebration party ever, and we want to thank you all for making it so—awesome!

The winners and highly commended from the gala night are listed below.



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

/ COMPANY AWARDS

Architecture Firm of the Year

**AEDAS**

**A**edas team lifted the Architecture Firm of the Year award. Aedas is celebrating 17 years of presence in Dubai and the Middle East. Contributing to generating a contemporary discourse on design, not only with their buildings but also helping to shape a new generation of

designers from the region. Designs and projects that are part of the popular culture and collective imagination of the region, like the Dubai Metro. Aedas aims to create pioneering architectural solutions that work aesthetically, economically and practically.

/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / DLR GROUP



/ COMPANY AWARDS

Interior Design Firm Of The Year

## STUDIO BRUNO GUELAFF + BG GROUP

Interior Design Firm of the Year was awarded to Studio Bruno Guelaff + BG Group. For the past 15 years, Bruno Guelaff acted as the design director of the award-winning interior design firm 'studio bruno guelaff'. He has been heavily involved in all parts of each

project, including architecture, master planning, interior design, landscape design, furniture design, and branding. Bruno, as a multi-discipline doyen, ensures that all design elements end in a comprehensive fluid personalised project.

/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / XBD COLLECTIVE



/ COMPANY AWARDS

Fit-Out Firm of the Year

# ALEC FITOUT

**A**LEC FITOUT was named Fit-Out Firm of the Year. In challenging market conditions, the team has safely executed a wide variety of projects across the MENA region including 5\* hotels and resorts, signature fine dining restaurants, cultural attractions and museums, airport passenger terminals and water parks. They offer design and build, fast-track, fit-out and refurbishment services to their valued clientele and work collaboratively

with the leading regional and international interior design and architectural firms. They have diversified into new business sectors such as Theming – where they have been awarded the theming package for the largest waterpark in the world. ALEC FITOUT continues the development of staff whilst implementing innovative technology solutions as well as ensuring all projects are completed with industry-leading health and safety practices.

/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / HAVELOCK ONE INTERIORS

DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023







/ COMPANY AWARDS

Decor Retailer Of The Year

# CHATELS & MORE



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

**D**écor Retailer of the Year award was won by Chattels & More. It is a home-grown concept from Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group. The brand offers a lifestyle experience committed to the transformation of homes into purpose-built havens. The brand guarantees that styling

places remain a joyful experience that brings out the best in individuals who live within them by striking a healthy balance between beauty and utility. Chattels & More specialises in contemporary, functional, and sophisticated furniture that makes a distinct statement while catering to a wide array of preferences.

/ COMPANY AWARDS

Boutique Firm Of The Year

## BRAND CREATIVE

**B**rand Creative was declared the Boutique Firm of the Year. Carla Conte, founder and creative director, went on a journey to build Brand Creative in 2011, following the recession. Her conviction was that the region needed a new approach

to design for local brands—one that was approachable, hands-on, and genuinely personal. The delicate fusion of interior design and graphic design is at the centre of their offering, where the discovery of revolutionary concepts becomes a reality.

/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / FINCH





/ COMPANY AWARDS

## Specialised Manufacturer Of The Year

# SEDAR GLOBAL

**S**edar Global grabbed the Specialised Manufacturer of the Year award. Catering to the window and wall décor industry for over 130 years, Sedar Global offers curtains, wallpaper, awnings, blinds, folding doors, curtain accessories and pillows from Marco Polo, Fujikawa, Amazona, Anatartica as well as internationally renowned names including Jannelli & Volpi,

Armani/Casa, Swarovski, Versace, Somfy and York Weave amongst others. One of the world's leading companies in the manufacture, design and installation of window and wall décor Sedar has over 30 showrooms across 11 countries including the UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Egypt, and Iraq and is in the process of expanding across further territories worldwide.



## / COMPANY AWARDS

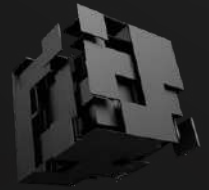
## Best Workplace Of The Year

**AECOM**

The best Workplace of the Year award was won by Aecom. With a team of highly experienced professionals, Aecom covers a broad industry focus and has worked on some of the region's most renowned projects, including EXPO 2020 Dubai; Yas Island, Abu Dhabi; NEOM Landscapes of the Line, KSA; Red Sea Project, KSA; Project Paradise, KSA; Diriyah Gate Development Authority,

KSA. Currently, the team are focussed on the leisure and entertainment sector, especially in Saudi Arabia. AECOM are Greening Riyadh and giving the city an uplift and is looking at Transit Oriented Developments. The team is nourished with a shared feeling of belonging and the desire to help cities and communities thrive, which is achieved by the internal ethos formed by Aecom.





/ COMPANY AWARDS

## Homegrown Furniture Brand Of The Year

# THE DESIGN HOUSE

The Homegrown Furniture Brand of the Year award was won by The Design House. Since its beginning in 2019, The Design House has established itself as the go-to place for bespoke elegance and custom furniture design for discerning client. It stands out among its competitors for its unrivalled dedication to crafting magnificent furniture that enriches places.

The Design House has consistently been at the forefront combining elegance and innovation while earning the trust of its valuable clients and creating inspirational spaces as it grows, demonstrating an intuitive understanding of great design while offering its clientele near and far a superior customer experience.



/ COMPANY AWARDS

Excellence In Health &amp; Safety (Fit-Out)

**KPS**

DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

**K**PS won the Excellence in Health & Safety (Fit-Out) award. KPS has a strong Swedish root, and health, safety, and the environment (HSE) have always been a core part of its operating model. The firm has its own professional HSE team and uses external certification

bodies to evaluate the compliance of its HSE systems and to provide guidance to senior management. They are monitored by the external integrated management system certification bodies through ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and OHSAS 18001 every year.



/ COMPANY AWARDS

## Tech-Savvy Firm Of The Year

# KEO INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANTS

**K**EO International Consultants won the Tech-Savvy Firm of the Year award. KEO actively collaborates with multiple software vendors such as Autodesk, Microsoft, Bentley, Deltek, ESRI, Trimble, Twin View, Giraffe, and Robert Mc Neel & Associates. This variety enables KEO to improve processes by embedding technology in every aspect of daily work.

KEO has a clear vision of its leading digital innovator position in the market and its long-term digital design capabilities. This vision is divided into smaller time-bound and measurable outcome initiatives. Agile project management principles are implemented to ensure efficient execution, appropriate resource allocation, early customer feedback, and progress tracking.



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

## / COMPANY AWARDS

## Emerging Firm Of The Year

**WARÛ**

**W**ARÛ lifted the Emerging Firm of the Year award. Warû, an interior architecture and strategic design agency focussed on creating nomadic spaces; a venture close to Rasha Al-Tekreeti, co-founder and creative director; roots, vision, and heart. Her foray in hospitality

and workplace design consultancy has garnered a portfolio spanning prestigious names in large-scale hospitality projects, with brands such as Westin, Hyatt, Fairmont amongst others, including projects for Siemens Energy, Masdar, and Biogen in office design spaces.







/ COMPANY AWARDS

Best Consultancy Firm  
Of The Year

# SHAPE ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE + RESEARCH

Shape Architecture Practice + Research, founded and led by visionary architect Abdulla Al-Shamsi won the Best Consultancy Firm of the year. As a multi-disciplinary architectural firm, Shape has garnered international acclaim for its innovative and sustainable approach to design. Over the years, Shape has curated an impressive portfolio that spans diverse projects, from private residences to city-transforming urban master plans. One of their most notable accomplishments is the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, which has been recognised for its innovative use of metal, remarkable interior design for public spaces, and role as an exemplary educational institution. In addition, the team is looking forward to the completion of the prestigious "Shees Rest Area," a transformational public market project in Khorfakkan, Sharjah.



## / COMPANY AWARDS

## Ceramics &amp; Tiles Brand Of The Year

**RAK CERAMICS**

**R**AK Ceramics was declared Ceramic & Tiles Brand of the Year. It is one of the largest ceramics brands in the world. Specialising in ceramic and gres porcelain wall and floor tiles, tableware, sanitary ware and faucets, the company can produce 118 million square metres of tiles, 5.7 million pieces of sanitary ware, 26 million pieces of porcelain tableware and 2.6 million pieces of faucets per year at its 23 state-of-the-art plants across the

UAE, India, Bangladesh, and Europe.

Founded in 1989, and HQ in the UAE, RAK Ceramics serves clients

in more than 150 countries through its network of operational hubs in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Asia, North and South America, and Australia.

RAK Ceramics is a publicly listed company on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange in the UAE.





DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

/// PROJECT AWARDS

**BEST RETAIL PROJECT OF THE YEAR**

# Shakhbout City Community Market

**/JT+PARTNERS**

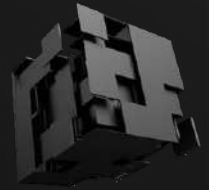
DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023



**J**T+Partners' Shakhbout City Community Market in Abu Dhabi was named Best Retail Project of the Year. This project offers the surrounding community high-quality convenient stores inclusive of hypermarket, convenient retail, F&B outlets, and community facilities. The project aims at providing integrated services to meet the needs of

Shakhbout City. The project supports the vision to enhance the quality of life. The centre is designed around a central node to link the surrounding community within the different clusters. The main courtyard offers open to sky landscaped area providing a contemporary and sustainable environment for its residents and visitors.

/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / NEWBY TEA, THE FITOUT



/// PROJECT AWARDS

## COMMERCIAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR

# Bain & Company /ALLEN ARCHITECTURE INTERIORS DESIGN

Bain & Company by Allen Architecture Interiors Design was awarded commercial project of the year. The office's ingenious design, inspired by the meandering Khor river, embodies Bain & Company's spirit of being bold and extraordinary while fostering collaboration and innovation. With its locally inspired yet contemporary design, premium ambiance, and brand-centric approach, this office space has transformed into a dynamic ecosystem that propels both productivity and creativity.



/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / PIRELLI TYRES HQ, LLOYD DESIGN FITOUTS

/// PROJECT AWARDS

**DESIGN EDUCATION PROJECT OF THE YEAR**

# New Building Dubai College

## /GODWIN AUSTEN JOHNSON

The New Building Dubai College by Godwin Austen Johnson was named Design Education Project of the Year. This project was a success for both the client and the consultant because it was completed on time and within budget. The new facility, which

spans 5200sqm, is a collaborative, connected structure where barriers are removed and integrated learning is promoted. It is a forward-thinking and adaptable learning centre that prioritises sustainability and the environment.





/// PROJECT AWARDS

## LANDSCAPE PROJECT OF THE YEAR

# Villa KB / B8 ARCHITECTURE

Villa KB by B8 Architecture won the Landscape Project of the Year. This extraordinary 4,000sqm villa, spread across four levels, serves as the cornerstone of a remarkable transformation. B8 transformed a large 15,000sqm property into a family paradise, complete with karting tracks, paddle and tennis courts, basket and soccer fields, kids farm, and lazy river, among other amenities...

Their approach to landscaping has been one of synergy with the environment, creating

outdoor spaces that harmonize rather than harm. Native plant selections, smart water management, and eco-friendly materials demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, resulting in lower overall energy usage and a more resilient outdoor environment for those fortunate enough to enjoy this special location. Villa KB is not just a residence; it's a masterpiece that celebrates the boundless potential of blending architectural brilliance with the serenity of the natural world.



/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / LAURENT & CELINE MEADOWS VILLA, SMART RENOVATION

/// PROJECT AWARDS

**LIGHTING PROJECT OF THE YEAR**
**MBC Al Arabia  
 News Studio / AMAQ**

Lighting Project of the Year was awarded to MBC Al Arabia News Studio by AMAQ. This project entailed optimising floor spaces with a fully integrated newsroom, studio, large LED displays, extremely high-tech data centres, news cutters, control gallery, make-up rooms, and a spacious courtyard area to interpret the natural elements and complement the client's vision of creating magic. The task was once again one in which all materials were totally import-centric, and the attention to detail was at its pinnacle, as usual, with the goal of providing the finest aesthetics and ambiance to AMAQ's valued client.







/// PROJECT AWARDS

HEALTHCARE PROJECT OF THE YEAR

Smart Salem /KPS



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023



Smart Salem by KPS won the Healthcare Project of the Year. Smart Salem is a Dubai Health Authority (DHA) authorised provider of smart health screening for UAE visa and residency processing. The clinics use the latest in robotics, automation, and AI, to speed up the time it takes to renew a UAE visa or issue a new one. Following the successful design and build of the Smart Salem screening clinic in DIFC, KPS was invited to build their latest facility at Dubai Knowledge Park.

/// PROJECT AWARDS

**SUSTAINABLE PROJECT OF THE YEAR**
**Solar House /XBD COLLECTIVE**


Solar House by XBD Collective was named Sustainable Project of the Year. Solar House, situated in the prestigious Emirates Hills. Spanning a total of four floors, the residence boasts an impressive 40,000sqft, with a total of 10 bedrooms and 16 bathrooms. Notable features include a two-story pool and an eye-catching suspended glass bridge, which add to the residence's futuristic feel. The combination of solar electricity, moisture harvesting, and adequate natural lighting demonstrates a consistent commitment to sustainability. These features not only save money, but they also allow the family to be environmentally conscientious. The usage of sustainable energy throughout the residence contributes to the villa's overall modern, contemporary tone.





/// PROJECT AWARDS

## RESIDENTIAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR

## Bayviews Residences /JT+PARTNERS



JT+Partners' Bayviews Residences project won the Residential Project of the Year. Bayviews, a groundbreaking architectural marvel in Mina Al Arab, Ras Al Khaimah, redefines luxury living through innovative design. Developed by RAK Properties and meticulously crafted by JT+Partners, the 14 and 17-storey towers showcase avant-garde facades, intelligent space utilisation, and sweeping sea vistas.

Inspired by the rhythmic dance of ocean currents, Bayviews seamlessly integrates modern design aesthetics with nature's grace. Sustainability is embedded in every detail, from eco-conscious materials to intelligent infrastructure. This project transcends traditional boundaries, offering residents a living, breathing experience where architectural innovation and natural splendour converge seamlessly on Hayat Island.



/// PROJECT AWARDS

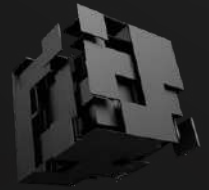
**INTERIOR FIT-OUT PROJECT OF THE YEAR**
**Aya By Hyperspace / DESIGN INFINITY**


The Interior Fit-Out Project of the Year was awarded to AYA by Hyperspace at Wadi Mall by Design Infinity. AYA is the first of a new series of immersive, experiential amusement parks in Dubai, designed by Design Infinity. WAFI City Mall's first-of-its-kind Entertainment Park features 12 completely immersive zones spread across 40,000 square feet. AYA transports visitors to a magnificent universe by combining art and cutting-edge technology. At AYA visitors leave the real world behind to create memories of the future in a vibrant and colourful cosmos. The transformative journey begins by entering the world of Aurora, followed by The Source, Drift, Outland and The Pool zones. Cosmic stars, pools, lush hills and waterfalls of The River zone.

DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023



/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / LA MAISON ANI, BLUECAMEL



/// PROJECT AWARDS

REFURBISHMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR

# Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa

/KHANSAHEB INTERIORS



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023



**B**ab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa was named Refurbishment Project of the Year by Khansaheb Interiors. The Bab Al Shams Desert Resort and Spa in Dubai was originally built in 2004 and expanded in 2006 by Khansaheb Interiors. It is owned by Meydan and managed by Kerzner International. Khansaheb originally built the resort in 2004, extended it in 2006 and continued their association with the 5-star Arabian style retreat property with this refurbishment project.

Owned by Meydan, the management of the resort falls under Kerzner International, the developer and operator of Atlantis Resorts and Residences and ultra-luxury One&Only Resorts worldwide. Khansaheb did the full refurbishment of Bab Al Shams Desert Resort and Spa's 105 guestrooms, 10 suites, reception, restaurants, bar/lounges, Meeting rooms, various public areas, and courtyard.

The scope also included furniture, fittings, and equipment (FFE) replacement and a project-wide MEP upgrade package.

/ HIGHLY COMMENDED / VILLA MBR CITY, MUSEDISIGN

/// PROJECT AWARDS

**MASTER PLAN OF THE YEAR**
**Amaala-Six Senses Triple Bay /U+A**

**A**maala - Six Senses Triple Bay by U+A won Master Plan of the Year.

The project offers a canvas for crafting unforgettable experiences. Nestled within the distinctive landforms, this coastal retreat features a range of accommodation options, including beachfront residences, a hillside village, and villas along the

private mangrove bay, catering to diverse guest preferences. These accommodations seamlessly blend the raw natural beauty of the site with the brand's refined and sustainable design ethos. The property boasts 64 rooms, six suites, 30 villas, and 25 branded residences, meticulously designed by architects U+A and enriched with interiors by Studio Carter.





/// PROJECT AWARDS

**BEST FUTURE PROJECT**

**Keturah Reserve /MAG**



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023



**B**est Future Project was awarded to Keturah Reserve by MAG. It is an inspiring development at MBR City District 7 by MAG that offers a collection of exclusive residential villa plots. A world-class and finest development which offers this one-of-a-kind lifestyle for residents. Where users will get to dive and immerse themselves in the natural elements and their servings.

The inspiring designs and aesthetics easily connect users with the beautiful surroundings of nature. Bio living concept here indulges occupants in a soothing and relaxing environment. A beautiful and charming development within a natural embodiment community of flora and fauna, verdant vegetation and green spaces.

/ **HIGHLY COMMENDED** / EMIRATES GOLF HEIGHTS, **KEO INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANTS**

/// **PROJECT AWARDS**
**DESIGN & BUILD PROJECT OF THE YEAR**

# Coterie Restaurant & Precision Football

## /AUJAN INTERIORS

The Coterie Restaurant & Precision Football project by Aujan Interiors won the Design & Build Project of the Year. This one is the epitome of success in changing a mere thought into a vibrant and thriving reality. This project arose as a vital addition to the local community, rooted in a vision to create a friendly and engaging venue. It reinvented the space above the Ibn Battuta Mall's parking area as a large playground, along with a state-of-the-art tech centre dedicated to football lovers. Furthermore, the project includes a magnificent restaurant and bar serving great English food, making it a true magnet for guests as well as a nurturing ground for football enthusiasts, all while focussing on the adoption of contemporary football technologies.



/ **HIGHLY COMMENDED** / CONTEMPORARY MIAMI,  
**CREATING HOMES INTERIORS AND CONTRACTING**







/// PROJECT AWARDS

**CULTURAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR****Diriyah Gate Experience Center /ALEC FITOUT**

DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023



**A**LEC FITOUT won the Cultural Project of the Year for Diriyah Gate Experience Center. The Diriyah Gate Experience Center is a unique cultural destination located within the Diriyah Gate Project zone, which is under the supervision of the Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The center is situated beside Wadi Safar, and is part of the Events District, which is adjacent to the Bujairi District and overlooks the Turaif UNESCO site. The design and concept of the experience centre were inspired by the rich heritage, stories, culture, origins of Najdi architecture, nature, and design of Diriyah. The centre brings these stories to life through immersive sensory experiences, cultural activities, and unique interpretations.

/// PROJECT AWARDS

**RESTAURANT DESIGN OF THE YEAR**
**Atrangi /DESIGNSMITH**

Atrangi by Designsmith won the Restaurant Design of the Year award. Atrangi exemplifies exceptional fit-out craftsmanship, with great attention to detail seen throughout the room. The natural wooden floors and earthy-toned walls are fitted effortlessly, providing a pleasant and inviting atmosphere. Rattan furniture not only adds an ethnic touch, but also displays a well-thought-out fit-out approach that maximises comfort and usefulness. The innovative transformation of the architectural facade showcases the expertise in fit-out execution, turning a challenge into a distinctive design feature.





/// PROJECT AWARDS

## BAR DESIGN OF THE YEAR

# Vaga /4SPACE DESIGN

Bar Design of the Year award was given to NONSENSE by VAGA. NONSENSE is a unique late-night speakeasy bar located in Dubai's Bluewaters The Wharf, renowned for its innovative bar design in Dubai by 4SPACE. This hidden gem combines a slick musical program with a futuristic vibe, making it a popular destination for locals and tourists alike. The bar's interior design is a stand-out feature, incorporating eccentric elements that offer an out-of-this-world experience. NONSENSE is a listening room featuring a cutting-edge music programme that is synchronised with the lighting display, as well as a visual masterpiece.

The pub is ideal for spending a night out with friends while enjoying distinctive music and design aspects.



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

/// PROJECT AWARDS

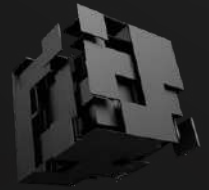
**WELL-BEING PROJECT OF THE YEAR**
**Aeon Clinic /ORANGE DESIGN GROUP**


DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

**A**eon by Orange Design Group won the Well-Being Project of the Year. Aeon is a Regenerative Wellness Centre located in the Atlantis Royal Hotel, one of Dubai's most recognisable landmarks. This 6,800sqft space was formerly classified as a hotel transit lounge and is now home to a wellness and aesthetic clinic with well-appointed consultation rooms, treatment rooms, waiting lounges, staff admin spaces, restrooms, and doctor's offices.

The clinic's public space is a standout feature, with consultation and treatment rooms designed to create a sense of elevated lightness.





/// PROJECT AWARDS

## HOSPITALITY PROJECT OF THE YEAR (HOTELS)

# One&Only One Za'abeel /ALEC FITOUT



A LEC FITOUT won the Hospitality Project of the Year award for their One&Only One Za'abeel project. A symbol of ambition, innovation and the pioneering spirit of Dubai, One Za'abeel stands tall and proud in the Za'abeel district in the heart of the city, strategically positioned at the crossroads of the old and new business districts of Dubai. With ultra-luxurious finishes and incredible attention to detail covering over 53,000m2 of fit-out, this project is a masterpiece in iconic design, innovation and delivery and represents one of the most complex, challenging and rewarding fit-out projects.



/// PROJECT AWARDS

**BEST INDEPENDENT SHOWROOM (KITCHEN)**
**NOLTE KÜCHEN SHOWROOM /ABU DHABI**

**B**est Independent Showroom (Kitchen) was awarded to Nolte Küchen Showroom in Abu Dhabi. Universal Trading Company's Nolte Küchen showroom in Abu Dhabi showcases superior design inspiration and effortless functionality.

Initially opened in 2005, the Abu Dhabi location was the first of three Nolte Küchen showrooms in the UAE.

Universal Trading Company is the exclusive partner for Nolte in the UAE.

Recently redesigned, the showroom features all the elements that make Nolte Küchen Germany's favourite

kitchen: premium aesthetics, innovative details and world-class durability. Customers can see everything Nolte has to offer in the redesigned showroom with memorable kitchen layouts and options for living spaces, utility areas and bathrooms. Talented designers are on hand every day helping customers experience the magic of building their own dream kitchen tailored to their needs. Universal Trading's signature 3D imaging brings the vision to life creating a kitchen that is easy to live in.





/// PROJECT AWARDS

## BEST INDEPENDENT SHOWROOM (BATHROOM)

# Nok Showroom / B8 ARCHITECTURE



**N**OK Showroom by B8 Architecture won the Best Independent Showroom (Bathroom). This showroom is a manifestation of modernity and chic elegance. The meticulously crafted space embodies a unique concept, thoughtfully harmonised to capture the precise vision of our discerning client. Every detail has been meticulously shaped with curves and the utmost attention to both form and the pursuit of aesthetic excellence, following the concept of their products and branding.

/// PROJECT AWARDS

**INNOVATION IN DESIGN AWARD**
**Samana Golf Views /SAMANA DEVELOPERS**

Samana Golf Views by Samana Developers won the Innovation in Design Award. Located in the coveted Dubai Sports City, this exclusive development transcends ordinary living. It lets you immerse yourself in the epitome

of refinement. It's golf-inspired living, impeccable craftsmanship, and unrivalled amenities capture the essence of vibrant elegance. With its contemporary architecture and futuristic design, this project epitomises luxury living at its best.







**DESIGN MIDDLE EAST Awards 2023**

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**WINNING WITH PRIDE**  
Winners Revealed



/// **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**
**INTERIOR DESIGNER OF THE YEAR**

# FIRAS ALSAHIN /4SPACE DESIGN

**F**iras Alsahein, the co-founder and design director of 4SPACE bagged the Interior Designer of the Year award.

Firas is a renowned interior architect known for his creative vision and passion for providing high-end architectural and interior design services.

With over 25 years of expertise and involvement in

over 200 projects, Firas has helped 4SPACE establish itself as one of the top architecture and interior design firms in the Middle East.

His distinct design approach and dedication to creating memorable, bespoke places have resulted in multiple honours for the firm, demonstrating his great talent and expertise in the sector.

 / **HIGHLY COMMENDED** / ADRIANA GRAUR, DWP




/// **INDIVIDUAL** AWARDS

**ARCHITECT OF THE YEAR**

# MICHAEL MAGILL /RSP

*\* Michael was unable to attend the ceremony, and the award was accepted on his behalf by a member of his team.*

**M**ichael Magill was named Architect of the Year. He is the creative director of RSP - a diverse, future-forward multi-disciplinary design group and his vision for the studio has always been focused on creating meaningful spaces and experiences that not only serve to inspire and engage users but also transform the lives of our communities.

Despite his extensive responsibilities in managing the Dubai studio, Michael remains deeply engaged in the daily craft of design. He serves as a mentor to a team of exceptionally skilled architects and master planners, guiding them through every stage of their creative journey, persistently challenging and honing their design sensibilities while ensuring that every voice is heard.

/ **HIGHLY COMMENDED** /

ABDULLA AL SHAMSI, **SHAPE ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE + RESEARCH**



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/// INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**
**PIERRE MARTIN DUFRESNE /U+A**

The Lifetime Achievement Award was won by Pierre Martin Dufresne from U+A. With over 25 years of global experience, Martin consistently places a strong emphasis on the significance of context and cultural identity in every project he undertakes. His passion for architecture stems from his enduring fascination with "living structures," buildings that enhance the daily lives of their occupants. He has always championed the architect's role as a facilitator, with a deep understanding of a design tailored to the client's specific needs, imbuing each space with soul and purpose.

Martin's vast travels, as well as his genuine interest in cultural diversity, have fostered his intense interest in urbanism. He sees architecture as a means of contributing to a community's feeling of place.





/// **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**

**PROJECT MANAGER OF THE YEAR**

**BORIS LAM /DLR GROUP**

**B**oris Lam, the senior project manager at DLR Group Middle East was named the project Manager of the Year. He has over 20 years of experience as a UK-qualified architect working across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Boris has vast management expertise leading multidisciplinary teams on

large-scale, high-end hospitality, residential, and mixed-use development projects throughout Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Boris has worked on notable projects in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, the United Kingdom, and China, among others. Hotels, resorts, mixed-use complexes, master plans, and residential buildings.

/ **HIGHLY COMMENDED** / NATASHA ABBAS, **NORTH 51 CONSULTING**



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/// INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

CEO OF THE YEAR

## TIM MARTIN /GENSLER

With more than 20 years experience across multi-disciplinary practices around the world, Tim Martin is a designer, mentor, and industry leader. Tim lifted the coveted CEO of the Year award. One of Tim's notable achievements is his ability to envision projects that seamlessly blend modernity with the rich cultural heritage

of the Middle East. His vision for iconic structures that pay homage to local traditions while embracing innovation is evident in projects like the King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh, a landmark that embodies Saudi Arabia's aspirations for a sustainable and prosperous future. Another keen example is 1364ah, Riyadh's premier lifestyle centre within the Diplomatic Quarter (DQ), KSA.

\* Tim was away and unable to attend the event.





/// **INDIVIDUAL** AWARDS

**FIT-OUT LEADER OF THE YEAR**

# SHERIF NAGY /THE FITOUT

**S**herif Nagy won Fit-Out Leader of the Year. He has been influential in introducing various ground-breaking technologies to the industry and altering it. He has made further steps in modernising THE FITOUT's factory facilities by combining state-of-the-art and modern technology-driven machinery, owing to his broad understanding in the fit-out as well as manufacturing industries. Adhering to the highest quality standards

of THE FITOUT, he has restructured its manufacturing and production facilities to deliver bespoke products with superior finishes.

The company has successfully completed several prime projects such as SLS Dubai Hotel & Residences, Marriott, The Palm Tower, University of Wollongong, Royal Atlantis, RIU Hotel, Huawei, and many more. THE FITOUT completed world-class fit-out works for the Expo 2020, World Expo hosted by Dubai.



/// **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**
**FIT-OUT PROJECT MANAGER OF THE YEAR**
**HAKIM EZZAHOUANY /NORTH 51 CONSULTING**

**N**orth 51 Consulting's Hakim Ezzahouany won the Fit-Out Project Manager of the Year. As a civil engineer and fit-out project manager with a very hands-on proactive approach at prestigious locations across the UAE, this year has been a thrilling ride for Hakim. He worked at the Yvonne Bistro & Patisserie, Dubai Hills Mall, where he was able to bridge the gap between

multiple languages and cultural boundaries on-site while serving as the clients' trusting eyes and ears during the fit-out stage. Ensuring all critical features such as gas design, kitchen equipment installations, mechanical/electrical installations, and lighting to the unique Furniture by Popus Designs were executed to precision and in compliance with Mall requirements to the highest quality and standards.







/// **INDIVIDUAL** AWARDS

**EMERGING ARCHITECT OF THE YEAR**

**HADIA HANAN /AEDAS**

**H**adia Hanan was declared Emerging Architect of the Year. She joined Aedas in 2019 and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture graduating with high honors from the American University of Sharjah. She has received the Dean's Award for Academic Excellence (top graduate), AIA

Middle East Design Award, RSP Best Drawing Award, and an honorable mention for the international AWR competition. She is an enthusiastic architect who enjoys participating in competitions and research initiatives. She has worked on a variety of projects in the UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia throughout her stint with Aedas.



/// **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**
**EMERGING INTERIOR DESIGNER OF THE YEAR**

# SHIAM SHIBL /DLR GROUP

**S**hiam Shibl lifted the Emerging Interior Designer of The Year trophy. Shiam joined DLR Group and became exposed to working on a wide range of projects such as 5\* hotels, residential complexes, retail, and mixed-use developments. Working alongside Design Director Vaida Buchrotaite, Shiam is trusted with Senior-level responsibilities, continues to develop her management and creative skills, develops concepts, and leads small to medium-scale projects.

Shiam prioritises the end-user experience in all her designs. She has a fresh and refined approach, ensuring the end-user feels delighted and comfortable within the designed spaces.

More recently, Shiam has worked on projects such as the Buruj 4\* Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, the Hyatt Regency 5\* hotel in Madinah, KSA, Multaka Residences in Madinah, KSA, Ehteraf Madinah boutique suites, Abha mixed-use development and 4\* hotel in Abha, KSA, and more.

 / **HIGHLY COMMENDED** / BETHANY LOCKHART, **ELE INTERIOR**




/// **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT OF THE YEAR

ESLAM ABEED /JACOBS

Es  
slam Abeed from Jacobs won the Landscape Architect of the Year award. Eslam excelled in a variety of projects, including Masaar, Jebel Ali, Neom Oxagon Village, and many others.

Eslam is always eager to create designs that are based on great storylines, and he has a very creative

design approach. Masaar, his one-of-a-kind built project, is very distinct in every way from all other residential communities in the UAE. Furthermore, he recently completed an essential exam and became a Chartered Landscape Architect at the Landscape Institute in the United Kingdom, and this is only a small part of his resume.



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# Curvy PERCY!

**NaughtOne** introduces **Percy**, a vibrant, multipurpose lounge chair, and it's time for you to get one as well.



**The design we landed on has a timeless look, almost as if it's always existed. But it's also unique – and can be dressed up or down, easily adapting to many environments and personal styles.**

**W**hy is Percy causing such a stir? The reason for this is because the Percy lounge chair is the most recent addition to NaughtOne's portfolio of functional yet stylish furniture. Percy is a statement piece and a supremely comfortable sit. Inspired by the simple, utilitarian design of mid-century waiting room chairs, Percy features classic, uninterrupted flowing lines. This lounge chair is made up of only two elements: the striking geometric outline of the frame and the luxurious, cushioned upholstery.

"When designing Percy, I was drawn to the combination of hard metal and soft upholstery. I wanted to play with visually softening the metal to create a cohesive, curvaceous look. I love working with metal and steel as it's an incredibly durable, industrial material, but it can also bend and flow. This allowed us to create the continuous curve forming the cushion frame," said designer Nicole Marion. "The design we landed on has a timeless look, almost as if it's always existed. But it's also unique – and can be dressed up or down, easily adapting to many environments and personal styles."

While inspired by a utilitarian design, the simple structure is the perfect foundation for customisation. In keeping with NaughtOne's focus on providing clients with a breadth of possibilities, the Percy Chair frame can be chosen with a choice of 16 colours and over 100 upholstery variations, resulting in a plethora of possible combinations.

Stephen Floyd, Creative Director, NaughtOne, commented: "Percy is special for two reasons. Firstly, it's a little unconventional but in a charming way. Secondly, we're used to seeing thin tubular frame chairs, but this is a chunky tubular frame chair that fully takes advantage of our RAL palette."

Percy was presented early in the design process at the 2020 Interior Design Show in Toronto, where it won the award for Best Prototype. It is NaughtOne's third new product of 2023, following the launch of the Pippin Chair and the Morse Table System earlier this year.

Visit [naughtone.com](https://naughtone.com) to learn more and purchase Percy. •



Dubai showroom's awe-inspiring exteriors are adorned with a monumental glass facade that captures the essence of Lamborghini's cutting-edge style.



DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2023

# AN EXCLUSIVE SETTING

**RAKAN TURKI**, Chief Executive Officer of **Lamborghini** Abu Dhabi and Dubai, discusses the world's largest Lamborghini showroom in Dubai and the brand's future goals.

**What are the main design highlights of the world's largest Lamborghini showroom, Lamborghini Dubai?**

Spread over 30,000 square feet, the Lamborghini Dubai showroom is the largest dedicated Lamborghini dealer facility globally. The building, which is designed by world-renowned Uruguayan architect Carlos Ott, spans three levels and boasts three private display areas, making it an

immersive and exclusive space for Lamborghini enthusiasts. One of the most distinctive features of the Lamborghini Dubai showroom is its external glass façade suspended by steel cables while the internal space provides customers with a dedicated Lamborghini environment that reflects the marque's visionary, cutting edge and pure brand values.

The transparent glass exterior,

combined with sleek black surfaces, reinforces the Italian brand's image of exclusivity and sophistication. The architecture of the building itself mirrors Lamborghini's design philosophy, characterised by curvilinear lines and aerodynamic aesthetics, making it a true embodiment of the brand's DNA.

Inside the showroom, clients are provided with a Lamborghini-



exclusive setting that perfectly embodies the brand's innovative and authentic core values. The interior design ensures that every aspect of the showroom is aligned with the brand's identity and ethos.

As the authorised dealer for Lamborghini in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, we constantly strive to deliver exceptional offerings and customer experiences. In line with our vision, we have introduced the Ad Personam lounge, a dedicated area within our showroom where our valued customers can fully explore the

extensive personalisation options offered by Lamborghini. This exclusive service is accessible at all our top-tier locations, including our facility situated in Dubai.

As we move forward, the brand will continue to redefine luxury, exploring the untapped potential in this dynamic market. We are well-positioned to providing the best support and a more elevated experience for our customers. This is especially important as the demand for luxury vehicles and excellent customer service continues to rise.

**In line with our vision, we have introduced the Ad Personam lounge, a dedicated area within our showroom where our valued customers can fully explore the extensive personalisation options offered by Lamborghini.** —



**Rakan Turki** is the Chief Executive Officer for Lamborghini Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and is highly accomplished and results-oriented leader with over 25 years of experience in the automotive industry.

### **What distinguishes Lamborghini from its competitors?**

Since it was established in 1963, several factors have contributed to Lamborghini's enduring status as a leading luxury sports car brand. Creating true firsts for the industry, from the Miura, the first mid-engine super car, to the iconic Countach, the first car to be called a super car and the model that define Lamborghini design language to this day.

Lamborghini has been able to incorporate futuristic designs and advanced technology at the forefront of its model range. This emphasis on cutting-edge design and technology not only distinguishes Lamborghini from its competitors but also appeals to customers, who seek unique and high-performance vehicles. Determined proportions, clear contours, precise lines, and pure surfaces are characteristics of Lamborghini's design reduced to its very essence. This DNA embodies the guidelines that inspire the Lamborghini Centro Stile to create cars that are always different and increasingly innovative in terms of research and aesthetic language, yet all unmistakably Lamborghini.

Lamborghini Abu Dhabi and Dubai offers unique experience to its customers through the newly re-launched Centro Stile center, with the mission to combine the spirit of the brand with innovation to create consistently new and unexpected design solutions. The Centro Stile brings together the world's best automotive designers, who collaborate closely >>>



The brand has a full-fledged service centre where Lamborghini's commitment to excellence extends beyond design to maintenance and support.

**The latest addition to the network is the Lamborghini Abu Dhabi service centre, a state-of-the-art facility, reflected in its grand opening that showcase original Picasso art pieces.**

with the Technical Office to achieve the perfect combination of form and function, designing one-of-a-kind 'off-offs' and highly customised models to their specifications. Lamborghini is one of the few brands that can provide this experience.

**What is the essence of design that is shared by all Lamborghini showrooms worldwide, and that you have maintained here as well?**

Our showrooms, which are focussed on innovation, luxury, and exclusivity, are designed to provide our consumers with a one-of-a-kind and immersive experience. We combine cutting-edge materials and technologies to create a visually attractive and

technologically advanced space.

All Lamborghini showrooms share a unified interior design that emphasises minimalism to highlight the key models on display. Scalability is important in showroom design, as showrooms around the world can vary in size from small boutiques to large facilities like ours.

**How can a great design affect visitors and enhance sales?**

The grand design of the showroom reflects the brand's iconic stature in the automotive industry. The journey begins even before stepping into the showroom where our display tower showcases the latest Lamborghini models and unique

colours, offering a glimpse of the unique models awaiting inside.

Upon entering the showroom, guests are greeted by a high-ceiling space that includes the main display area, our new Lamborghini store, and access to our after-sales area. A commissioned glass staircase and elevator lead to the display tower, which houses our Ad Personam lounge, delivery area, and the Lamborghini Certified Pre-Owned collection.

The walkthrough is designed to showcase the unique character of each space while immersing visitors in the diverse offerings of Lamborghini Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

**What are your future plans for the Lamborghini**

**showroom and service facilities?**

We have implemented a strong network with our current facilities in the UAE, with our flagship facility in Dubai housing our showroom, service center & corporate offices dedicated to Dubai and Northern Emirates. Our boutique showroom strategically located at the Heart of the capital, provides a unique and personal experience to better serve our esteemed client's needs.

Finally, our latest addition to the network is the Lamborghini Abu Dhabi service centre, a state-of-the-art facility, reflected in its grand opening that showcase original Picasso art pieces. Located at the center of Yas Marina circuit, a first of its kind to have opened in the world-renowned race track, this location is ideal for our clients from Abu Dhabi city and its suburbs, and a perfect launchpad for driving and motorsports events.

As the brand expands its footprint across the UAE, the roar of its engines and the allure of its iconic designs will undoubtedly resonate with enthusiasts and collectors alike. By prioritising luxury, cutting-edge technology, exceptional customer service, and environmental sustainability, we as the official dealer of Lamborghini in Abu Dhabi and Dubai have aligned our objectives with Lamborghini's future vision and goals. We are committed to leading the market by upholding these shared ideals. •



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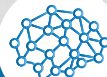
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# ALLEYES *on you*

A living room system designed to define the domestic landscape in a fluid, flexible manner. Antonio Citterio's first concept for Cassina is a modular sofa that symbolises everlasting beauty and flair.

The Esoft line includes eight modules that can be utilised as standalone couches or coupled to make L-shaped sofas, allowing for maximum versatility in designing living rooms. Benches, ottomans and a series of coffee tables complete the family. Esoft consists of an aluminium exoskeleton and a shell with an organic silhouette upon which soft cushions are placed.

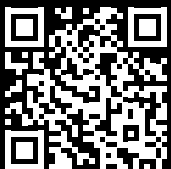
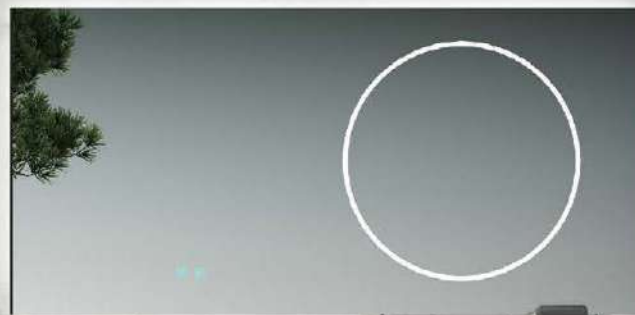
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