

# AD50

An overview of the most stunning **projects** in the Middle East and the great **architects** and **interior designers** behind them

## THE GAME CHANGERS

*Architectural Digest selects the 50 top regional talents in architecture and interior design. The parameters: an incredible body of work and a practice located in the Middle East*

Words **SHALAKA PARADKAR, TAHEREH SARABEH, PRATYUSH SARUP, KARINE MOINE, NAUSHEEN NOOR**

### **LIGHT SPACE DESIGN**

The work of Light Space Design is a testimony to all three words in the firm's name. Founded by Omar Ghafour in 2002 and covering the Middle East as well as Hong Kong and London, LSD interweaves light, purity of design and infinite space to each and every interior, whether residential, hospitality or office.

**RECENT PROJECTS:** Leila Heller gallery, Vitol head office, Spa Dunya (all in the UAE). **UP NEXT:** Boutique hotels in Dubai and Oman, Baxter head office and Dutches F&B container concept in Dubai. **VIP CLIENTS:** Apple, Dubai Crown Prince office, Dubai Investments, Merras, Vitol. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "Our design is creative, technically feasible, detailed and effortless to look at, less is more. Or so we hope!" Dubai; [lightspacedesign.ae](http://lightspacedesign.ae)



**BERNARD KHOURY**

For a while he was the rebellious boy of Middle Eastern architecture. Today Bernard Khoury is known as an award-winning architect, educationist and art curator. At the helm of Beirut-based firm DW5 since 1993, Harvard-educated Khoury infuses his creations with a deep respect for the relationship between culture, urban fabric and scale. **RECENT PROJECTS:** National Bahraini pavilion, 2014 Venice Biennale's Architecture Exhibition. **UP NEXT:** Learning centre in Armenia and the redesign of La Grande Brasserie du Levant in Beirut. *Beirut; bernardkhoury.com*

**HABIBEH MADJDABADI ARCHITECTURE OFFICE**

Iranian architect Habibeh Madjdabadi says the role of an architect is to understand which aspect of the project can inspire architectural solutions. Madjdabadi's oeuvre extends from architecture to art installations and conceptual design. **BEST KNOWN FOR:** The 40 Knots House, shortlisted for the 2016 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture and the Mellat Bank building. **INSPIRED BY** "Materials are an important means of expression in my work and I consider them from a poetic point of view." *Tehran; habibehmadjdabadi.com*

**SSH**

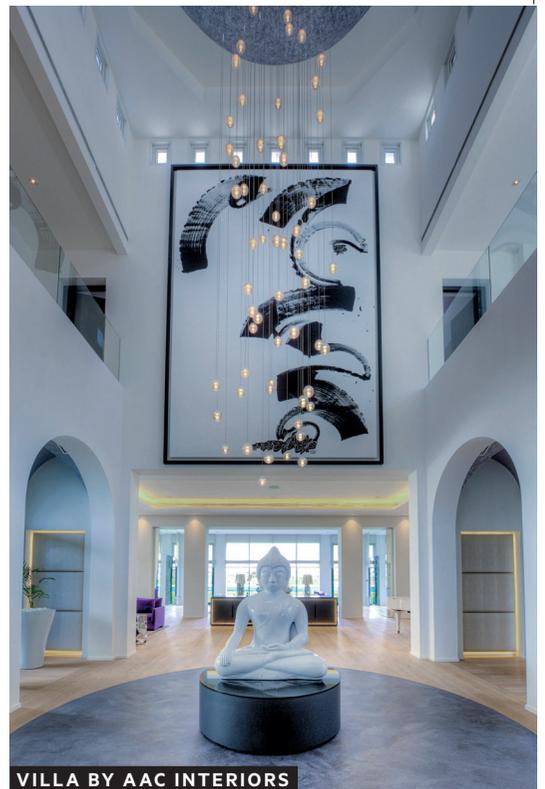
Headed by Ray Phillips, managing director, building design, and Simon Dennison, architecture director, SSH has delivered high profile projects such as the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre and Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre and Museum in Kuwait. **KEY PROJECTS:** Marina Waterfront, Kuwait and the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. **UP NEXT:** Al Salam Palace, Kuwait Children's Hospital and Ras Al Bar Masterplan. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** Successful design must address functionality and sustainability, and go beyond expectations, without compromising budgets. 11 offices worldwide including Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai and Saudi Arabia; *sshic.com*

**AL HITMI COMPLEX BY NORR**



**DESIGN 2000**

Set up in the 1970s by the late Sandro Corvi as a furniture retailer in Rome, Design 2000 has now grown into an architectural practice, interior design consultancy and manufacturer of bespoke furniture. In Qatar, Design 2000 is represented by its affiliate, Italian Style Qatar. **KEY PROJECTS:** Exhibition hall at The Pearl Qatar (design by Peia Associati); Hamad International Airport, Doha; Angolan National Assembly, Luanda; royal residences in Africa and the Middle East. **UP NEXT:** Private residences in Monaco, Bahrain, Doha and Miami, villa and majlis in Doha. **LEADERSHIP:** CEO Massimo Cioccoloni, Paolo Schiavi, architect, Daniele Venanzoni, chief designer, Roberto Nicolai. *Rome, Bahrain; designuemila.com*



VILLA BY AAC INTERIORS

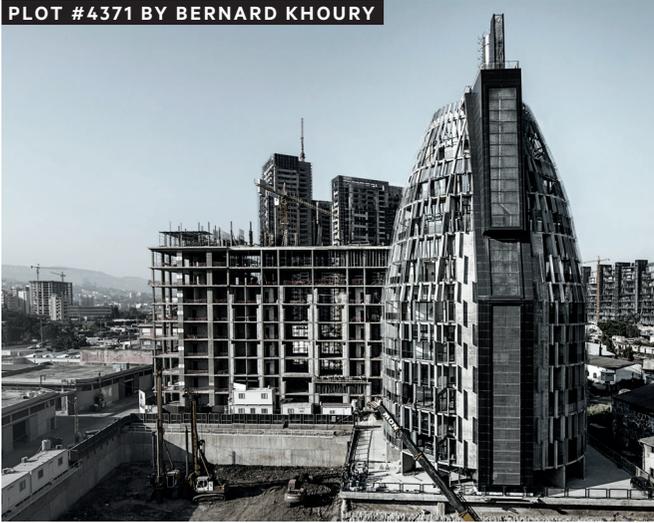
**SHEIKH JABER AL AHMAD CULTURAL CENTRE BY SSH**



**EMBASSY BY DESIGN 2000**



PLOT #4371 BY BERNARD KHOURY



### NORR

Architects of Dubai's Emirates Towers and Kuwait's Trade Centre, NORR's design solutions are characterised by a multidisciplinary approach that brings together architects, interior designers, engineers, and other specialists. **UP NEXT:** In Dubai - The Address Residence Sky View, The Address Boulevard Hotel and Vida Residence Downtown, First Gulf Bank HQ; Al Zorah Resorts I & II, Ajman; Ajdan Waterfront Development, Saudi Arabia and Lusail Residential Development, Qatar. **23 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Qatar and Saudi Arabia; [norr.com](http://norr.com)**

### WILSON ASSOCIATES

The US-headquartered global interior architectural design firm was founded in 1971; today it employs over 400 design professionals worldwide. Along with hospitality interiors and architecture, the in-house specialty studio Blue Plate consults on restaurant projects. The firm's Middle East and Africa regional office is now headed by Isabel Pintado. **KEY PROJECTS:** In Dubai – interiors of the One&Only Royal Mirage, Atlantis The Palm and Armani Hotel; Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah resort, Muscat; and St.Regis Doha. **Nine offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Singapore; [wilsonassociates.com](http://wilsonassociates.com)**

### DIBA TENSILE ARCHITECTURE

Leila Araghian and Alireza Behzadi co-founded their firm in 2005, specialising in membrane and special structures. An early project - the Tabiat bridge - which redefines the bridge as a sequence of spaces, earned an Architizer A+ award and has been shortlisted for the 2016 Aga Khan Awards for Architecture. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Abo Atash Amphitheatre, Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge, membrane covering for Shahrak-e Gharb Jame Mosque, awning for Modern Elahieh restaurant. **UP NEXT:** ETFE Roof, Iran Mall and Birds Garden Cable net, Lavizan Park. **Tehran; [dibats.com](http://dibats.com)**

### AAC INTERIORS

Offering interior architecture and design services for residential, corporate and retail projects, this Dubai-based firm works across the Middle East and Europe. They might be known by their luxuriously appointed spaces, but since founding AAC Interiors in 2002, Anne and Alexandra Cantacuzene have steered clear of being locked into a trademark style. "What we work towards is a quality design, delivered to the highest of standards." **MOTTO:** Good design enriches the quality of life and productivity of businesses. **Dubai; [aac-interiors.com](http://aac-interiors.com)**



HABIBEH MADJDABADI



TABIAT BRIDGE BY  
DIBA TENSILE ARCHITECTURE

ATLANTIS BY WILSON ASSOCIATES

