



DESIGN INSPIRATION

# Cyril Zammit

Fair Director - Design Days Dubai

## DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN FIVE WORDS OR LESS.

Impatient but caring. Focused but spontaneous. French.

## HOW IS YOUR PERSONALITY REFLECTED IN YOUR HOME?

Less is more. Pure lines, less lines.

## WHAT MAKES HOME FOR YOU?

A combination of safety and comfort, but more a hideaway.

## WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE ROOM TO DESIGN?

Living room. I don't sleep much so I need the bare necessities; a living room must be a cozy set up.

## FAVORITE CITY?

It must be several ones: Tokyo, Prague (because my first job was there), Zurich, St Malo (France).

## BEST PURCHASES?

A little house in southern France in 1979. I was nine years old and I paid 600 French francs (around EUR100 today) at that time. My parents signed the official documentation for this old house, registered as a barn. My next project will be to commission designers to renovate it.

## LAST PURCHASE FOR YOUR HOME?

A new table lamp by Big Game and a rocking chair by David & Nicolas, coming very soon!

## WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSION?

My freedom.

## WHAT EFFORTS ARE YOU MAKING TO BE MORE GREEN?

I am careful with reducing the amounts of waste and surprised by the frantic overwrapping of items these days. So besides recycling, I don't use shopping bags unless necessary.



**Big Boss Desk** by designer Piergil Fourquié presented by Galerie Gosserez.



**Stencil Lamp** by designer Julien Carretero, presented by Victor Hunt DesignArt Dealer.

## YOUR TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A FUNCTIONAL AND STYLISH HOME.

Function and style vary and are subjective. Create it the way you like it, not the way your neighbor did. Your home is a perfect reflection of your identity and your surroundings are an extension of your personality.

## WHAT TRENDS DO YOU PREDICT FOR THE NEXT SEASON?

The beauty of design is that trends sometimes follow the choice of materials. Even that can't be considered as a forecast because there is always an unexpected material chosen. Studio Swine, a design studio based in London, used human hair in producing their Hair Highway series.

## COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE: A HOUSE CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MANY...

Closets; the more you store the less the visual pollution.



**Hammer Lamp**  
by design studio Big Game, presented by Wiener Silber Manufactur.



**Split Chair**  
by Chinese designer Zhoujie Zhang presented by Chinese Gallery ALL.



**Loulou rocking chair**  
by designer duo david/nicolas, presented by ArtFactum Gallery.

## WHAT DO YOU MOST DEPLORE SEEING IN A HOME?

The smell of AC; I might not see it but the sensation leaves me uneasy. I was raised to open my windows every morning regardless of the outside weather. In Dubai, it is often a challenge in the summer but I must have the sensation that the air has been ventilated outside the AC grids. Allowing the home to breathe is key.

## WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE ONLINE SHOPPING SITE?

I prefer to see the object in real life before purchasing it. I am old fashioned in that sense, except for preserved food (where there is zero chance to be surprised). I prefer using my senses before purchasing.

## IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT AMMAN, WHAT WOULD IT BE ?

I know too little of the city but I would hope for more common concerns about sustainability. Everyone must play a role and ensure they support their city in various fields.

## WHO IS YOUR STYLE ICON OR INSPIRATION?

My personal inspiration is my grandmother. Born in 1914, she experienced a tough life but never complained. She raised my mother and then shared her wisdom with my sister and I in a humble but passionate way. I met two mentors who coincidentally shared the same values as my grandmother: work hard, know where you are coming from and appreciate what you have. On the professional side, a major mentor was Claude Nobs, the founder of the Montreux Jazz Festival who I was fortunate to work with. His humanity and hard work paid a lot with a great trust and passion. In the design industry, I respect Alexander von Vegesack, creator and chairman of Vitra Design Museum and founder of Boisbuchet (France, an amazing center that welcomes design enthusiasts, students and professionals every summer. His personal design collection is a pure wonder and he helped me to refine my knowledge on design and on key iconic pieces.

## FAVOURITE ARAB ARTIST

Hard to say as I don't manage the language, but melodically Abdul Halim Hafez.

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE FOR YOUR HOME?

My collection of tea, gathered or gifted to me from Korea to India to the United States.

## WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT STATE OF MIND?

Focused on Design Days Dubai this coming March. When you bring over 40 exhibitors from 20 countries you need to make sure they experience the best of hospitality, service and, of course, a lucrative experience.

## SHOWS YOU LIKE TO ATTEND?

Carnival in Salvador (Brazil), but I constantly miss it due to the workload of Design Days Dubai from December to March. I wish I could escape for a short ski weekend in the Swiss Alps or St Moritz, Diavolezza, Gstaad - any of them work for me!

## HAS YOUR PERSONAL STYLE/ INTERIORS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

A little. I always enjoyed Scandinavian design known for its linear aesthetics. I make an effort to break out of my comfort zone once in a while with bold choices of color.

## WHAT IS THE QUALITY YOU LOVE MOST IN A HOME?

Feeling naturally welcome. I don't need to be impressed, I don't need to be overwhelmed but simply feeling the true warmth and soul of its owner.

## FAVORITE SHOPS?

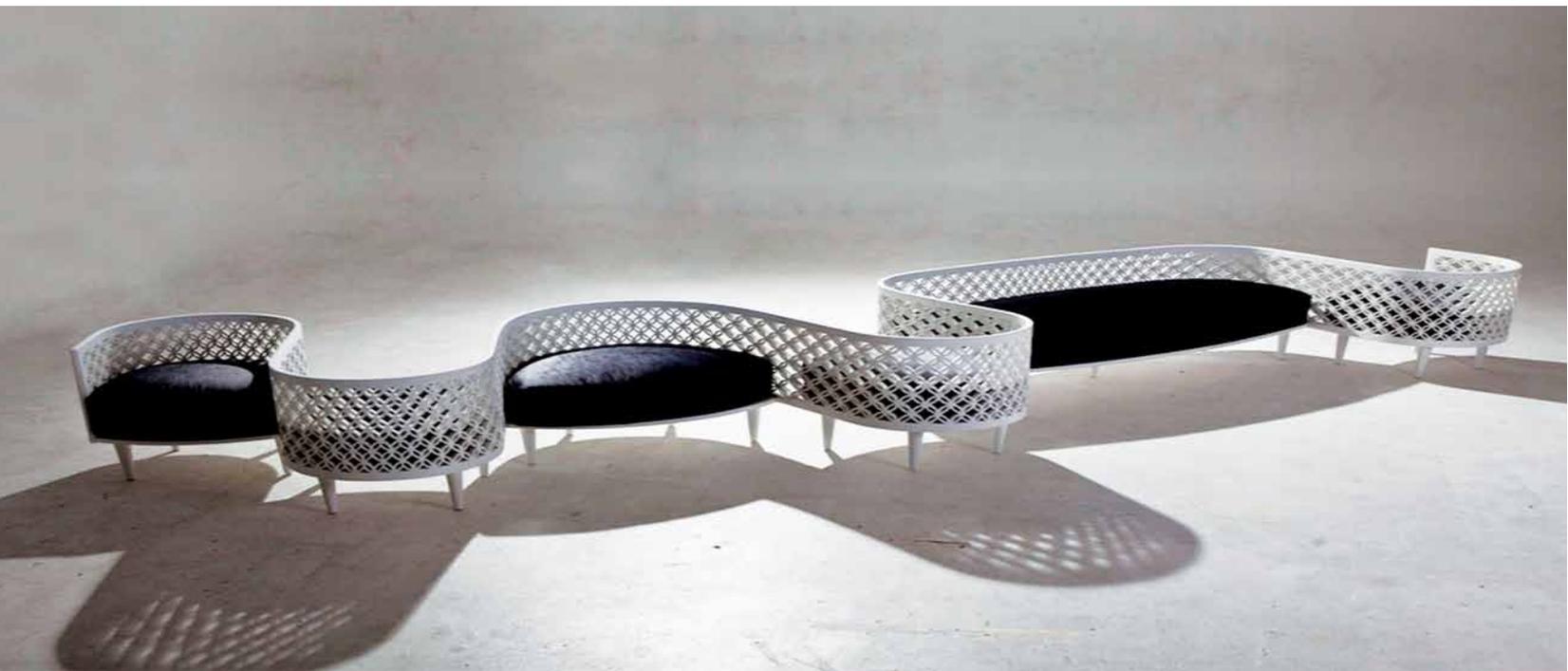
Each time I am in Tokyo, I spent one hour buying clothes at Okura. Simple rule: the shop has (almost) only naturally died fabrics in indigo. Great prices, good cut and the alterations are made in 20 minutes.

## IF YOU COULD CHOOSE A DIFFERENT PROFESSION, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

If I had the knowledge, maybe a private teacher. If I had the talent, maybe a designer. If I had the leisure, a permanent traveler.

# DESIGN DAYS DUBAI

## RETURNING, RISING DESIGN-SCAPES

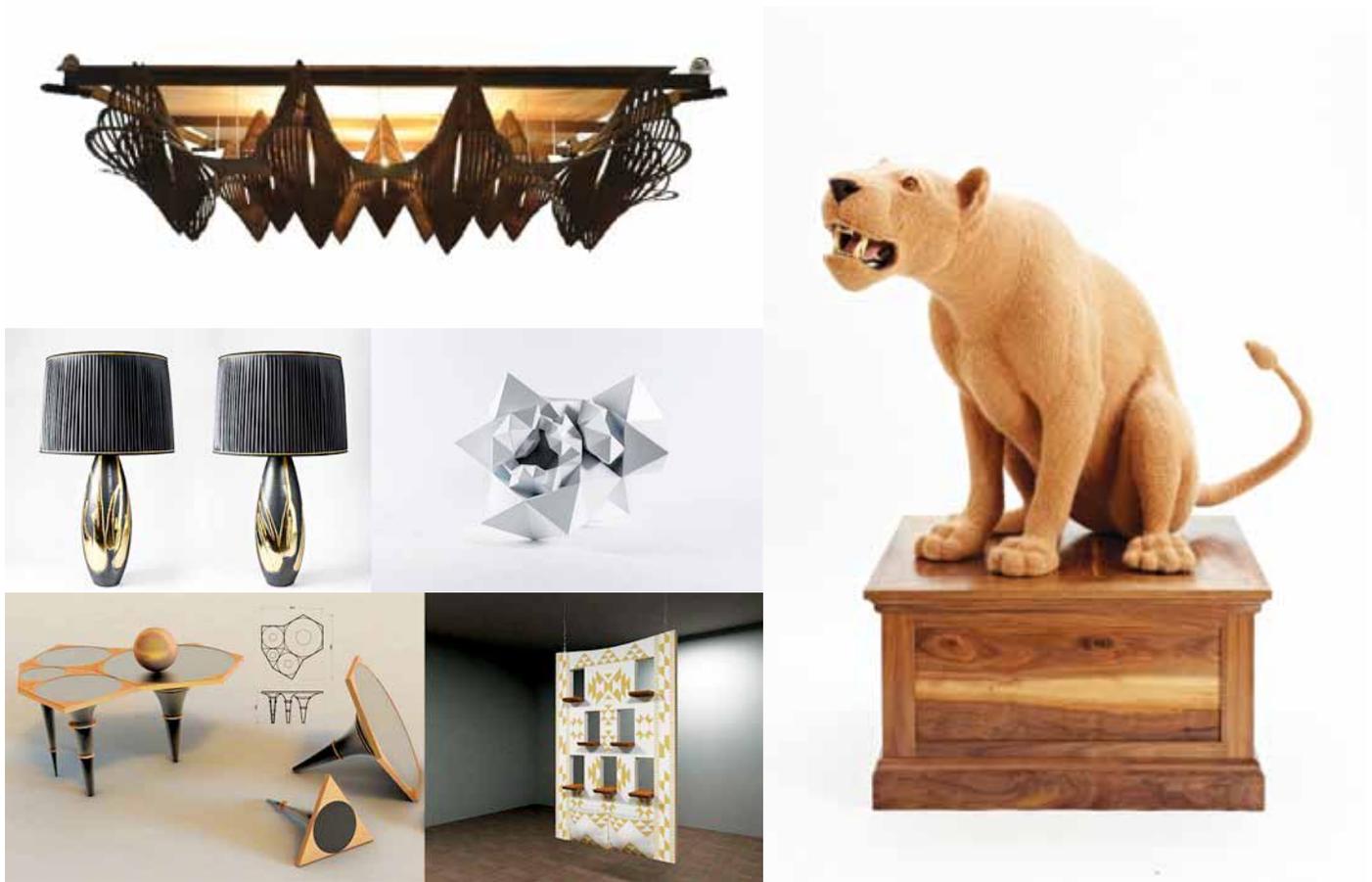


**D**esign Days Dubai (DDD) returns for its fourth edition, from March 16 to 20, 2015, with a number of firsts. This installment will see an international line-up of 44 renowned exhibitors from 20 countries presenting purchasable and highly desirable works of modern and contemporary design in the Middle East and South Asia's only collectible design fair. A recognized symbol of the growth and maturity of the design landscape in the UAE, Design Days Dubai includes 22 returning exhibitors, such as Carpenters Workshop Gallery (Paris/London), Southern Guild (Cape Town), Artifactum (Beirut) and Broached Commissions (Melbourne), alongside 11 first-time participants including the regional premiere for David Gill Galleries (London) and Gallery FUMI (London), as well as Gallery ALL (Beijing/Los Angeles), Chamber NYC (New York), Galerie Silbereis (Paris), and designer and personality Fiona Barratt-Campbell's Privé Collection (London).

Design Days Dubai continues to support the Middle Eastern design industry through a record number of 16 design studios, galleries and design professionals based in the Emirates and wider GCC. These include the first participation of 1971 (Sharjah), and 19th Century Antiques (Dubai), as well as the launch of Aljoud Lootah Design Studio (Dubai). Other highlights of the 2015 program will include a 10th anniversary celebration of Lebanese designer Nada Debs, as well as the regional opening for a new series of vases presented by Wiener Silber Manufactur by Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid, who will also have distinct "liquid" table works shown by David Gill Galleries (London). Additional Middle Eastern representation can be seen through the participation of Authentique Art Gallery (Dubai), Cities (Dubai and Riyadh), Naqsh Design House (Amman) and Nakkash Gallery (Dubai), together with Tashkeel (Dubai), Fatima bint Mohamed bin Zayed Initiative (Dubai and Abu Dhabi), Faddi Sarriedine (Dubai) and jewelry from Shamsa Alabbar (Dubai).

Held again at The Venue, the annual setting for the fair, idyllically located next to the iconic Burj Khalifa in Emaar's Downtown Dubai, audiences can experience, discover and engage with the works on display, and the galleries and designers from around the world. Presenting the highest number of exhibitors at Design Days Dubai to date, participation will be seen from Australia, China, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, the Netherlands, South Africa and Taiwan, as well as Europe and the Americas, showcasing the fair's global reach.

Design Days Dubai has had the continued support of returning sponsors since its establishment in 2012, including the strategic partnership with Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, the Emirate's dedicated authority for culture, arts and heritage; French high-jewelry Maison Van Cleef & Arpels, which will showcase its dazzling new collection of exceptional stones entitled Pierres de Caractère; Emaar; and Audi, working in collaboration to provide visitors with an opportunity to engage with pieces from new-



comers and well-established designers. *Home* magazine talks to Cyril Zammit, director of Design Days Dubai, for the latest scoop on the event's exciting developments and more.

**In what ways does the fourth edition of DDD project a shift in the perspective and direction of the design audience in our region?**

Since its inception, the crowd was a combination of curious and well-versed visitors. In the fourth year, the design audience has grown to understand Design Days Dubai in the sense that it is not a furniture show, and they are now more familiar with the bodies of work by various designers. That to me is a great shift in intellect and comprehension. Just as our audience has grown, our fair has grown. Levels of work are of even higher quality; experimental methods that produce the unique pieces allow Design Days Dubai to remain the most diverse design fair in the world. The perspective hasn't changed as much as the hunt for creative design has intensified.

**How has DDD served as a platform for the surrounding countries in the**

**Middle East to engage further in the art and design scene?**

It is the only fair in the Middle East and South Asia dedicated to limited edition design. In 2012, the market was very limited, which discouraged designers to enter this niche market. Fast forward a few years, there are design weeks across the region, various initiatives such as the Van Cleef & Arpels Middle East Emergent Artist Prize, held in collaboration with Design Days Dubai and Tashkeel. This year the call was opened to designers based in the Middle East, which supports the thriving interest to back design talent and shed light on our own gems. With that said, designers have more opportunities to explore, and I am happy that Design Days Dubai provides such a platform. This edition of the fair will host Aljoud Lootah, a designer I have seen grow over the past years and now she is launching her first full collection of limited edition objects in her city at Design Days Dubai. This is a great accomplishment to have given a young designer the strength and opportunity to enter this competitive market.

**At this year's event, 44 renowned exhibitors will be presenting their works. In what ways does DDD stand apart from other internationally recognized collectible design fairs?**

Design Days Dubai's primary focus continues to be on contemporary design. With the exception of one gallery exhibiting modern design, all of our exhibiting galleries continue to showcase premieres and latest works by exceptional contemporary designers. In addition, as I have said before, we remain the most diverse, adding this year China to our list of 20 countries exhibited.

**DDD has played a significant role in establishing Dubai as a cultural hub. Do you see the possibility of this taking place in neighboring countries? In Jordan?**

There is always the possibility, but before such a fair creates the culture, I believe the citizens create the opportunity. With the aid of Design Institute Amman, year 2014 was filled with opportunities to attend



workshops by renowned designers such as Filippo Protasoni. Constant involvement and investment from various institutes in homegrown talent gives confidence and knowledge to do and grow more.

**In what ways is DDD encouraging young and undiscovered talents to come forward?**

Design Days Dubai has leading international and regional press around for the entire week, an opportunity for designers to present their ideas to an alternative market. In addition to the collectors' circles, which hail from all around the world, networking opportunities are endless. We have also seen collaborations between galleries that share exhibitions and allow different markets to view various objects. Design Days Dubai has also witnessed galleries meeting new designers and representing them, and we see the fruits of our labor the next year. It is rather exciting!

**Has DDD worked with universities and institutions to further uproot the art/design direction the fair is leading?**

Since its inception, Design Days Dubai has collaborated with universities. We were the first in the region to invite the College of Art, Architecture and Design (American University of Sharjah, UAE), VCU Qatar and also ECAL (Lausanne, Switzerland) to showcase the creations of both their students and sometimes teachers too. We are working very closely with Dubai Culture and Arts Authority and are grateful for its support to nurture young local talents to enhance their skills in design through various initiatives launched since 2012. Recently, we supported an open call for a special competition called "Urban Commissions" presented in collaboration with Dubai Culture and Dubai Design District. We had an amazing number of entries (over 120) from UAE residents. More than 25 different nationalities participated in this competition. We are about to announce something very soon geared towards designers specifically. Each year, we also welcome students to take part in the workshops part of the public program. We estimate 400 participants to take part, learning new design techniques with world-renowned professionals.

**How would you describe the intensity of the arrangements underway throughout the year to prepare for such a highlight event?**

There is this constant drive to explore, research and see new designers. With endless travel plans, for leisure and work, I keep my eyes opened, you do not what you will find hanging in a hotel in Iceland. It could be a discovery, which leads to creating a new opportunity. The months leading up to Design Dubai remain the most intense and I don't believe that will change anytime soon.

**Any last minute surprises to expect at DDD?**

We are proud to showcase the world premiere of "Cloud," a mesmerizing installation by Commonplace Studio (Amsterdam) presented by Victor Hunt DesignArt Dealer in Brussels. This is the result of one year of experimenting and research. The designers have a special relationship with Design Days Dubai and we were thrilled to work with them to present this very visual installation. More to be discovered at the fair. ■