

Muhammad Yusuf "When Barcelona meets Bazaar" The Gulf Today - Time Out

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Alfonso de la Fuente



Fatma Al Mahomed



Cecilia Lobel

When Barcelona meets bazaar

Muhammad Yusuf writes about how Spanish designers remade objects they found in Sharjah's marketplaces to create extraordinary pieces of art

1971-Design Space, Sharjah, in collaboration with L&B Contemporary Art Gallery, Barcelona, is hosting, till June 30, "Remade", an exhibition that tries to create a dialogue between recreated objects d'art. The show is a joint effort of Pichiglas Studio, the professional title of the Spanish designer Alfonso de la Fuente and Yomuto, a designer duo consisting of Barcelona artist Xavi Muñoz and Italian designer Federico Tosco. It results from a conversation that started way back in 2016 in Barcelona and is curated by Cecilia Lobel, owner, L & B.

The dialogue - or dialogue - was the trigger for the plan to showcase the work of the Spanish designers in the UAE. In the process, the Spanish trio raided the bazaar of Sharjah in what is called the Souq Al Tanayyah or the Iranian market in the Heart of Sharjah, acquired objects of daily use like kitchenware and ceramic vessels, and remade them into unique art pieces.

The Iranian market is an attraction for tourists and residents and plays a significant role in providing items of daily use. It holds shops and air-conditioned stalls.

"I'm a member," says Fatma Al Mahomed, Head, 1971-Design Space, when the designers went on their first visit to the market. Alfonso de la Fuente seemed like a child entering a candy store. The availability of objects, their diversity and the wide variety of items were the trigger for the plan to showcase the work of the Spanish designers in the UAE. In the process, the Spanish trio raided the bazaar of Sharjah in what is called the Souq Al Tanayyah or the Iranian market in the Heart of Sharjah, acquired objects of daily use like kitchenware and ceramic vessels, and remade them into unique art pieces.

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"I'm not of the UAE," she said. "I'm of the UAE." She said she was looking at the architecture of Sharjah and realized that the architecture had impacted even modern architecture. She said she was looking at the architecture of Sharjah and realized that the architecture had impacted even modern architecture.

This year, the UAE marks the year of Zayed. The logo of the year of Zayed, which circles the late President portrait, is seen throughout the country. The designers, who were there for the first time, were curious about the story behind the portrait. They saw that the portrait was a life to find out what he had done and the values he believed in. The four words: Dream, Hope, Do, Believe were then translated to Arabic and the site of the installation was created.

Cultural adaptation and integration is something that has been around as long as human civilization. It is something that has been around as long as human civilization. It is something that has been around as long as human civilization.

Cultural integration can also be said to occur when people from other cultures introduce elements of their own culture to their new one. This can be in the form of music, food, attitudes, religion, etc.

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to European schools of art. In contemporary times, Italian and Spanish artists have been making their way into the UAE. It is a multi-cultural society. It is a multi-cultural society.

"When Barcelona meets Bazaar" Muhammad Yusuf writes about how Spanish designers remade objects they found in Sharjah's marketplaces to create extraordinary pieces of art

1971-Design Space, Sharjah, in collaboration with L&B Contemporary Art Gallery, Barcelona, is hosting, till June 30, "Remade", an exhibition that tries to create a dialogue between recreated objects d'art. The show is a joint effort of Pichiglas Studio, the professional title of the Spanish designer Alfonso de la Fuente and Yomuto, a designer duo consisting of Barcelona artist Xavi Muñoz and Italian designer Federico Tosco. It results from a conversation that started way back in 2016 in Barcelona and is curated by Cecilia Lobel, owner, L & B.



The dialogue – or triologue – was the trigger for the plan to showcase the works of the Spanish designers in the UAE. In the present works, the Spanish trio raided the bazaars of Sharjah in what is called the Souq Al Iraniyah or the Iranian market in the Heart of Sharjah, acquired objects of daily use like kitchen ware and textiles, and remade them into unique art pieces.

(The Iranian market is an attraction for tourists and residents and plays a significant role in providing items of daily use. It holds it own against all odds surrounding it in the form of modern shops and air conditioned malls).

“I remember”, says Fatma Al Mahmoud, Head, 1971-Design Space, “when the designers went on their first visit to the market, Alfonso de la Fuente seemed like a child entering a candy store. The availability of objects, their diversity and colour, were a treasure trove for his style of work”.

The transformation of the mundane into the unique is astounding. In the hands of the designers, humble household items like laundry baskets, bins, fruit bowls, metal spoons and pots, for which we do not spare a second glance or thought, become Cinderellas. Catapulted from their routine roles, decontextualised and enthroned as objets d’art, they shine, glint and dance in a million colours, enjoying their newly found Queen Bee status to the hilt.

Materials used are principally glass, but different artisanal and industrial objects too find a place in the oeuvre of the designers. Though material is recycled, they have been deeply respectful of memories and emotional values the objects carry. The articles may now have different forms and shapes; but they still retain elements of their ancient character.

“Everything has been done”, says de la Fuente, “with the help of local people and institutions. It is a way of representing their culture and the things learned”.

He told of how the Mashrabiya affected the selection of objects for his pieces. When he was looking at the architecture of Sharjah, he realised that the Mashrabiya had impacted even modern architecture in manifold ways. Some of his pieces reflect the moiré effect related to it.

He has also titled his pieces after the names given in the Arabic language to women. It could have been a conscious decision, since the materials remade were more utilised by women. Fatma; Noor; Sana; Zeina and Leila are some of the names that have found favour with him.

Yomuto’s work is divided into three sections. ‘Trophies’ take their name from the impression they make on visitors. ‘Granny Lamps’ is a light installation and the final piece is titled ‘Dream. Dare. Do. Believe’.

This year, the UAE marks the Year of Zayed. The logo of the Year of Zayed, which carries the late President portrait, is seen throughout the country. The designers, since it was their first visit to the Emirates, were curious about the story behind the portrait.

They researched Sheikh Zayed’s life to find out what he had dreamed, dared to envision, what he did and the values he believed in. The four words Dream, Dare, Do, Believe, were then translated to Arabic and the site specific installation was created.



It is attached to the windows of the building which opens up and provides a shoreline view of Sharjah, leading to the ports. The endless world waits outside – something Sheikh Zayed was never hesitant to deal with. “Magical structures connected by inspiration”, conclude the designers, referring to their creations.

Their investigation process in Sharjah lasted 15 days, following a residency. For the first 10 days, the designers explored the city from different angles and bought or picked up odds and ends from local markets, luxury stores, museums, parks, bazaars, galleries, malls and restaurants, among other places. Then it was onward to the workplace, where they gave the chosen objects a second life.

Cultural adaptation and integration is something that has been around as long as human civilisation has existed. It happens during the course of centuries – as English has been adopted as a global language - or decades, as the Indian curry has been adopted in the UK or Chinese food has made its home in the USA.

Integration happens when people from a culture adopt the essence of another culture, such as its attitudes, ceremonies and products, while at the same time maintain their own culture.

This happens in many immigrant homes (the Barcelona designers can also be considered as having been temporary immigrants) when individuals maintain their old culture at home, while adopting some practices of their new culture in public.

Cultural integration can also be said to occur when people from other cultures introduce elements of their own culture to their new one. This can be in the form of music, food, attitudes, religion, arts and many other cultural features.

In India’s Mughal Empire, during Akbar’s and Jehangir’s time, the Emperors used imagery brought by Europeans to their courts, in the paintings made in their ateliers. If you do not look closely, some of the most striking Mughal art between 1580 and 1630 could be mistaken for belonging to European schools of art. In contemporary times, Indian artist Subodh Gupta, makes use of ceiling fans and kitchen utensils, among other things, to make dramatic artworks. Thus cross disciplinary employment of cultural products across regions, has a hoary and significant lineage.

L & B Contemporary Art Gallery collaborates with public and private institutions, including art centres, museums and foundations. It aims “to be a platform for projecting contemporary thought, and promoting the diffusion and exhibition of the art and culture of our time”.

1971-Design Space is a multi-functional design space, dedicated to the display and discussion of all forms of contemporary design ranging from graphic, furniture to interior, interactive design and new technologies. It works with local designers, architects, schools and universities.