

# Design

Middle East

Interiors and architecture  
from the Gulf, Levant and beyond

DESIGN  
MIDDLE EAST

## AWARDS 2021

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**THE WINNER  
TAKES IT ALL**

Glimpses of a starry  
night when exceptional  
achievers were awarded  
the region's most  
prestigious design  
and architecture honours

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REDEFINING  
ARCHITECTURE//  
**EXPO 2020**

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FIT SOLUTIONS//  
**SHERIF NAGY**





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# Design / AWARDS 2021

Middle East

RAK CERAMICS



ON THE COVER AND THIS PAGE: PHOTOGRAPHY FAROOQ SALIK



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## Design / AWARDS 2021

Middle East

### THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL

GLIMPSES OF A STARRY NIGHT WHEN EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVERS WERE AWARDED THE REGION'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE HONOURS.

It was a celebration unlike any other, with an audience unlike any other, and a party unlike any other! The *Design Middle East Awards 2021* honoured the finest and brightest in the region's design industry.

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OP-ED

### FIT SOLUTIONS

COVID-19 set the path for healthier, more eco-friendly fit-out solutions, says SHERIF NAGY, general manager of The FITOUT

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TALKING POINT

### HOW CAN A CITY BUILD A LASTING IDENTITY?

Michelle Saywood, vice president of North 25, discusses how Dubai may develop its own identity by combining elements of sustainability, wellness, and liveability

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EXPO 2020

### REDEFINING ARCHITECTURE | EXPO 2020

Under the theme of *Connecting Minds, Creating the Future*, Expo 2020 Dubai is showcasing cutting-edge architecture to visitors around the world

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PICK OF THE MONTH

### THE STAR HAS ARRIVED!

The iconic Camaleonda sofa by Mario Bellini is relaunched using sustainable materials.

THE FITOUT'S list of prestigious clients and projects includes Ritz Carlton, Marriott, Green Community, Mall of the Emirates, Crowne Plaza, The Address Hotel, twofour54, Palazzo Versace, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, Cleveland Clinic, Creek-side Residence, Nikki Beach Resort, Skynews, SLS Hotel, RIU Hotel, University of Wollongong, and many more.

# FIT *Solutions*

COVID-19 SET THE PATH FOR HEALTHIER, MORE ECO-FRIENDLY FIT-OUT SOLUTIONS, SAYS **SHERIF NAGY**, GENERAL MANAGER OF THE FITOUT

DESIGN MIDDLE EAST | NOVEMBER 2021

**T**he global pandemic affected us in various ways, and the fit-out sector is no exception. Floorplans, material choices, and how we furnish these settings will all be considered while keeping safety and health as top priorities. How we consciously design spaces has become crucial as we shift and navigate our lives in a post-pandemic world.

Could the growing fit-out sector adapt to the changes? While the forecasted number of fit-out markets in the UAE indicates a bright future, the impact of the pandemic is revolutionizing fit-out solutions for commercial spaces.

Today's challenge is how to design and maintain spaces that ensure sustainability, health, and safety. There is an increasingly positive response to this call; commercial and fit-out companies are now offering sustainable solutions with key consideration to what matters to employees and clients, such as health, safety, and climate change. One obvious fit-out trend these days is the shift from shared to separate spaces. With COVID-19 regulations and measures in place, workplaces, and even commercial spaces, are now designing and redesigning their floor plans and interior with safety in mind. Open floor plans and screened enclosures are added to avoid crowding and close contact.



Employees' health and well-being are also among the main priorities nowadays. Handwashing stations are available in most places, alongside the integration of biophilia, an approach in designs and architecture that connects people with nature. Cleaner air ventilation and larger areas for natural light are incorporated to give occupants a healthier environment experience.

In addition, to reduce the anxiety brought about by the pandemic and create a relaxing environment, calmer and brighter colours with natural and wood materials are incorporated in the interior design of workplaces. These efforts now become part of the company's agenda when it comes to efforts that contribute to the better mental health of employees.

Fit-out companies also need to think more broadly about the future of interior workspaces. Flexible spaces that can be easily modified and redesigned to accommodate more or lesser individuals will be a smart consideration. With the rise of remote working, the need for office space is being reconsidered.

**Fit-out companies are now integrating sustainable solutions such as carbon footprint reduction, use of recycled and biodegradable materials in furniture, employing raw and clean materials, as well as energy-saving methods and technologies in the spaces.**

**THE FITOUT** provided complete fit-out services to the landmark project - **SLS DUBAI HOTEL & RESIDENCES**. The hotel's more than 630 rooms were fitted out with the company's world-class interior solutions in six months. Considered as one of The FITOUT's high-profile undertakings in Dubai, the project has a total built-up area of around 180,000sqm.

Digitalisation and technological innovations are also on the rise, especially in ensuring contactless operations without compromising business continuity. Automated systems ranging from air conditioning systems to lighting and security are being practised avoiding contact with frequently used surfaces. Employers are becoming more interested in the installation of touchless sensor technology.

In cases where other members of the workforce continue to work from home, technological advances such as wireless access points, network login data, and sensors are becoming more popular. There is an increasing reliance on video conferences, so providing meeting rooms and spaces with efficient video conferencing facilities has become a must.

Another major fit-out trend this year is the preservation of resources. A survey conducted by Boston Consult-

ing Group shows that in the wake of the pandemic, more than 3,000 people across eight countries have become increasingly concerned about addressing environmental challenges.

Fit-out companies are now integrating sustainable solutions such as carbon footprint reduction, use of recycled and biodegradable materials in furniture, employing raw and clean materials, as well as energy-saving methods and technologies in the spaces. Green buildings and spaces reduce waste and energy consumption while increasing savings...

Every year, office design and fit-out trends vary and adapt in response to the requirement to balance aesthetics, sustainability, efficiency, safety, and health. While the pandemic caused enormous upheavals, it also prepared the path for good and long-term reforms in workplaces and commercial areas. •

