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Janna Soueidan

These are the People behind Dubai's Leading Art Galleries

Takeaways from Janna Soueidan's conversations with three art curators.

Dubai-based, multidisciplinary artist [Janna Soueidan](#) visited three art galleries within the city and met up with the curators to get a deeper understanding of its art world.

“The feeling I get when walking into an art gallery is a form of escapism. To me, galleries provide a respite from the noise and chaos of my everyday life, offering me a space of contemplation and introspection,” Soueidan explains. “The second I walk into one, I suddenly feel a sense of inspiration, wonder and joy that I can’t compare to any other experience. It can sometimes be emotional, discovering new artists or pieces that resonate with me on a personal level.”

It's the feelings evoked and conversations that they create within the spaces that display the emotions, history and storytelling of the artist themselves which hold a place close to her heart. “As an artist myself, I've always dreamt of having my work displayed in art galleries and I've always wondered about the curatorial process and the role that curators play in creating such a beautiful space,” she says.

Celine Azem – Firetti Contemporary

Founded by mother and daughter, Mara Firetti and Celine Azem, [Firetti Contemporary](#) brings a multidisciplinary art exhibition with a strong identity to an international platform by representing both emerging and established artists from all over the world. The gallery embraces the role that art can play in addressing sustainability and social issues, and aims to become a vehicle for social change, through the influence of art.



Janna Soueidan

My focus is on emerging artists from the region and those that are from / based in the UAE. Conceptual clarity is another key component, the exhibition should have a clear curatorial concept or theme that ties the works together and provides a framework for understanding them. The exhibition should also offer opportunities for audience engagement, such as artist talks, educational programs, or interactive installations. The curator and artist relationship is extremely important, the curator must learn the artist process and delve deep into their concept, spend time with them, visit their studio and work side by side.

How do you balance showcasing new artists alongside established artists?

By featuring both established and emerging artists, I aim to provide a platform for up-and-coming talent to gain exposure, while also demonstrating the gallery's commitment to showcasing established and recognized artists. This approach not only adds credibility to the exhibitions but also creates an exciting dynamic for the audience. With this, I aim to achieve a diverse and well-rounded representation of the contemporary art world.

How do you make your gallery a inviting and inclusive?

I start off by curating exhibitions that explore topics that are relevant, engaging and thought-provoking. I also like to create an inclusive environment by using curatorial texts that are easy to understand and don't overwhelm the audience and organize complementary events and activations around each show to enhance the overall experience. Lastly, I ensure that the exhibitions are curated in a way that is not intimidating so that visitors can feel comfortable exploring and interacting with the art.

What part of curation do you enjoy the most?

The most rewarding aspect of my job is seeing the artists I work with and represent succeed and get the recognition they deserve, particularly when I work with emerging artists. A great example of this is the show I curated with Syrian-Palestinian artist Sawsan Al Bahar. Through this show, she was highlighted as one of the top 10 contemporary Arab artists. We also took her to an art fair in Italy where she received a prize and will be having a bi-personal exhibition in a museum in Italy. It was a truly rewarding experience for the artist, myself and the gallery. Getting to know the artist and watching them in their process whether it's through a video call or in person is beautiful.

For more in art, [Yu Nagaba and Asterisk reconnect for '星仔/Sing Jai' figure.](#)

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