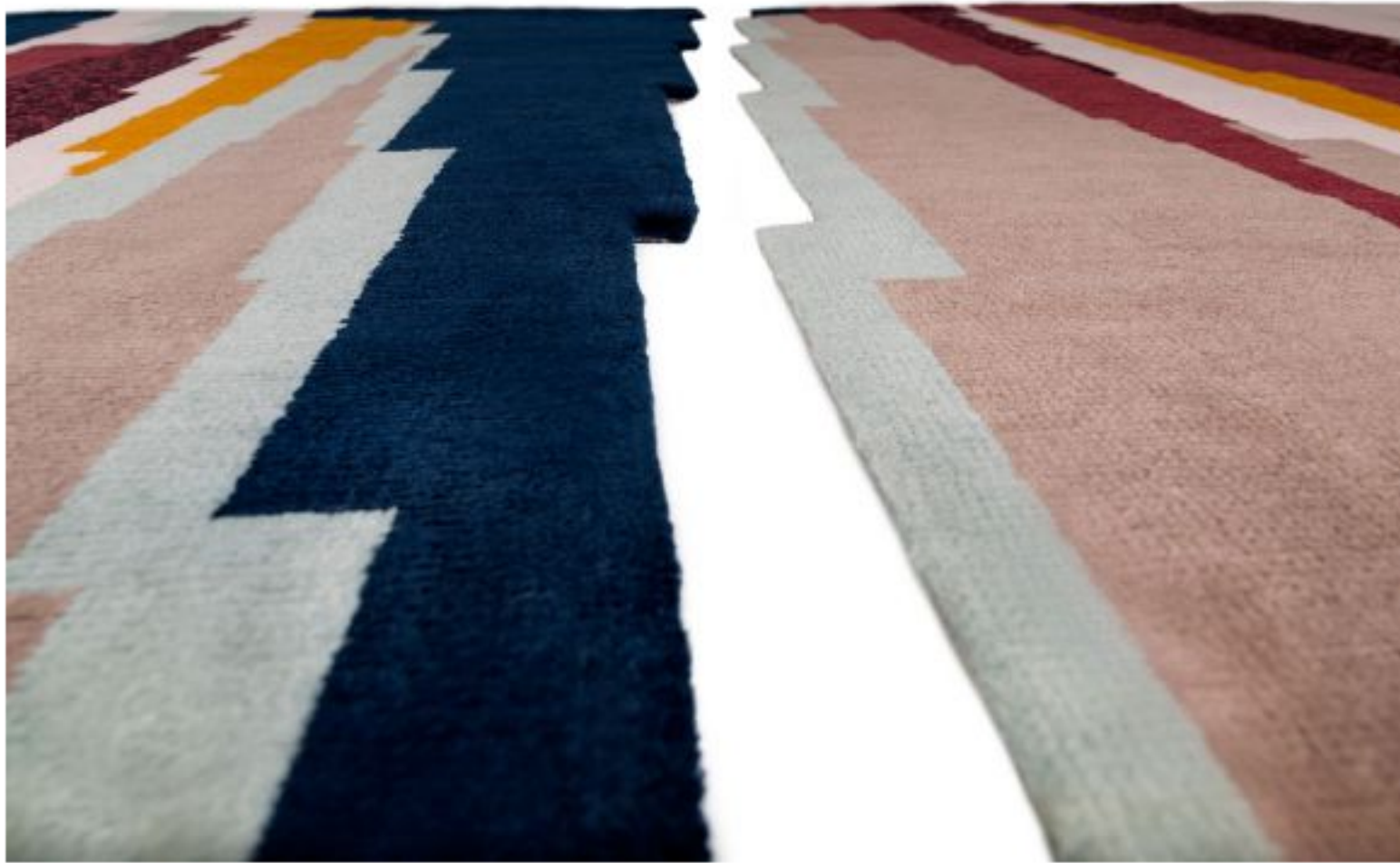


TEXTILE ARTIFACT WOOD RECYCLED

Labor of Love

28 OCT 15 / TEXT: [MANIKA DHAMA](#)



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Design via the Emirates

H

is was not a serendipitous foray into the world of design, but a journey toward fulfilling a long cherished dream - building a reputable International Emirati brand. Over the last six years, Dubai-born Khalid Shafar has managed to place his nation on the design map through the

creation of an aesthetic that is locally inspired and globally relevant.

Following a graduate business degree with a seven year stint in marketing and communications, it was in 2005 that Khalid entered the world of design with a Fine Arts - Interior Design course. But it was only by the end of 2009 that he left the corporate world to



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pursue his passion for design. He went on to study and specialize in Furniture & Objects design, first at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London, UK, then at the Centre for Fine Woodworking in Nelson, New Zealand. In 2011, he opened his studio in Dubai and in Nov 2012 inaugurated his first showcase space KASA.



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“Each object is designed by me, handmade by chosen craftsmen and decorated with quirky accessories,” says Khalid. The interior space objects under his eponymous label showcase a revival of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s sleek styling, re-interpreted with today’s furnishing trends. His design approach borrows from the concept of storytelling and forms of personal expression. Using wood as the predominant base in most designs, the signature pieces are embellished with varied accoutrements such as metal, marble, textiles for soft furnishings, locally available camel leather, goat hair and even pearls from a cultivation farm in his neighboring emirate of Ras Al Khaimah. Crafts from the region find their way in his work, in forms such as palm leaf weaving carried out by female artisans or a reinterpretation of the *Egal*, the traditional black headband that holds the Keffiyeh in men’s attire.

In several projects Khalid has collaborated with international designers, including the Brazilian duo Campana Brothers on an installation for Abu Dhabi Art 2010 and recently limited edition releases with the historical French cabinetmaker Moissonnier, the carpet industry leader Tai Ping, and with the design brand Kartell.

Khalid feels his journey charts the progress made by the design sphere in the U.A.E. and he is happy with the way it has been aligned with his work. “There were many challenges when I started out. But now the industry has moved far ahead and a lot has happened in the local design space. Exhibitions, collaborations, formation of spaces like the Design District are all part of it. Youngsters who rarely considered design as a career path and a passionate form of expression are now being drawn to it and I am very proud of that.”



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Following the path of balancing both the creative aspect and the business end of this homegrown label, the future for him is laden with bringing forth a holistic design experience that enamors all five senses. “I began this new phase with the launch of signature candles in the end of 2014, which tell the amber oil story, having seen my grandmother use it years ago. Even with candles the emphasis on patterns and colors remains. We also moved into creating surface materials like wall paper and textiles for interior decorators, giving them a new mood or sensation to interact with. On a particular showcase of my designs, I even collaborated with a chef to build recipes inspired by the seven emirates, created from imagining how each of them would taste, again playing on one of the five senses.”

Khalid feels there is a whole interconnected universe of design waiting to be explored. “Aviation, mobile, fashion, the possibilities are endless and I am moving ahead one step at a time. I am focused on building a patient and mature brand,” he signs off.

For details on the brand, visit <http://www.khalidshafar.com/telltale-designs/>



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