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INSPIRATIONALISTS



Grand designs



Riding high on the success of his first solo show, Emirati designer Khalid Shafar reveals his latest masterplan

leadership, but I am enjoying my design journey and I feel I belong to this part of me more.

You currently split your time between the UAE and New Zealand – what does each place bring to your work?

My designs are a fusion of East and West. They are the outcome of a cultural exchange between the UAE and New Zealand. Each place has its own light, space, cultural history and mood. It interests me to explore the Arabian culture in contemporary pieces and introduce them to New Zealand. It is very open to global design and one day I hope to see my Arabian-influenced pieces in Kiwi

homes. Living between both cultures makes me understand and adapt to both communities views, both culturally and in terms of design.

What are your biggest influences?

My lifestyle, surroundings, the city I grew up in, and my life memories are always a rich source of influences. Yet a designer is always sensitive to the beauty of things around him and, for me, I find inspiration in many things be it crafts, art, and people.

You employ traditional UAE motifs and materials in your work – why is this important to you?

At my recent collection for 2012, The Palm line,

particularly, featured materials strongly linked to my culture and heritage. I don't mean for this to become my trademark, but I strongly believe that it's important for me to expose it in many creative ways. Some of these are dying crafts that I hope, by drawing attention to them in my designs, I will in some way help to keep alive. My 'T' chandelier, for example, is inspired by the simple tools used to make tall embroidery in the UAE.

How do you see homegrown design developing in the UAE? Do you hope to be an inspiration?

I'm glad to see events such as Design Days Dubai and Design Studio at Abu Dhabi Art taking a lead on this and I'm confident this will encourage more local talents and designers to express their creativity and expose their work to the world. I hope my work will be a source of inspiration for other designers from the region and globally – my primary career aspiration is to build a strong, reputable Emirati brand with an international presence in the design world. I'm very keen to get involved in more collaboration with international designers. My long-term plan is to open my flagship stores around the world – of course, Dubai will be my first location! Until Feb 4, Pavilion Downtown Dubai, Dubai, free. Tel: (04) 4477025. pavilion.ae



How did you get started?

It was always my long-term personal and professional goal to be a designer, but marketing was my first career choice.

Academically, I am a combination of both disciplines. I decided one day I wanted to design a piece that would carry my name always. I don't regret my corporate life at all. It taught me discipline, management skills, and