



magpie

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DUBAI DOES ART

it's art week, which means a mass of openings and events for us to preview

DESIGN CATCH-UP

design days dubai is getting brighter and better – but not much bigger, and that's policy

HOW TO AFFORD ART

so you think you can't afford original art? we have the options for the canny buyer

MAKING A GALLERY

abu dhabi is going to be part of the art boom in the gulf. maya allison says so, and she should know



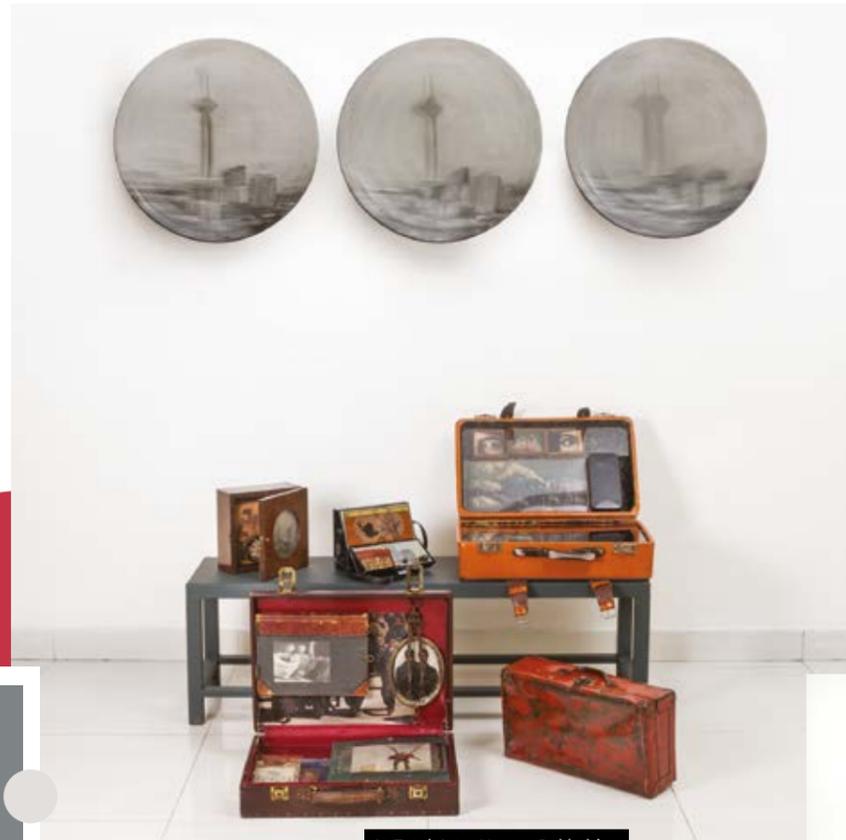
At Total Arts: Sara Abbasian, *The Black Eared*, 2015. Pencil on cardboard

Total Arts at the Courtyard Al Quoz, Dubai

Fearless: the next wave of artists from Iran
14 March – 16 April

"None of these artists have had media or market attention because of their obsession with work and not personal hype, says curator Fereydoun Ave about this show by no fewer than 33 artists from 25 to 75 years old. The idea: it's fearless to keep on working on personal visions, and "to see fear as the only real censorship is to come out of the shadow". This will be an interesting show; it opens simultaneously with the same artists at three galleries in Tehran – Araan Projects, Lajevardi Foundation and O gallery.

www.courtyard-uae.com



At Total Arts: Nasser Bakhshi, *From Tehran on Transit*, 2015



Stéphanie Marin's playful furniture collections at Artroom

Antidote Al Quoz, Dubai

Artroom, edition II: Collective loft
9 March – 31 March

Antidote's second pop-up design-plus-art collection – at the Zumtobel showroom on 6A Street, opposite the Alserkal Avenue extension – continues the theme of presenting a mix of art and design in an informal and relaxed private environment, this one a life-size installation of the interior of a young collector's loft. Artroom II features artworks and design pieces by 22 artists and designers from 11 countries, including multi award winner Ibrahim Quraishi and the interesting French designer Smarin (aka Stéphanie Marin) who was introduced to the UAE by Antidote during Downtown Design last year. Also look out for Argentinean Martin Reyna's large-scale works on paper, and two Pakistani artists, Idrees Hanif and Aamir Habib, who work in cement and neon.

antidotedxb.com



Simone Fattal, *Stele*, 2013. Clay, 40x46x25 cm. Courtesy of the artist

**Sharjah Art Foundation
SAF Art Spaces, Sharjah**

Simone Fattal
12 March – 12 June

This solo exhibition for the Syrian-born Lebanon-based painter and sculptor is curated by Sharjah Art Foundation director Hoor Al Qasimi. Featuring works created between 2006 and 2013, it includes non-figurative clay sculptures, works centred around textual compositions, and some of Fattal's dramatic Warrior sculptures – large standing figures that are representative of those continuously withstanding war and struggle. This looks like a good survey of Simone Fattal's thinking; her practice has always been informed by war and its historical contexts; and clay is an ancient material that can combine fragility and strength, allowing Fattal to trace the past into the present.

bit.ly/1mRlwoG



Safwan Dahoul, *Dream 108*

Ayyam Gallery 11 Alserkal Avenue, Dubai

Safwan Dahoul: *Still Dreaming*
14 March – 30 May

This large-scale exhibition features new work from the painter, including several mural-sized canvases. They continue Dahoul's signature style with a female protagonist but show several recent changes in both the narrative of the series and the artist's aesthetic. In 2015, Dahoul began isolating his recurring figure in ambiguous settings rather than the darkened cityscapes and barren landscapes that resemble actual sites in Syria. The results are more open to interpretation – the heavy use of white could suggest hope or rebirth, yet white is also the colour of Muslim burial shrouds and might signal death or mourning.

bit.ly/2182ZbJ



Zhivago Duncan, *One Pays Two Suffer*

Meem Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai

Zhivago Duncan:
Never But Always
13 March – 10 May

Syrian-Danish Zhivago Duncan is a multi-media artist who utilises both traditional and non-traditional media for an oeuvre that includes large-scale site-specific installation, printmaking and photography, performance art, sculpture and painting. In this new body of work, Duncan uses gold and linen with silkscreening; the combination of different materials is reflected in the subject matter, where Islamic geometry can sit side by side with Spiderman.

www.meemartgallery.com

START RIGHT HERE:

A BEGINNERS' GUIDE

TO BUYING ART ECONOMICALLY

IN THE UAE

Just about every art enthusiast wants to start their own collection, probably filled with a mix of hot newcomers bought from their graduation show, a few wall-sized outsider-art pieces acquired as a kindness from a passing tramp, and a couple of small canvases by lesser-known impressionists picked up at a car boot sale.

It isn't going to happen like that, of course. And if the amount of money burning a hole in your pocket can't match the astronomical sums changing hands in auction houses and high-end galleries, it might seem hard to make that dream a reality.

In fact it isn't. There are sensible midway options between massive wealth and massive good fortune, and in the UAE we have several ways of acquiring high-quality artworks (and there are some very good artists at work here) at reasonable cost (and given the amount of time and effort that goes into producing most art, you might be surprised by just how reasonable the prices can be).

As a complement to Kourosh Nouri's view on the subject from a gallerist last month, we asked artists, collectors and experts to share their tips for taking the plunge – whatever your budget.

Ibrahim Quraishi, M portrait. One of a series of coloured prints based on a 1919 image of his grandfather. Antidote, showing at Artroom



Plump up the art -- cushion by Mo Awwad

RULE 1: BUY WHAT YOU WANT

It's a cliché that you shouldn't buy anything you don't like. That's true, unless you're aspiring to be the kind of collector who buys and sells art – an investor, in other words, in which case you might well saddle yourself with something you dislike intensely in the expectation that the artist's stock will rise.

But that needs serious money, a lot of storage space and a relationship with a smart dealer. You also need to be both knowledgeable and lucky.

So it's much easier to focus on what's important: is this something that will give you joy when you see it in your home every day?

You can trust your instinct, of course, but the best decisions will temper love at first sight with more level-headed considerations.

Check out the advice in Kourosh Nouri's piece in last month's

magpie. Choose your artist carefully. Do you like their whole body of work, or just this one piece? Their reputation matters – now is probably not the best time to invest in Richard Prince, embroiled in plagiarism lawsuits and ethical controversies.

Equally, when an emerging artist is labelled as the hottest thing in town, the market for their work is likely to spike: but they might quickly fade. If you bought at the top of the market, you may find the value of anything you bought drops dramatically.

That's not a problem if you have bought a piece you really like; just don't get suckered into thinking you're an art investor if you aren't.

Do your research, especially if you're planning to spend a hefty chunk of money. "Maybe meet the artist and get some more details about their life, their vision and technique," suggests Kurt Blum of online art platform SwissArtGate UAE. "Get inspired about their idea."

"There are many options to find art from a bigger name, or from an artist that you really like at a smaller budget," says Emirati collector Wael Hattar. "What's good about younger artists already

at a gallery is that there is more of a chance of them making it, producing more work and evolving, so your purchase would really help – and you might end up owning a soon-to-be household name.

"I was lucky with a few I've bought because the work spoke to me."

You might not be able to predict how your tastes will change, but be wary of getting swept up by art world trends. In five years, will your artwork still look fresh or will it have dated and be dismissed as "so mid-2010s"? Maybe you should avoid anything too edgy, ironic or kitschy – it might seem a fun choice now, but will rapidly become tiresome.

Logistics are important; when you fall for

an artwork, don't forget to think about where you'll put it. A monumental painting or dramatic sculpture might be stunning in a spacious white-cube gallery, but will it overpower in your living room, clash with the décor or block your view of the TV? Before you buy, contextualise the artwork – because you're likely to love it a lot less when you have to clamber over it to get at your kitchen or pass it every day on the way to the bathroom.

Ultimately, a little thoughtfulness will keep you from making impulse buys that don't suit your lifestyle. You can and should play a slow game, scoping out styles you love before you commit to something you'll want to display proudly in your home for a long time to come.



At last year's World Art Dubai

LOOK FOR AFFORDABLE ART EVENTS

Without a hefty budget, you don't stand much chance of competing with established collectors and investing institutions at traditional auction houses and galleries. The good news is that the UAE is experiencing a boom of events designed to entice new collectors with more modest budgets.

In 2016, Art Dubai's RCA Secret Dubai project returns; register online at bit.ly/1PqCSlt before the mid-March sale to make your choice from a thousand postcard-sized original artworks, each priced at AED 500.

Once you've received your buyer's ID and you've made your selection of cards, you can join the queue at the sales desk; the cashier will tell you if your favourite cards are still available. It's best to prepare a nice long list so that you can be sure to get something you like.

The twist: all the artists are kept secret until

the sale ends. In past editions, high-profile artists and designers including Grayson Perry, Burberry's Christopher Bailey, Zaha Hadid and Paul Smith have contributed, meaning you could nab a valuable gem for a low price.

For even more affordable options, head down to the Dubai World Trade Centre between 6 and 19 April for the second edition of World Art Dubai.

"Everyone has to start somewhere," says Pravin Punjabi, World Art Dubai's event director. "Galleries and artists can benefit hugely from young collectors who collect for sheer passion and the love of art rather than investment, which

is an important aspect of the mix.

"Younger collectors are very influential and trendsetters – a young collector's base cultivates a culture of supporting the arts and engaging with it."

"As a concept, this accessible and affordable new fair supports the universal principle that art is for everyone," says his colleague Trixie LohMirmand from DWTC, who describes World Art Dubai as "an entirely new proposition for the region". (magpie will be speaking at this year's edition on the subject of economical art, incidentally.)

Certainly this pocket-friendly art fair boasts over 2,000 paintings, prints, sculptures and photographs for sale, with prices for original works starting from as low as AED 100. There's also a contemporary craft market for local artisans and designers; it will be interesting to see if this can attract more than the regular crop of jewellers.

Ms LohMirmand's claim of "an entirely new proposition" is debatable – similar 'affordable art' events are cropping up with increasing regularity, and there's no shortage of craft markets at the vibrant arts hubs

of Alserkal Avenue and Warehouse421 as well as the Ripe Night Markets. They represent fantastic opportunities to browse unique artworks and design pieces, and deal directly with their talented makers.

Watch out too for Abu Dhabi Art Hub's regular summer Affordable Art Sale Exhibition. Last year's had original art from 20 different artists with a maximum price of AED 2,000 per work.

Throughout the year, keep your ear to the ground (and/or read magpie regularly) for hidden gems and independent design boutiques where



But would it look good in JVC?

GO ONLINE

The explosion of online art buying platforms in the last few years has really disrupted the conventional gallery-mediated market model.

Though controversial among purists, online sale sites are in theory empowering consumers with lower prices and increased ease of accessibility.

For the first time buyer terrified at the thought of heading into a high-end gallery where the principle "if you have to ask, you can't afford

it" reigns supreme, the online option may be the right way at least to begin a collection.

Price points can vary wildly at big international websites like ArtList and ArtNet Auctions, where you'll find a huge variety of works from prints by relative unknowns to unique originals by some of the world's most famous artists.

At the time of writing, ArtNet offerings start at \$300 for an 'After Jean-Michel

Basquiat' plate and range up to a 300cm bronze 'Contemporary Terracotta Warrior' by Yue Minjun, with an estimate topping out at \$120,000. Also for sale on the online market powerhouse are works by Jeff Koons, Tracey Emin, Yayoi Kusama, Gerhard Richter and David Hockney. (Don't worry about being ripped off – a reputable site will guarantee the authenticity of anything you buy.)

Beware of online auction fever, however.



Alternative art by Mo Awwad - original tote bags

Ask anyone who has ever spent four times as much as they planned on a dead Dualit toaster on eBay; it's all too easy to sail past your budgeted amount, caught up in the thrill of clicking that 'Bid' button.

If you're not ready to dip your toes into international waters, first spend some time looking around fixed-price regional art sale sites like Emergeast. This beautifully curated online gallery specialises in emerging Middle Eastern artists including Zaina El-Said, Mohammed Al Hawajri, and Amar A Zahr.

The gallery has works from around 50 artists, most originals with

a couple of limited edition prints; prices start at \$100 but typically are around \$3,000-5,000.

"I think most of the online buyers know exactly what they want", says Kurt Blum.

Around 90 percent of the works sold online by his company SwissArtGate UAE are available to view on display somewhere in the UAE. With prices from AED 900 to AED 60,000, Blum estimates that over a third of his customers are first-time buyers.

quirky surprises may be waiting for you to discover – think of Cities in Jumeirah's Galleria Mall, Objects & Elements in Al Quoz, or Andrew Martin in DIFC. Even Abu Dhabi institution Café Arabia has artworks for sale.

One of the best options for testing the waters with auction buying has sadly departed, though. Ayyam Gallery's Young Collectors Auctions were less rarefied than the likes of Christie's Dubai, specialising in Middle Eastern artists and presenting an eclectic selection of works including painting, photography, limited-edition prints, sculpture, and installations. But no more: we're told that Ayyam decided to stop the auctions "in order to focus on expanding

the international reach of the gallery while also strengthening our custodianship programme and nonprofit initiatives. We want to focus on individual projects that will have a greater impact in the long run."

At least Emergeast has organised some non-conventional auctions in the past – the last of them in November at the Vida Downtown hotel. These Emerging Art Auctions emphasise newer artists from the region that have yet to become established, with prices which are commensurately modest. Emergeast said November's prices were in the \$1,000 to \$7,500.

Antidote is also worth considering. The idea of Antidote's Artrooms

is that on-trend design and art from emerging artists is shown together in a room setting; the next of these occasional pop-up exhibitions, titled Collective Loft, is being shown 9-31 March 2016 at the Zumtobel warehouse on 6A Street (opposite the new Alserkal extension).

Collective Loft is described as a life-size installation of the interior of a young collector's home, mixing fine art and design to create "a well-rounded international collection". It features work by 23 artists and designers from 11 countries.

Says Antidote's Najeh Zimmerman: "The big focus is emerging artists from the region, some of them showing for the first time in Dubai".



World Art Dubai?