



Overview:

The *Abu Dhabi Art UAE Designer Programme* was established in 2013 by Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority and the British Council to provide tailored opportunities for UAE designers to develop and produce unique and innovative design products that incorporate elements of traditional UAE craft.

Through a mentorship programme led by British designer and Central Saint Martin's Course Coordinator, Kieren Jones and the resulting exhibition at Abu Dhabi Art, the designers were given the opportunity to access not only the UK design industry, but also designers in the UK who are exploring craft and heritage in new and innovative ways.

Future Nomads presents work by the three UAE designers, Noora Alawar, Fatima Al Zaabi and Kholoud Sharafi of the interdisciplinary design firm, TINKAH. Noora, Fatima and Kholoud have looked to their country's past in order to produce designs for the future. From innovative applications for traditional Emirati crafts to new material investigations and explorations into nomadic ways of life, these three products respond to the fast changing landscape of the UAE whilst celebrating where the country has come from.

In this exhibition audiences are invited to discover the explorations of these three designers and learn more about the traditional crafts of the UAE that are in fast decline.

For us these designers are the Future Nomads of the UAE – they continue to search for progress whilst staying true to their country's traditions.

Through this project UK and Emirati designers were able to develop together to both investigate the innovative elements of product design as well as protect the traditional cultural heritage of the UAE.

We believe that it is through such experiences of knowledge and skills exchange that the two countries are able to grow together and present an ever-developing story of how the contemporary and the past are not that far apart.

Participants: Please meet Noora, Kholoud and Fatima



Fatima Al Zaabi

Fatima Al Zaabi comes to design from an architectural background having graduated from the American University of Sharjah. With a keen interest and passion for computer-aided design and contemporary manufacturing technology, Fatima is always looking for ways to merge her knowledge and sense of materials with contemporary processes. Her recent collaborators include FN Design, WTD Magazine and Bloomingdales Dubai. Fatima was recently selected to present work at Design Days Dubai in 2014. Fatima currently lives in Sharjah and works in Dubai.

Kholoud Sharafi

Kholoud Sharafi is a Dubai-based multi-disciplinary designer. Since graduating in 2008 with a degree in visual communication from the American University of Sharjah, Kholoud has explored the fields of typography, textile printing and silversmithing through her work. In 2012, Kholoud formed a collective known as TINKAH under which she now creates most of her work. Kholoud's work has been shown at the Barjeel Art Fondation and The Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art and her work is part the British Museum's private collections and has been sold at Sotheby's in Doha.

Noora Alawar

Noora Alawar graduated as an architecture design major from the American University of Sharjah in 2013. She currently works as both a product and architectural designer and has a keen interest in the way design processes can be applied to contemporary ways of life. Noora's work often stems from her love of art and painting, a discipline she continues to use to explore her creative practice resulting in her being shortlisted in 2013 for the Sheikha Manal Award for a self-portrait oil painting. In 2012 Noora produced an interactive installation for TedxYouth Jumeira entitled "e3br w3abber" that looked to encourage youth freedom of expression and individuality and in 2014 her Barjeel stool was exhibited at Design Days Dubai.

Noora, Fatima and Kholoud have looked to their country's past in order to produce designs for the future. From innovative applications for traditional Emirati crafts to new material investigations and explorations into nomadic ways of life, these three products respond to the fast changing landscape of the UAE whilst celebrating where the country has come from.



Feedback:

Fatima

The Abu Dhabi Art design programme was a great experience that helped shape my design career. It was a great opportunity to showcase my work and my culture through a product. As part of the programme, I was able to take part of Abu Dhabi Art an internationally recognized annual exhibition. Through it, I was able to meet international and local designers, also had the chance to discuss possible investment opportunities to develop my product.

I felt that the most essential part of this program was meeting with Kieren and talking to him. He was a great mentor and that part of the program should be developed more. As you know, me and Noora joined the program in the end of August and met Kieren only a month before the exhibition. I was not able to fully incorporate the feedback from him and explore with my design.

The trip to London even though last minute, was a turning point for my design. I was able to incorporate some ideas from the exhibition visits we did in London into my design. To personally meet Kieren and other UK designer was important because we were able to learn more about the design scene in London. However, I hoped we have done the same here in the UAE, visit Emirati designers and exhibitions.

Noora

This program made me aware of the number of possibilities around us when we come to design. What was great about this program is that it joins the making society in this region with what's there in the UK and making a connection in our own way of creating a bridge between them. My highlight would be the Zaha Hadid visit would've been great if we had the chance to meet her personally!

Faculty

I would like to say that we thoroughly enjoyed the programme and were pleased with the final results. Fatima, Noora and Kholoud are very talented designers and are certainly the ones to watch in the emerging contemporary design scene in the UAE. The Future Nomads exhibition seemed relevant and poignant within the context of the fast changing landscape of the Emirates and we hope the programme will continue and evolve.



Audience:

T1

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Minister of Culture

Chairman of Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority

Founder of Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation

T2

13 European Ambassadors

Sheikh Sultan Saud Al Qassimi Founder of Barjeel Art Foundation

Sir Richard Lambert Chair of the Board of Trustees for the British Museum

Exhibition attendees: 17,000

Images:



HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development

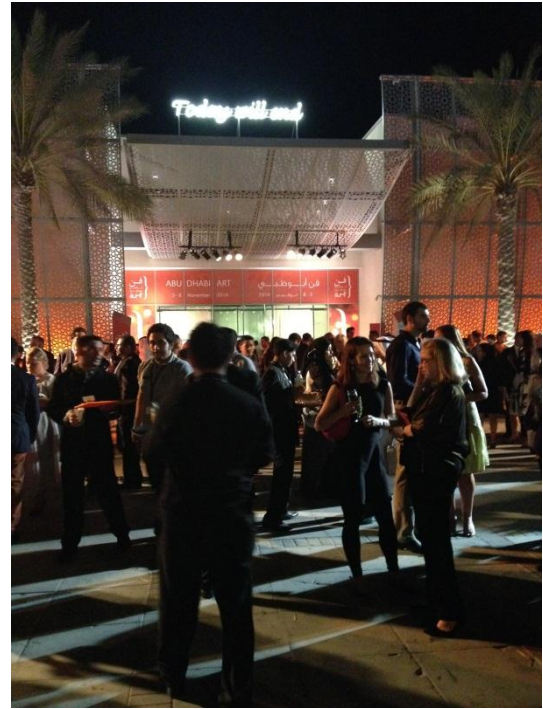


HH Shiekh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, the Chairman of Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority

Sir Richard Lester, Chair of Trustees at British Museum



HH Sheikh Abdulla bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs



Press Coverage:

ABU DHABI ART UAE DESIGNER PROGRAMME


Abu Dhabi Art: Beyond Design and Architecture inspired by UAE Aesthetics for a Global Audience

Nov 07, 2014 Art Event by Islamic Arts Magazine

The innovative design product prototypes at the Abu Dhabi Art UAE Designer Programme

The Abu Dhabi Art UAE Designer Programme culminates with a presentation of innovative design product prototypes using elements of UAE craft by Fatima Al Zaabi, Noora Al Awar and Kholoud Sharafi of the multidisciplinary design firm TINKAH.

For its inaugural year, TCA Abu Dhabi collaborated with British Council to provide mentorship and guidance by UK-designer Kieren Jones who worked closely with the UAE designers throughout their process. Jones and curator Moira Lascelles, curate Future Nomads a presentation and accompanying publication that showcases the UAE designers' work.



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Designs by Fatima Al Zaabi, Noora Al Awar and Kholoud Sharafi (TINKAH) / Courtesy of Abu Dhabi Art

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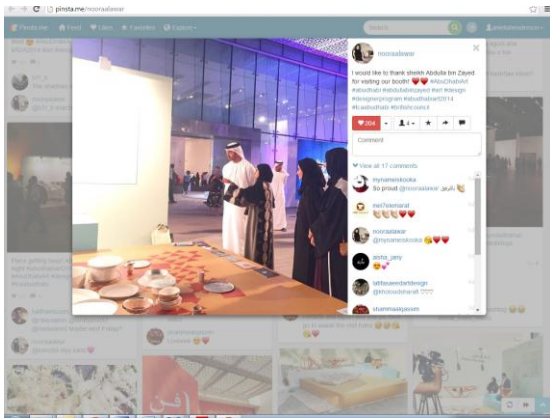
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15



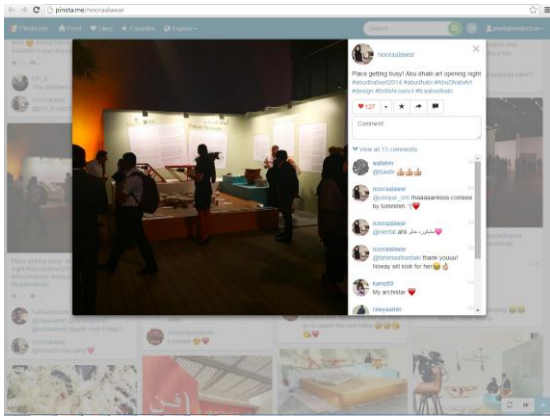
Social Media: Three designers using Instagram generated 1139 likes



204 likes



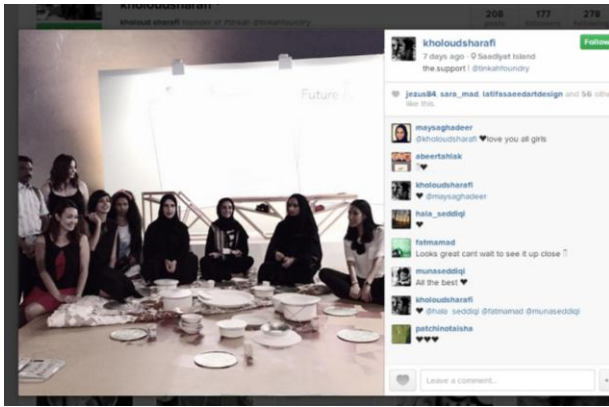
92 likes



127 likes



90 likes



59 likes



87 likes



57 likes



73 likes

Issues

- 2 of the original designers dropped out for personal reasons and needed to be replaced, this led us to have to source 2 new participants at short notice. As it turned out, the new participants were extremely engaged and took to the project straight away. In future we would be careful to fully qualify the candidates and ensure their commitment from the outset.
- On the launch of the festival we realised that the scorching heat was actually melting the signage which had been printed on a much thinner plastic than originally stipulated. This meant that the signs needed to be re-printed at the last minute. Luckily we were able to impress on the organiser how crucial this was and we were able to have new signs printed on a more suitable material. In future we will fully research and insist upon the most relevant materials for the showcase.

Recommendations:

- Ensure the designers are well qualified for commitment to avoid drop out.
- Arrange the UK trips with plenty of time in order for students to incorporate their experience into their designs
- Prepare the publication in good time
- Try and also prepare a UAE tour of designers' workshops as well as a UK one

