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id 50 / Celebrating 50 individuals who have made positive contributions to design and architecture across the Middle East and North Africa

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Celebrating contributions to design and architecture across the Middle East and North Africa

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For its 200th issue, *identity* pays tribute to 50 individuals who have made positive contributions to the development of design, architecture and culture across the Middle East and North Africa. The list includes design and architecture professionals who have furthered these fields within their respective countries or have expanded the legacy of design onto the world stage. The list also celebrates individuals who have helped establish platforms – be it governmental institutions or design events – that further enhance the development of design and architecture within the region, while maintaining a positive outlook into the future.

From creating notable buildings that have put the region on the map, to developing signature interiors and products that are propelling the crafts industry forward and preserving the region's cultural and architectural heritage, the individuals on this list have time and time again, proven their commitment to furthering design and architecture in the region and abroad.

Hailing from countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Sudan and France – these 50 individuals present some of the strongest voices within design and architecture across the MENA region today.



Photo by Fabian Frinzel

Anne Holtrop

Dutch architect Anne Holtrop graduated in 2005 from the Academie van Bouwkunst in Amsterdam, The Netherlands with a degree in architecture and in 2009 started his own studio, Studio Anne Holtrop, with offices currently located in Muharraq, Bahrain and Amsterdam. Holtrop's projects have come to be known for their deep-rooted material exploration which at times dictates the outcome of the architecture itself. His work spans temporary installations and permanent buildings, many of which adopt abstract references that stem from drawings and form.

THE WAY THE MATERIAL FLOWS AND FORMS AGAINST THE BOUNDARIES OF SOIL AND TEXTILE AND THE SITE BECOME ASPECTS THAT EXPRESS THE CHANGE OF THE MATERIAL STATE, AND DEFINE THE FORM OF THE ARCHITECTURE.

In 2015, his first two major buildings, Museum Fort Vechten and the National Pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain – a country he had never visited at the time and where he now lives- for Milan Expo 2015, were completed. Holtrop has since designed a number of projects across the Kingdom, many of which are currently under construction. He has completed the design for the Customs House in Manama, operating as its main post office, while the Qaysariya Suq and Green Corner Building in Muharraq are nearing completion. The studio is currently working on new stores worldwide for Maison Margiela with flagship stores in London, Paris, Osaka and NYC, and several UNESCO-listed heritage buildings in Bahrain including Murad Boutique Hotel and Siyadi Pearl Museum. For his practice, Holtrop has been awarded several grants from the Mondrian Fund, as well as receiving the Charlotte Kohler Prize for Architecture from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds in 2007.



Photo by Ieva Saudargaite

Bernard Khoury

Lebanese architect Bernard Khoury spent his adolescence in Beirut during the civil war, after which he moved to the US to study architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design, later obtaining a Masters in Architectural Studies from Harvard University. Upon returning to Beirut, Khoury began his professional career and founded his architectural practice DW5 in 1993 with the post-civil war city and its urban landscape becoming his workshop and sources of inspiration. He gained acclaim in 1998 for the design of music club B018, a subterranean discotheque constructed on a former refugee camp which was awarded an honorable mention for the Borromini Prize in 2001 by the municipality of Rome, giving rise to an array of temporary entertainment buildings in Beirut. Khoury's work demonstrates exceptional creativity and flexibility and a firm stance against conforming to norms; instead Khoury focuses on creating his own opportunities to produce buildings that reflect a less sugar-coated narrative of his home city. Alongside DW5, Khoury also co-founded the Arab Center for Architecture. He has lectured and exhibited works across a number of prestigious academic institutions from Europe to the US. He also served as the architect and co-curator of the Kingdom of Bahrain's national pavilion at the Venice Biennale's 14th International Architecture Exhibition in 2014, under the theme 'Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014'. Over the past twenty years, his office has developed an international reputation and a diverse portfolio of projects, both locally and in over fifteen countries abroad.

I HAVE NO INTEREST FOR POLISHED, SMOOTH, WELL-BEHAVED ARCHITECTURE.

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Cyril Zammit

Paris-born and Dubai-based Cyril Zammit started his career at the Institut Français in Prague, before relocating to London where he served in the cultural department of the French Embassy. After working as Sponsorship Manager for the Montreux Jazz Festival, he joined UBS and then HSBC Private Bank in Switzerland for which he signed a five-year partnership with Design Miami. In 2012, Zammit launched Design Days Dubai, a fair entirely dedicated to collectible and limited-edition design – the first of its kind in the Middle East and South Asia, helping establish a platform that launched the careers of many young local designers across the region. Zammit had since then worked to bridge relationships between brands and designers, focusing primarily on introducing local talent to an international audience. In 2015, he participated in the launch of Dubai Design Week, giving the first design event of its kind in the city its distinctive identity. In February 2017, Zammit established himself as an independent design advisor and consultant, working with Dubai Culture & Arts Authority. In February 2020, Zammit joined the team of HE Zaki Nussibeh, Minister of State, where he now serves as expert for Cultural Affairs.

