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KHALID SHAFAR
TALES OF DESIGN

**QATAR'S
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MAGAZINE**

**THE
GRAND
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FOCUS ON
ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

JAY STRONGWATER
THESE ARE A FEW
OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS

ZAHA HADID
BUILDINGS THAT LIVE ON...



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PHOTO COURTESY: SERGEY BESPALOV AND CARTEL

telling tales of design

KNOWN FOR HIS INGENUOUS COMBINATIONS OF TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS AND CONTEMPORARY PRODUCT DESIGN, UAE-BASED DESIGNER KHALID SHAFAR'S APPROACH ENCOMPASSES A PERSONAL EXPRESSION OF FORM, MOVEMENT, EMOTION, AND THE TALE OF OBJECTS.

BY AARTHI MOHAN

The objects that inhabit his world make an impression of stills dredged from a tale, a reflection of his thematic choices and the way in which he realizes them by using different techniques and narratives, which makes Khalid's aesthetically functional designs one-off pieces.

Sparked by a long-term personal and professional goal to be a designer, Khalid is qualified in two disciplines, marketing and fine arts and interior design. He obtained both his degrees from the American University in Dubai but his passion was always in furniture design. "I developed more interest while doing my Interior Design degree and a furniture design course. By then, I had decided that I wanted to build my own brand and have my own designs. I don't regret my corporate life. It taught me discipline, management skills, and leadership," he says.

His approach to design embraces the golden triangle of creativity, practicality and functionality. "Functionality is the key to all my creations and I consider myself a functional designer. I ensure that my work is valid and purposeful", says the designer. His products serve a multitude of purposes and spaces. Many objects have been designed to function in more than one mood, depending on the tales they tell.

A designer is always sensitive to the beauty of things around him and for this designer, inspiration lies in many things such as architecture, crafts, art and people. Simple yet avant-garde, each product pictures a revival of the 50s, 60s, and 70s sleek styling which is then re-interpreted with contemporary flair. Designed to fit individualistic interior spaces, they are fuelled with the energy and passion of Khalid's own lifestyle and life stories.

"It is the 'tale' that is the aesthetic side of each object and what creates the attachment with all my pieces. Whether you belong to the tale or not, you still react towards it when you read or listen to it," he says.

Following specific trends of design does not interest this artist; he believes



CULTURALLY INCLINED

Khalid Shafar's connection with the rich past of his native region is highlighted in works such as his Palm collection, Flame-ingo project for DRAK 2015 and the Seats collection.



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that in the world of product design, we are less restricted to trends than in fashion. The Campana Brothers are Khalid's global design idols and he has a lot of admiration for their work. He also enjoys the works of Martino Gamper, Konstantine Grcic and Maarten Baas.

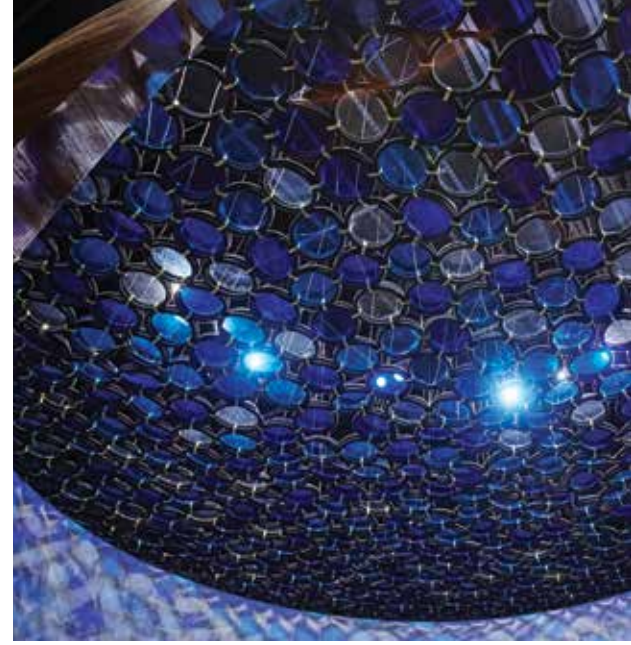
Designed with a conscious use of form, materials and texture encapsulated in functional objects, this designer's repertoire highlights the rich past of his native region which he achieves by employing dying crafts, including weaving and embroidery. He explores the area of the genesis of forms depending on the practical conditions of utility and possibility.

Khalid's internationally acclaimed work "telltale objects", includes his Palm collection, a series of stools, tables, coat stands and coffee tables. Pine and ash blocks face upwards in a graphic representation that explores the bark found on the trunk of a palm tree, a popular sight in the designer's home country. Continuing upward, the surfaces of the tables are woven out of

dried leaves, creating colourful patterns while the handle pays homage to wicker baskets woven in a similar way. "I also recently started using the Agal (the black woven cord that Arab men wear to secure their head covers) in my latest installations, The Cabin and Forma which is very unique to me," says the artist.

FLAME-INGO is another popular project by Khalid which was presented during DRAK 15. Exploring the relationship between material and form through mass-produced industrial materials such as interlocking pavement blocks, he reinterpreted the material to create a functional object, in this case a candleholder. His design drew inspiration from the body shape of the flamingos of Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary. The different kinds of interlocking blocks retain their original variety of shape, form and finish to reinforce the value of such material when put into a design. The candleholder's components correspond to various parts of the flamingo's body. The tall,





slender shape of the candlestick, for example, makes reference to the bird's long neck. The candle burns and melts over the interlocked body leaving a sculptured layer of wax which suggests the flamingo's feathers.

Timber is a dominant medium in most of Khalid's collections. "It is true to say that I have an affinity with this material. As a medium, it has a reaction from the moment you cut it. When I finish the piece and oil it, it is not the end. It comes alive, it moves. It reacts towards heat, humidity and cool weather. It's something to take care of," he says.

Khalid has also been a part of varied collaborations. He says, "I love collaborating with other brands. One of the simplest but most challenging was the COS collaboration where I and five other international designers each had to use one square metre of white sheet paper to create something. It was a medium that I used for the first time within a limited quantity and specific brief. For me it was one of the nicest projects I was involved in".

Simple lines mixed with rich detail and fine materials are the hallmarks of a Khalid Shafar design. Being conscious of his motto, "Think Global, Act GobaI", his future projects include a couple of collaborations which are in the pipeline and a new product line under his label which is set to be launched during the first quarter of 2017. ♦



ARTISTIC COLLABORATOR

Above: The Cabin, an interactive space which is an experience between sea and land. Below: Nakkash Gallery paired-up with Shafar for the 5th Edition of Design Days Dubai.

