



GULF TIMES NOW

SPECIAL EDITION
Edition 01 · 2026

THE ENTREPRENEURS' ISSUE

SPECIAL EDITION · ABU DHABI FIRST

THE MAKERS

The Kaaba, through one lens

JOURNEYS

3,000 km, on foot, to Dubai

THE ABU DHABI 10

The emirate's who's who

THE COVER STORY

Kalpesh Kinariwala

Pantheon — and the developer who decided a Gulf city needs more than buildings.

THE PUBLICATION



THE MAGAZINE

Gulf Times Now is a magazine about the people building the Gulf – Abu Dhabi first, then the wider region. Where a feed forgets by morning, a magazine keeps a record. This is ours: founders, makers and originals, told with rigour and respect, in their own words.

Everything in these pages is reported and verified. Every quote belongs to the person who said it; every claim is one they stand behind.

A region this ambitious deserves a record of the people building it.

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THE COVER STORY

Kalpesh Kinariwala

The developer behind Pantheon, on why a Gulf city needs more than buildings — and how real estate led him into art and culture.

READ THE COVER STORY · PAGE 12

FROM THE EDITOR

Everyone here started with a decision, not a fortune.

Fifteen founders, makers and originals — and the one thing every single one of them had in common.

THE GULF REWARDS A PARTICULAR KIND OF PERSON. NOT the one who arrives with everything, but the one who arrives with a decision already made — that they will build here, whatever it takes. This first edition of Gulf Times Now is a record of the people who made it.

Read their pages and a pattern appears. A lawyer of ten years lands in Abu Dhabi and, instead of starting over quietly, builds one of the city’s largest communities. A teenager leaves home for a construction site and, two decades on, owns the company. A fighter pilot trades the cockpit for a studio. A developer decides a city needs more than buildings, and takes an artist around the world.

“None of them waited to feel ready. They began afraid — and they began anyway.”

That is the thread. They began unqualified, or unbacked, or simply unsure — and they began anyway. The Gulf, more than almost anywhere, let the work speak.

We have told each story the way we believe stories should be told here: with rigour, with respect, and in their own words. Nothing in these pages is invented. Every quote is theirs; every claim is

one they stand behind. Our job was only to give it the frame it deserved.

Why a magazine, and why now? Because a feed forgets by morning, and these people have built things worth remembering. Because a region this ambitious deserves a record of the people building it — Abu Dhabi first, then the wider Gulf. Turn the page: they are about to tell you how they did it.

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— and, in this edition, *The Abu Dhabi 10: the emirate’s most compelling founders, makers and originals, profiled in full.*

The Editors

GULF TIMES NOW · ABU DHABI

GULF TIMES NOW

“Where the Gulf’s achievers belong.”

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The Contributors

Fifteen founders, makers and originals who sat down with Gulf Times Now — in their own words, on their own record.



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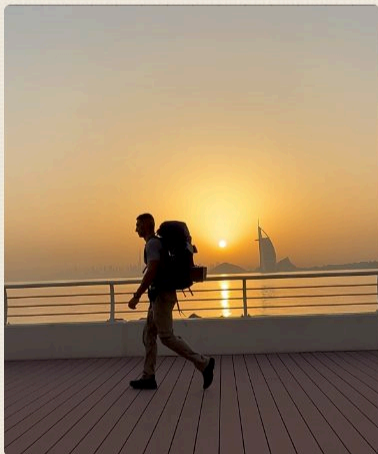
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SECTION 01 · THE ENTREPRENEURS' ISSUE

01

Built in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi is where Gulf Times Now plants its flag — the beat we intend to own.

IN THIS SECTION

Built in Abu Dhabi

The emirate we are betting on – and the people already building its name.

THE FEATURES



Nº 01

Khalid Al Mutawaa

A decade backing Emirati art



BUILT IN ABU DHABI

Khalid Al Mutawaa

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ETIHAD MODERN ART GALLERY

N° 01

Khalid Al Mutawaa opened Etihad Modern Art Gallery in 2003, when Abu Dhabi's art scene barely existed. Over two decades on it is an institution – and still, proudly, independent.

He backed the art before *the world did.*

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ETIHAD MODERN ART GALLERY

ON A GOOD EVENING AT ETIHAD MODERN ART GALLERY, THE room does exactly what Khalid Al Mutawaa always hoped it would: it fills with people who came to look, and to talk, and not only to buy. That, more than any single sale, is the thing he built.

He opened the gallery in 2003, when Abu Dhabi's art scene was almost nothing like the one the city knows today. Over two decades on, Etihad Modern Art Gallery is one of the emirate's cultural

anchors — a home for established and emerging artists, collectors and the wider community — and it is still independent.

The pull towards art came early. As a boy his father took the family to museums and galleries, and what stayed with him was not only the work on the walls but the stories, people and cultures behind it. That curiosity grew into a lifelong connection, and eventually into a decision to make a space where artists and the public could meet.

“ *My goal is for Emirati art to reach the world.* ”

The hard part was not the art. It was the audience. In those years he had to convince people that a gallery was a place for culture, conversation and community, not simply a shop. Working with artists — every one a different personality and vision — taught him patience, flexibility, and how much of this business is really about relationships.

Around the gallery he built more room for that: Art House Café, exhibitions, conversations, a place where a collector, an artist and a curious stranger might end up at the same table. The point was never only to sell work. It was to make art part of ordinary life in the city.

His focus now points outward. He wants UAE art and artists to reach audiences far beyond the region, because he believes art is one of the truest ways to understand a country — its culture, its heritage, how its society has changed. His ambition is for Etihad Modern Art Gallery to be a bridge between the UAE and the wider art world.

Ask what he wants to leave behind and he does not talk about his own name. He talks about the opportunities he created for artists, and a gallery that carries on as part of Abu Dhabi's cultural landscape long after him. And if he could tell his younger self one thing? To explore his own creativity, too — perhaps to have been the artist, and not only the man who gave them a wall.



Khalid Al Mutawaa — founder of Etihad Modern Art Gallery since 2003.

Photograph · Courtesy Etihad Modern Art Gallery

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Every one of them started with a decision, not a fortune.

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The Founders

They began unqualified, unbacked, or simply unsure – and they began anyway.

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A billion in deals, built on trust



THE FOUNDERS

Kalpesh Kinariwala

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS WHITE LABEL MEDIA

Nº 02

Kalpesh Kinariwala began by building homes in Dubai, with a vision that continued to evolve beyond real estate. Today, Pantheon brings art, culture and real estate together — three expressions of one larger vision.

From buildings to *belonging*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS WHITE LABEL MEDIA

KALPESH KINARIWALA DOESN'T SIMPLY SEE WHAT EXISTS; HE sees what is missing. That instinct to identify gaps and create meaningful solutions has shaped his journey – from building homes to building a wider world of art, culture and real estate.

He runs Pantheon, a company he has deliberately grown from a Dubai real-estate developer into something wider – Pantheon: Art, Culture, Real Estate – with a cultural arm, HOP Events, at its centre.

“ *Real estate builds the framework of a city. People, culture and creativity are what give it meaning.* ”

That realisation pushed him past property. He began exploring how culture, creativity and shared experience could give a place meaning – which led to HOP Events, and eventually to reframing the whole company around art, culture and real estate as one idea rather than three.

The clearest proof of the approach is HOP Events, Pantheon's cultural arm, which stages large-scale live experiences and international touring productions. For Kalpesh the ambition is deliberately bigger than any single show: to make Pantheon a name associated as much with culture and belonging as with the buildings it began with – and to prove a developer can shape how a city feels, not just how it looks.

The shift was not a rebrand. It was a change in what he believed he was in the business of.

The journey began in property, building residential communities in Dubai. Starting out, the lesson that stuck was an uncomfortable one for a developer: a successful development is not really about architecture, location or square footage. It is about understanding people, and creating places where a community can genuinely form.

Underneath all of it is a single conviction: that people and relationships are the heart of everything worth building. He chooses partners on shared values rather than the easy commercial win, and through projects such as Borderless Melodies he is trying to give artists real platforms and new audiences rather than one-off spectacles.

He would tell his younger self to be patient, stay authentic, and build something meaningful instead of chasing the quick result. Build relationships before transactions; choose purpose over noise; never trade authenticity for a short-term opportunity. The most meaningful things, he has learned, are the ones that take time.



Kalpesh at Pantheon — the company he reframed around art, culture and real estate.

Photograph · White Label Media

COMPANY Pantheon – Art · Culture · Real Estate

PLATFORM HOP Events

CULTURAL ARM HOP Events – live experiences & touring

BEGAN Residential communities, Dubai

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THE FOUNDERS

Hamid Al Ali

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY HAMID AL ALI

N° 03

Hamid Al Ali grew up watching Dubai become Dubai. Now, moving from government and media into property, he sells something rarer than real estate: advice you can actually trust.

The local's guide to *getting Dubai right.*

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY HAMID AL ALI

HAMID AL ALI LEANS OVER A SCALE MODEL OF A DEVELOPMENT the way some people read a contract — slowly, and looking for what everyone else has missed. It is a fitting image for a man whose whole business is helping people see a city clearly before they commit to it.

He runs Catch Estates, advising entrepreneurs and investors who want to relocate to Dubai, set up a business, secure a Golden Visa or

buy the right property. But he did not arrive at real estate in a straight line. He came to it sideways, and that is exactly why it works.

He grew up in Dubai, watching the city change with remarkable speed into a place people came from everywhere to build, invest and start again. His own career began in government and innovation, alongside a life in media and presenting — roles that gave him an unusually wide view of how the city actually works behind the scenes.

“ *There is a lot of information online. People still don't know who to trust. That is the gap I want to close.* ”

The pivot was not planned so much as noticed. Through his work, his network and his media presence, people were already coming to him with the same questions — how to move here, how to set up, how to invest. He saw a gap: plenty of salespeople, very few willing to give the honest big picture instead of pushing a single service.

So he built one. Today he is growing Catch Estates, moving further into luxury real estate and continuing to build his media presence, with a clear goal — to be the name people think of when they need trusted local advice about building, investing or living in Dubai.

The lesson he keeps returning to is that trust compounds. In government, in media, and now in property, people remember how you made them feel and whether your advice was really in their interest. It has made him more willing, not less, to tell a client that the thing they want is not the thing they should do.

His larger ambition is to raise the standard of how entrepreneurs and investors are advised in this city at all. Not to close more transactions, but to be remembered as someone who gave people genuine local insight and built a reputation on trust — the one asset in Dubai that never depreciates.



Advising an investor over a development model — trust, not transactions, is the pitch.

Photograph · Courtesy Hamid Al Ali



THE FOUNDERS

Fayez Jazmati

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY DESIGNLINK · GTN SPOTLIGHT

N° 04

Fayez Jazmati comes from a family of architects. He was planning buildings before he could spell the word. DesignLink is what that lifelong obsession built.

In love with architecture since *six*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY DESIGNLINK · GTN SPOTLIGHT

FAYEZ JAZMATI WAS SIX YEARS OLD WHEN HE UNDERSTOOD WHAT his mother did for a living. She was sketching at a table, and he asked what she was drawing. Not drawing, she told him – planning; designing a building, and studying how people would live in it. That a few lines could become a real place stunned him. He decided, then and there, to become an architect.

He kept the promise. Today he runs DesignLink, his own architectural design studio, built to produce work of the highest

quality that still holds up in reality and understands the culture it is built for.

He came by it honestly. He is from a family of architects – both his parents and his younger brother design buildings, and at family dinners the conversation was drawings and space. He learned planning diagrams, he jokes, before he learned to draw cartoon characters. So when he began, whether studying or working, architecture came naturally.

“ *The design stage should be joyful, hopeful and full of positive energy – not just a means to a fee.* ”

His start was unusual. Most fresh graduates spend years assisting senior architects before they design anything of their own. Fayeze refused to wait. From his earliest jobs he pushed to be a designer, taking on extra work and making real financial sacrifices to earn the chance to design in every firm he joined – until he had earned it outright.

After years of concept work across studios in Abu Dhabi, he founded DesignLink to build the thing he actually believed in: designs of the highest possible quality, applicable in the real world, rooted in local culture and need. For him the design stage is the cornerstone of a

project – and it should be joyful and hopeful, not merely a means to a fee.

The studio is working on several homes, a set of commercial projects and a residential masterplan. The longer mission is bigger than any one of them: to grow DesignLink from a small local studio into a global design brand that sits among the top firms in the world.

Ask what he wants to be remembered for and it is simple – a passionate architect whose work resonates. His advice to anyone starting out is the advice he lived: do not wait for your chance, create it; step out of your comfort zone; and never give up, even when the dream looks out of reach. Nothing, he insists, is impossible.



Fayeze Jazmati (centre) with the DesignLink team.

Photograph · Courtesy DesignLink



THE FOUNDERS

Ameer Hamza

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY AMEER HAMZA

N° 05

A soldier, then a banker. A father in finance. Ameer Hamza inherited the instinct to guard what matters — and turned it into a chartered practice built for the UAE's small businesses.

The family trade was *protection*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY AMEER HAMZA

AMEER HAMZA DID NOT SO MUCH CHOOSE ACCOUNTING AS inherit it. His grandfather served in the Pakistan Army – a life built on discipline and duty – and when that chapter ended, he carried the same rigour into a career in banking. His father worked in finance with the same steady, unwavering commitment. In that house money was never treated casually; it was something to protect, tied to trust and responsibility. By the time Ameer picked accounting, it did not feel like a decision. It felt like continuation.

But he never wanted to spend his career behind someone else's desk, following someone else's structure. He wanted to build something of his own. Accounting became the tool to offer the same protection his

grandfather gave a country and his father gave his clients, only in a modern business context. Looking at the UAE market, he saw SMEs growing fast but struggling to keep up with evolving tax and compliance requirements – needing more than someone to file returns once a year. That gap felt personal.

So he built AH Chartered Accountants from nothing, in a country where he had no network and no shortcuts. He measures the work not by the firm's name but by the trust behind it. Every time a client avoided a penalty because of proper guidance, or a confused founder finally understood their own numbers, it reinforced why he had done it.

“ *My grandfather protected a country, my father protected clients' finances — I want to protect businesses from poor decisions and preventable penalties.* ”

The road there was a calculated risk with no guarantees. He pursued ACCA, moved to the UAE, and lived through tight months, lonely days, and stretches where progress felt slower than he wanted. He did not share the full weight of it with his father – not to hide anything, but to protect him from worrying. On the hard days he thought of his grandfather in uniform and his father at his desk, and that kept him showing up.

Now he is building on two fronts, connected by a single idea: giving business owners clarity and protection. At AH Chartered Accountants he is deepening advisory services around corporate tax and VAT, so clients navigate compliance with confidence. Alongside it he is building PocketLedger – UAE-focused accounting software for SMEs, designed around a WhatsApp AI assistant, so owners can manage their finances without advanced technical knowledge.

The hardest lesson came early, and it reshaped how he works. He once believed technically perfect work would speak for itself; experience proved otherwise. Consistency, he found, matters more than brilliance. Clients do not just buy expertise – they buy trust and clarity, and the reassurance that someone genuinely has their back.

Ask what he wants to be remembered for and the answer is plain: the person who made finance easier to understand for small business owners in the UAE, who helped them avoid unnecessary mistakes and move forward with confidence. His advice to anyone starting out is the advice he lived – do not wait until you feel ready, because that waiting can become a trap. No qualification fully prepares you; certifications teach technical skills, not resilience. Start before you feel ready, and show up with consistency. That, he insists, is where real opportunity comes from.



Ameer Hamza — the accountant who treats trust as the product.

Photograph · Courtesy Ameer Hamza

FIRM AH Chartered Accountants

QUALIFICATION ACCA-qualified accountant

BUILDING PocketLedger – SME software

FOCUS Corporate tax & VAT advisory

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THE FOUNDERS

Harikrishnan Valloli

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY HARIKRISHNAN VALLOLI

N° 06

Harikrishnan Valloli grew up watching Dubai become a global real-estate capital. A career he says has passed AED 1 billion in transactions later, he is still convinced the property is never the point.

The advisor who sells *trust*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY HARIKRISHNAN VALLOLI

HARIKRISHNAN VALLOLI GREW UP IN DUBAI AND WATCHED IT change. He saw the city transform from what it was into one of the world's leading business and real-estate hubs — a front-row view of growth that most people only read about. It marked him, and it set the terms for everything he would go on to do.

Before the market, there was the crease. From a young age he represented Dubai and, he says, the UAE at cricket, and the game taught him what no office could — discipline, resilience, teamwork,

and how to perform under pressure. Those lessons, he says, became the foundation of his professional life.

What pulled him into real estate was not the buying and selling. It was the realisation that property is really about helping people build wealth and secure their future — a field that combined his passion for sales, communication, market analysis and leadership. He genuinely enjoys educating investors and helping them make informed decisions rather than simply selling them a property.

“ A property can be sold once, but trust creates lifelong relationships, repeat business, and referrals.”

The start was the hard part. Like many newcomers he faced rejection, long working hours and intense competition. Instead of treating them as obstacles, he treated them as learning opportunities — studying the market, understanding developer products, sharpening his communication and consistently delivering value. Success, he learned quickly, does not come from knowing projects. It comes from earning people's trust.

That trust is now measurable. By his own count he has facilitated over AED 1 billion in real-estate transactions while leading and mentoring high-performing sales teams, and collected multiple awards from leading developers for his sales performance. But the awards are not what he is proud of. Knowing that he has helped investors make life-changing financial decisions and build long-term wealth — that is the achievement that matters most.

Today he is focused on helping investors identify high-growth opportunities across Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, while mentoring

his team and building a personal brand on social media — educating people about real estate, market trends and wealth creation. It all points at one long-term goal: to become one of the most trusted real-estate advisors in the UAE. He never recommends a project simply because it is available; he suggests only what he genuinely believes will create long-term value.

Ask what he wants to be remembered for and it is not the sales. He wants to raise the standard of professionalism in the industry — proving that success comes from knowledge, transparency and putting clients first — and to be known as someone who helped people build wealth, educated thousands of investors, mentored future professionals and earned trust through integrity. His advice to his younger self doubles as his advice to anyone starting out: be patient, learn before you earn, and never compromise your integrity for a short-term gain. Reputation is the most valuable asset you will ever build.



Off the deal-desk — Harikrishnan, in his own frame.

Photograph · Courtesy Harikrishnan Valloli

FIELD Real estate advisory **MILESTONE** AED 1 billion+ in transactions, by his own count **MARKETS** Dubai, Abu Dhabi & Sharjah
EARLY TRAINING Cricket for Dubai and, he says, the UAE

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THE ENTREPRENEURS' ISSUE · EDITION 01

SECTION 03 · THE ENTREPRENEURS' ISSUE

03 The Makers

A maker's real work is learning to trust their own eye.

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The Makers

The photographers, designers and studio-builders turning craft into a living.

THE FEATURES



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The pilot who builds studios



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Aigul
An eye trained in Italy



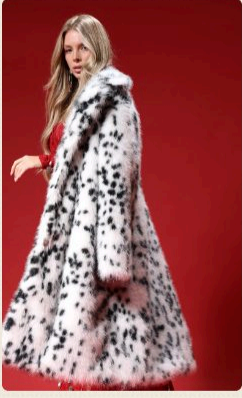
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Shoayb Khattab
The Kaaba, through one lens



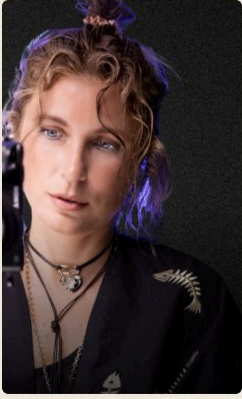
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Roudha Aljuraishi
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The QR Collection
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Nº 12

Mariya
A food blog that became a lens



THE MAKERS

Sean Barcoe

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS PETER LOUIS / BARCOE STUDIOS · GTN SPOTLIGHT

Nº 07

Sean Barcoe spent two decades in the military, a US Army pilot, most of it in heavy-lift Chinooks. The discipline came with him into the studio — the conviction that people, not equipment, make the work — that came later.

The pilot who builds *studios*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS PETER LOUIS / BARCOE STUDIOS · GTN SPOTLIGHT

ON THE EDGE OF ABU DHABI, A FARM HAS QUIETLY BECOME A place where musicians, filmmakers and producers come to make things. It is not where you would expect to find a former US Army pilot. It is exactly where Sean Barcoe wanted to build.

Barcoe runs BarCoe, a creative production company he grew from an idea into a working studio. But the path there did not run through a

music school or a film set. It ran through more than twenty years in the military, most of them in the cockpit.

He joined young, into a world where preparation, discipline and accountability were not slogans but the difference between a mission that worked and one that did not. He became a US Army pilot, most of it in heavy-lift Chinooks, and took from it the lesson he now runs his companies on: that leading is mostly about giving people the tools and the confidence to succeed, then staying calm while they do.

“ *Don’t wait until everything is perfect before starting. You’ll never have all the money, all the equipment or all the knowledge. Start with what you have.* ”

Moving into the creative industry meant starting over completely — not just the cameras and the consoles, but the business behind them. The hardest part was credibility. He had not come up the traditional way, and had to build something substantial without the usual résumé. In the end that became the advantage: he approached problems differently, and was never too proud to learn.

Today his biggest focus is a new creative studio at the farm — a dedicated space for music, film, content, live performance and artist development. The vision is bigger than another recording room. He wants a creative ecosystem: professional facilities, experienced

people and real opportunities, open to established and emerging talent alike, producing work that can reach the world while being made here.

Ask what he wants to be remembered for and he does not mention equipment or awards. He talks about access. There is enormous talent in the region, he says, but talent alone is rarely enough — people need someone willing to believe in them before everyone else does. If BarCoe becomes the place that does that, the whole second career will have been worth it.



Barcoe on stage — live performance and artist development sit at the centre of the BarCoe vision.

Photograph · Peter Louis / BarCoe Studios



THE MAKERS

Aigul

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS AIGUL KAILYUKOVA

N° 08

Aigul grew up between Kazakhstan and seven years in Italy, quietly absorbing a sense of beauty she did not know she was learning. In Abu Dhabi, it became a lens.

An eye trained in *Italy*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS AIGUL KAILYUKOVA

THERE IS A STILLNESS TO AIGUL'S PHOTOGRAPHS THAT IS difficult to fake and harder to teach. At first it reads as restraint. It is really the residue of a whole life spent looking — at rooms, at light, at the way beautiful things are made.

She is a fine-art and portrait photographer in Abu Dhabi who launched her business in 2025. But the eye behind it was formed

long before that, and a long way from here.

Born in Kazakhstan, she spent seven of her most formative years in Italy, and the country did its quiet work on her. Museums, architecture, fashion, the whole grammar of timeless design — she absorbed a feeling for composition and detail without ever setting out to study it.

“ *I don't try to recreate someone else's work. My strength is seeing a moment in a way that feels authentic to me.* ”

The camera came later, and from family: her sister, also a photographer, put one in her hands. Suddenly everything she had taken in — the light, the proportion, the restraint — had somewhere to go. In the beginning she compared herself to others and wondered if she was good enough. The confidence, she says, came from doing the work, not from waiting to feel ready for it.

What she will not do is imitate. Every photographer has their own way of seeing, and she treats hers as the whole point. Photography, for her, is about people before it is ever about cameras; genuine relationships create trust, and trust is what makes an honest picture

possible. Some of her clients have already come back — which she considers one of the highest compliments in the work.

Now she is building a personal brand in a city she calls one of the most photogenic in the world. The longer ambition is specific: to become a photographer people recognise by style alone — elegant, unhurried images that someone will keep for years.

One of her photographs has already travelled further than she has — published in a magazine in Chile, a small proof that a genuine image can outrun a name. That, in the end, is the test she has set herself. If the work is recognisable without the credit, she will have arrived.



From a recent sitting — the restraint, the light, and an eye for the timeless over the trending.

Photograph · Aigul Kailyukova



THE MAKERS

Shoayb Khattab

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY SHOAYB KHATTAB

N° 09

He left a career in architecture to photograph it. More than fifty international awards later, he took on a commission he describes as the one subject almost no lens is allowed near — the Kaaba.

He reads the building *first*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY SHOAYB KHATTAB

FOR A FEW MINUTES, THE BUSIEST PLACE ON EARTH WAS STILL. The crowds had been cleared, the light was turning blue, and Shoayb Khattab had the frame he says he spent an entire career learning how to take — the Kaaba, almost empty, in a way he says almost no one is allowed to see it.

Khattab is an architectural photographer and director, the eye behind more than fifty international awards and the studio he runs, MassHouse. But to call him a photographer undersells the trick of it.

He was an architect first, and he still reads a building before he ever lifts the camera.

The instinct showed early. As a boy he taught himself a simple design program, and when an aunt was building a house he quietly redrew her architect's plans. The architect, handed the revisions, dismissed them — they looked, he said, like a student had drawn them. He did not know they were the work of a child. The house was built exactly as Khattab had redesigned it.

“*Stop photographing everything. The moment I picked a lane and went all in, my voice came through for the first time.*”

He came to it honestly. He studied architecture and graduated with excellence honours, then picked up a camera in his first year of school, almost as a hobby. For a long time it stayed unfocused. “I was photographing everything,” he says, “and none of it was distinctly mine.” The breakthrough was a decision to narrow — to photograph the one thing he understood more deeply than most.

His first real recognition came for the House of Wisdom in Sharjah, a local landmark that earned global design attention — and mattered to him precisely because it proved the work did not need to be somewhere else to count. From there the commissions grew, up to what he describes as the one most photographers never get near: work he says took him to the Kaaba and Al-Rawdah Al-Sharifa, in a rare, carefully planned window.

Today MassHouse produces architectural and branded visual work at scale, for architecture firms, developers and hospitality brands across the region. Around it, Khattab is building a wider portfolio: Alifba, a screenwriting app built natively for Arabic; BinaForm, an architecture education platform rooted in the Arab world; and Khattab Architects, a boutique studio for high-end residential design.

The through-line is not the camera. It is a conviction that the region's architecture deserves to be seen — and valued — on the world stage, and that the telling of it should start here rather than somewhere else. He wants people, not just clients, to stop and actually look at the buildings around them. The ambition is not local. But it begins, deliberately, at home.



Through the lens — Shoayb Khattab's architectural work.

Photograph · Courtesy Shoayb Khattab

DISCIPLINE Architectural photography & direction

STUDIO MassHouse

RECOGNITION 50+ international awards

ALSO Alifba · BinaForm · Khattab Architects

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THE ENTREPRENEURS' ISSUE · EDITION 01



THE MAKERS

Roudha Aljuraishi

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ROUDHA ALJURAISHI · GTN SPOTLIGHT

N° 10

Roudha Obaid Aljuraishi is an Emirati designer who refuses to stay on the screen. Her work moves between graphic design, paint and mixed media – and it is unmistakably her own.

Beyond the *digital canvas*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ROUDHA ALJURAISHI · GTN SPOTLIGHT

THE NIGHT ROUDHA OBAID ALJURAISHI STOOD BESIDE HER OWN work on a gallery wall, something quietly settled. People could finally see not just what she had made, but who she is — which, for an artist who had spent years mostly on a screen, was the whole point.

She is an Emirati graphic designer and mixed-media artist whose work refuses to sit still in a single medium. Design, painting and

more — she treats them as one language rather than separate careers, always exploring and blending ideas until the work is distinctly hers.

It began at home. She grew up surrounded by art and culture, and discovered early how visual expression could carry a story. That pulled her towards design as a deliberate choice, not a fallback — a field that let her combine creativity, storytelling and cultural identity in one place.

“ *I trust my creative voice, experiment fearlessly, and let different mediums make work that feels genuinely unique.* ”

Her method took shape through university projects and freelance work, where she pushed herself to fold graphic design, painting and pure experimentation into the same pieces. The lesson she kept was to trust her own creative voice and to experiment without limits, embracing whatever medium the idea needed until the work felt genuinely like hers.

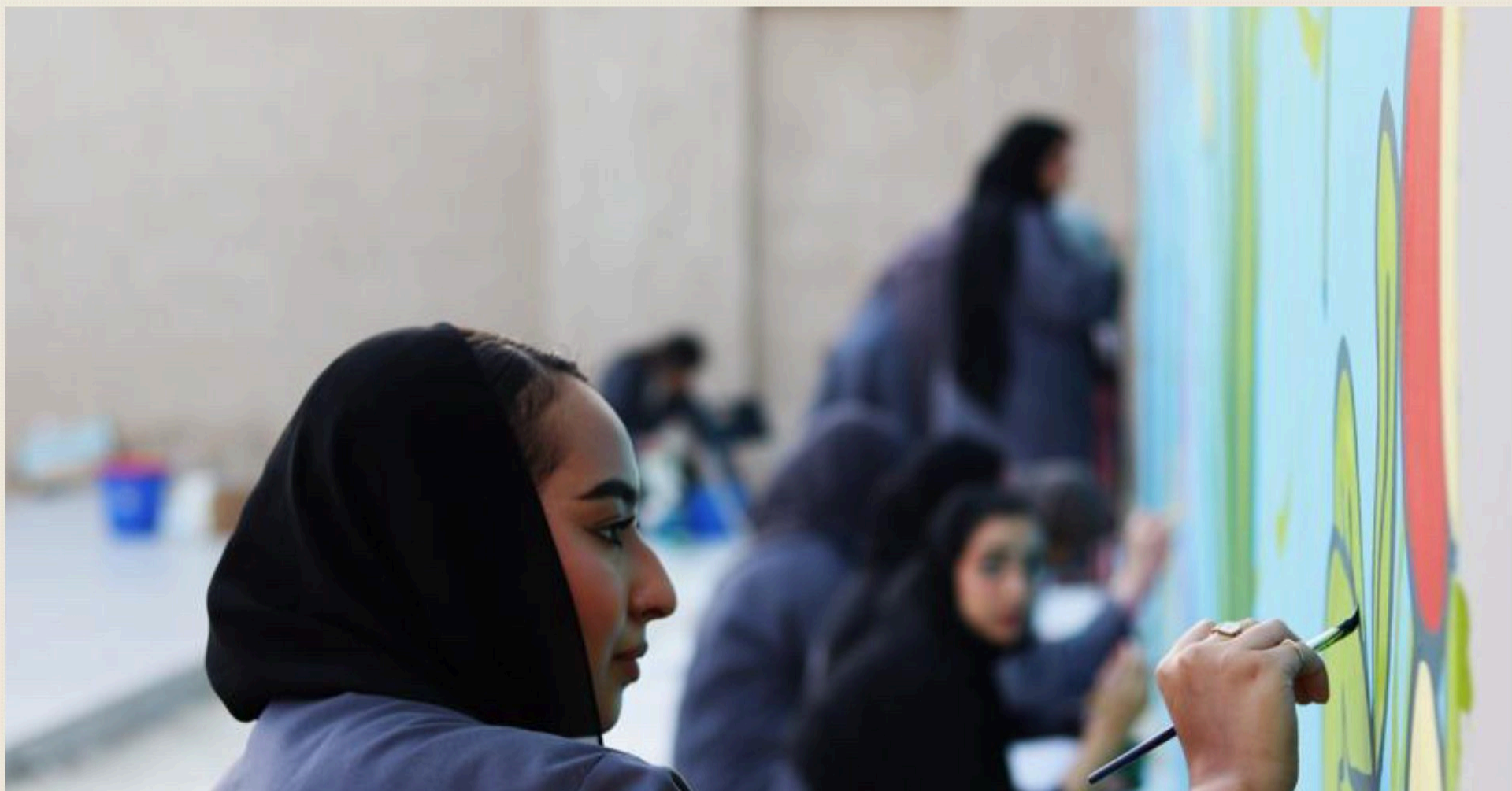
Exhibiting that work became a milestone precisely because it revealed her identity beyond digital design. On the wall, the mixed media and painting said what a screen never quite could: this is who she is, and this is what her art means.

Now she is developing projects that braid graphic design, mixed media and painting into a single, recognisable visual identity — often

reaching past digital work into something you can stand in front of, rooted in the culture she comes from.

If she could tell her younger self one thing, it would be to keep trusting every idea, never hesitate, and never stop creating. Our hands, she believes, can make more than we expect them to. Hers already have — and she is only getting started.

Design is not her only venture. Alongside her graphic-design career, Roudha creates handmade beaded accessories and runs a traditional henna brand with a modern twist — businesses that feed her creativity and push her to keep making. As an Emirati woman who wants to inspire others, she carries a simple conviction: nothing is ever too hard to make.



From Roudha's practice — design, paint and photography in one frame.

Photograph · Courtesy Roudha Aljuraishi

DISCIPLINE Graphic design · painting · mixed media

NATIONALITY Emirati

STARTED University projects & freelance

SHOWN Exhibited mixed-media work

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THE MAKERS

The QR Collection

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY THE QR COLLECTION

Nº 11

The designer behind The QR Collection has been cutting cloth since childhood. A best-dress award at the Bali Meet Gala 2025 proved what she already knew.

A red carpet, and a dress she never *planned.*

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY THE QR COLLECTION

THE DESIGNER BEHIND THE QR COLLECTION CANNOT REMEMBER a time when she was not making clothes. She was naturally talented from childhood, she says, and she stayed in this field because it is the one thing she can do most professionally. Design was never a choice she weighed against others; it was simply what she was for.

The turning point was not an award or a sale. It was a sentence. Her role model, the designer Madam Joumana Al-Hayek, praised her

talent — and that recognition, from someone she looked up to, is the early moment she still returns to.

The journey began quietly, with dresses made for close friends and family. The difficulties came just as quickly. The first was convincing people she was genuinely talented at a very young age. Then came limited financial resources, and, hardest of all, the societal rejection of working in this field at the time.

“ *I hadn’t planned on winning the prize — and that is what made it matter.* ”

The proof arrived on a red carpet. At the Bali Meet Gala 2025 in Indonesia, her work won the award for best dress design. She counts it among her proudest moments — not least because she had not planned on winning the prize at all. It found her, rather than the other way around.

The lesson she values most is one she resisted at first: taking the advice and opinions of those with more experience than her. With the passage of time she became certain that everything they told her was true, and that this is what carried her to where she now stands.

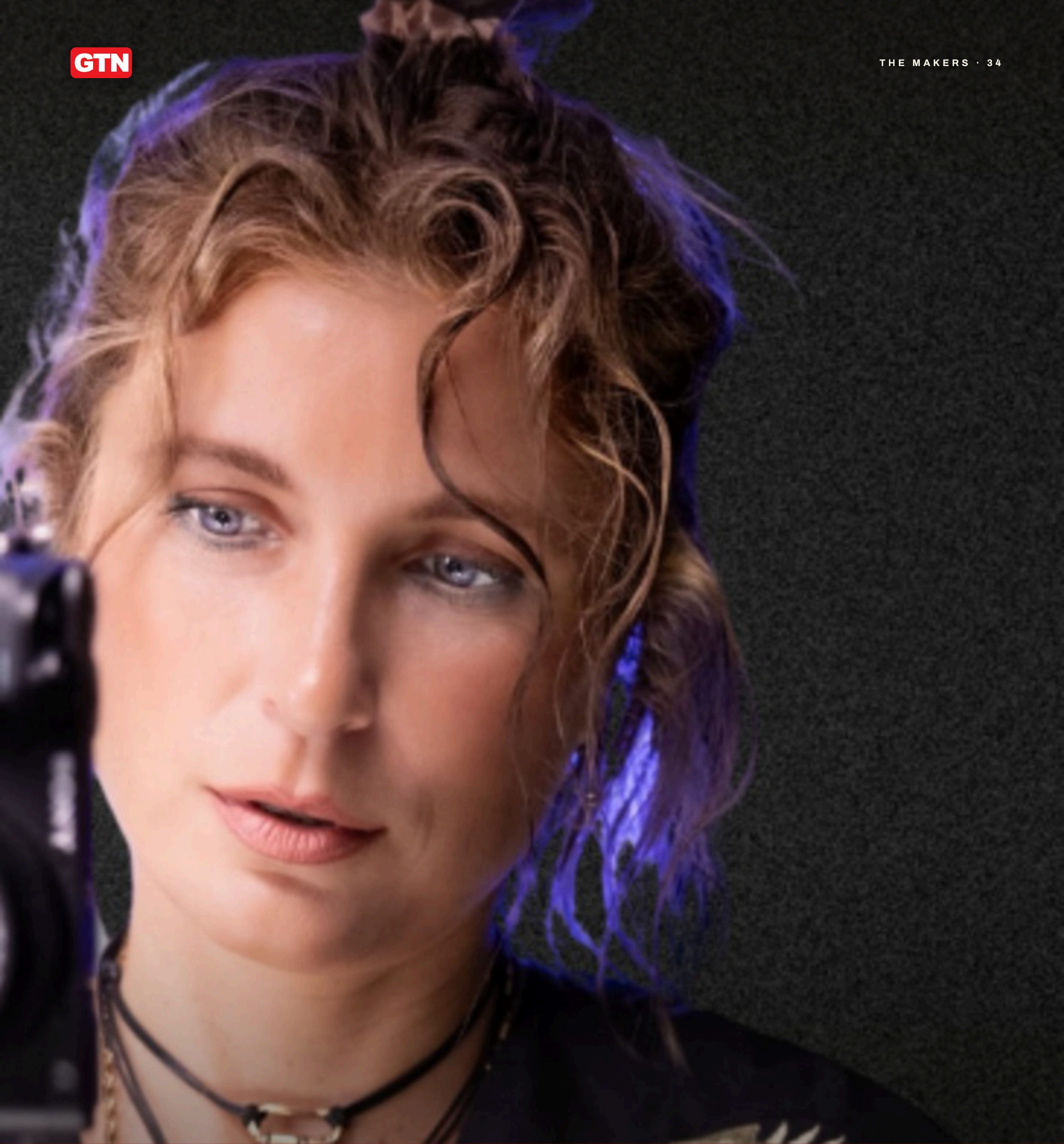
She is not slowing to enjoy the view. She is working to build a solid, successful and integrated entity — one that reaches everyone and rivals the success of the global fashion houses. Continuing to follow the plan she has set, she believes, is what will get her there.

Ask what she wants to leave behind and it is a clear artistic mark, and a hope that people will remember her for a special and distinctive style. Her message to her younger self is the one that keeps her moving: do not give up, no matter the pressure — because giving in has already cost her too much time away from her ambitions.



Couture by The QR Collection.

Photograph · Courtesy The QR Collection



THE MAKERS

Mariya

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS MARIYA / REEL DYNAMICS

N° 12

Mariya picked up a camera to photograph her lockdown cooking. It turned into Reel Dynamics — a studio built on the belief that the images that last are the ones that make you feel something.

A food blog that became a *lens*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS MARIYA / REEL DYNAMICS

MARIYA HAD LOVED PHOTOGRAPHY FOR MANY YEARS BEFORE IT became her work. The real turning point came during the COVID lockdown, while her family were living in England. Looking for a creative outlet, she started a food blog on Instagram, photographing the healthy meals she cooked. Creating those images became far more than sharing recipes – she found herself fascinated by composition, lighting and storytelling.

The seed had been planted years earlier. When the family lived in Malaysia, her husband gave her a first professional camera. At the

time it was simply a hobby. But the gift stayed with her, and the lockdown gave it somewhere to grow.

What started as a hobby gradually became a passion, and eventually a profession. Photography and videography, she found, let her combine creativity with human connection. She did not just enjoy taking beautiful photos – she loved telling stories and preserving genuine emotions. Whether it is a wedding, a personal-brand shoot or an event, every project is unique, because every person has a different story to tell.

“ *The most meaningful photographs and films are the ones that make us feel something.* ”

One of her proudest early achievements came while she was still a food blogger: reaching the finals of a cooking competition judged by the renowned chef Marco Pierre White, who told her personally that if there had been a second-place award, it would have gone to her. Today her greatest achievement is different – it is seeing that creative journey evolve into a career in photography and videography. What matters most, she says, is not a single award but the fact that she never stops learning.

Her professional journey began in an unexpected way, and it was not easy. Starting from scratch in a highly competitive industry meant building a portfolio, gaining clients’ trust and learning the technical side, all of which required patience. She quickly realised that success does not come from owning the best camera – it comes from continuously learning, creating and improving with every project.

So she keeps stretching herself. Videography has always been one of her stronger areas, but she wanted to deepen her understanding of photography, especially studio lighting. She completed individual training in studio photography and lighting, and is now taking another creative course with challenging assignments – from flash photography to approaching unfamiliar people and creating spontaneous portraits – all in service of becoming a more versatile visual storyteller.

Growth, she believes, comes from consistency rather than perfection. In the beginning she often compared herself to more experienced creators; over time she learned to approach every assignment with curiosity and the mindset of a lifelong learner. She would tell her younger self not to wait for the perfect moment, and never to underestimate the value of curiosity. She hopes to be remembered as someone who captured authentic stories with honesty, creativity and care.



Visual storytelling, frame by frame — the craft behind the lens.

Photograph · Wikimedia Commons

SECTION 04 · THE ENTREPRENEURS' ISSUE

04

Beauty, Life & Journeys

The best businesses here are built for someone, not just for profit.

IN THIS SECTION

Beauty, Life & Journeys

Beauty entrepreneurs, cultural voices, and one nearly 3,000-kilometre walk.

THE FEATURES



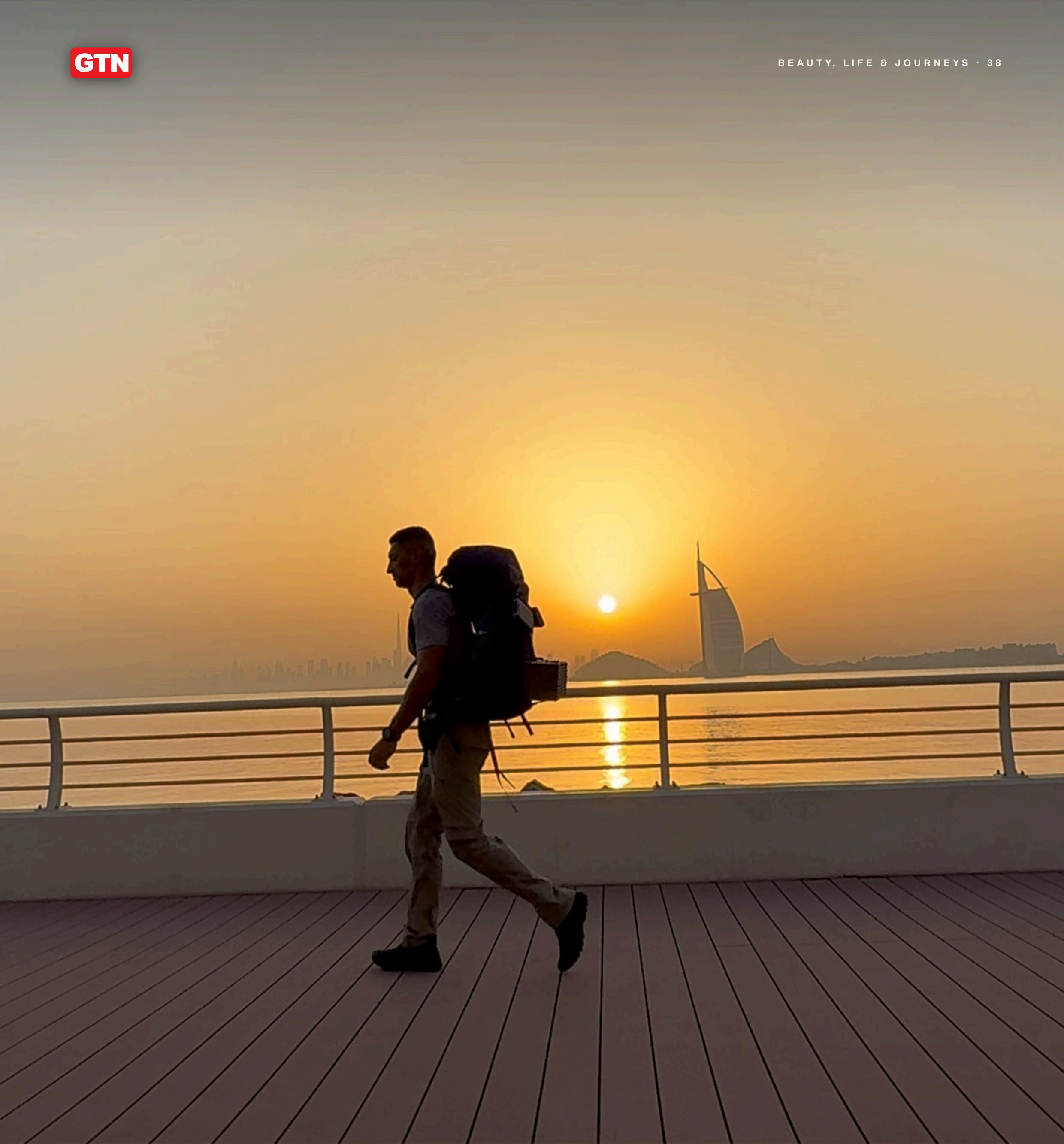
Nº 13 **Edmond Margaryan**
Nearly 3,000 km, on foot



Nº 14 **Atiba Nasar**
Beauty, built into a business



Nº 15 **Budoor Khalid**
An Emirati voice, on her own terms



BEAUTY, LIFE & JOURNEYS

Edmond Margaryan

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS EDMOND MARGARYAN

N° 13

Edmond Margaryan left Armenia with a backpack and a mission, and walked to Dubai. The road rebuilt him – and became the way he now does everything else.

Nearly three thousand kilometres, *on foot.*

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS EDMOND MARGARYAN

ON THE LAST STRETCH INTO DUBAI, AT SUNRISE, A MAN walked past the Burj Al Arab with everything he owned on his back. Edmond Margaryan had come nearly three thousand kilometres to reach that moment – on foot, from Armenia, with no support team behind him.

He calls the walk RAKOSAT, and he set out on it with little more than a backpack and a mission to spread kindness. It changed the way he sees almost everything. Meaningful growth, he decided

somewhere along that road, happens when you step into uncertainty rather than away from it.

His career had already taught him that the hard way. More than two decades in fitness, then a move into digital marketing, then into real estate – each transition meant starting over from nothing, building credibility in an unfamiliar field, living with financial uncertainty. The walk did not teach him persistence so much as prove he had it.

“ *Extraordinary achievements are just countless ordinary steps, taken without giving up.* ”

The journey itself became the lesson. Every border crossed, every challenge met, every stranger who turned into a friend reinforced the same idea: that human connection is one of our real strengths. He documented it as he went, performed small acts of kindness, and left a trail of connected communities behind him.

Today he is helping clients invest in Abu Dhabi's fast-growing property market while continuing to build the RAKOSAT movement. The longer plan is to braid the two together – entrepreneurship, honest storytelling and purposeful travel – into something that pushes people towards ambitious goals and simple kindness at the same time.

The principle underneath it is almost boring in its plainness. Consistency beats intensity. Success rarely arrives in one dramatic moment; it is the sum of ordinary days, shown up for even when no one is watching. He brings the same patience to a client relationship that he brought to the road.

He would like to be remembered as proof that business and kindness are not opposites. Whether through RAKOSAT or a property deal, he wants people to see someone who built trust, inspired a little courage, and chose the harder, more meaningful path. If his story moves even a handful of people to believe in themselves and treat others well, he will call it a success.



A rest on the road — somewhere on the nearly 3,000 kilometres from Armenia.

Photograph · Edmond Margaryan

THE WALK RAKOSAT – Armenia to Dubai, nearly 3,000 km, solo

NOW Real estate, Abu Dhabi

BEFORE 20+ yrs fitness → digital marketing

BELIEF Consistency beats intensity

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BEAUTY, LIFE & JOURNEYS

Atiba Nasar

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ATIBA NASAR / GLIMMERNGLOW

Nº 14

A disappointing makeup at her own event convinced Atiba Nasar that women deserved better. She resigned from a corporate career and bet, instead, on herself.

She left the desk for *the chair*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ATIBA NASAR / GLIMMERNGLOW

THERE IS A PARTICULAR MOMENT ATIBA NASAR WORKS TOWARDS — the second before a bride looks up into the mirror and sees herself. Get everything right, and the face that looks back is not a different woman, only the most assured version of the one who sat down.

Nasar runs Glimmernglow, a bridal and beauty makeup business. She arrived at it the hard way: by walking away from a stable corporate

career to chase something she could not stop thinking about.

Makeup had always been a passion, even while she worked full-time. The push to make it a profession came from an unlikely place — a disappointing makeup at her own event. It made her realise, sharply, how much it matters to have someone who truly understands what a woman wants on an important day. She decided to become that someone.

“ *Taking a risk and believing in yourself can really change your life.* ”

So she resigned. It was a risk, and she knew it, but the work felt right. She started small, taking clients whenever she could and learning with every face she touched. The hardest part was not technique; it was building a name and earning trust from nothing. That took consistency, patience, and a stubborn belief in herself.

Her philosophy is simple and unglamorous: success is not only the work, it is how you treat people. She has built her name on being kind, approachable and easy to be around, giving each client a personalised experience so they leave feeling genuinely valued — not processed.

Today she is growing Glimmernglow into a proper beauty brand, working with brides while passing on what she knows through training. The longer plan is to build a trusted beauty name and, with it, to teach and encourage other women to follow their own passion.

She would like to be remembered for more than a flawless face — for how she made people feel. Things do not happen overnight, she says; you stay patient, stay consistent, and you do not compare your journey to anyone else's. Taking the risk and believing in herself changed her life. She would like it to change a few others', too.



Atiba Nasar — beauty as a business, built on her own terms.

Photograph · Courtesy Atiba Nasar / Glimmernglow



BEAUTY, LIFE & JOURNEYS

Budoor Khalid

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY BUDOOR KHALID · GTN SPOTLIGHT

N° 15

Budoor Khalid studied culture and communication, led guests at Qasr Al Watan, and built her own voice online. She refused to place herself in a single box.

The path she *never planned*.

WORDS BY GULF TIMES NOW · PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY BUDOOR KHALID · GTN SPOTLIGHT

ONE DECISION SHAPED EVERYTHING THAT FOLLOWED. BUDOOR Khalid chose to study Tourism and Cultural Communication at Zayed University, drawn to culture, events, and the pull of meeting people from different backgrounds. Those years taught her the things she still leans on — the importance of storytelling, of understanding your audience, and of creating experiences that actually mean something.

She has always gravitated to work that lets her connect with people and express herself. Her professional experience gave her the chance to plan and organise events, host guests and delegations, work across cultures, and represent Emirati hospitality. Content creation, when it

came, felt less like a leap than an extension of all of it. Instagram became her own space to communicate, tell stories, share experiences, and build a genuine relationship with her followers.

Ask about her proudest achievement and she resists naming just one. What she is proud of is the journey she has built. Becoming a leader at Qasr Al Watan was an important milestone — being involved in significant events and cultural occasions, hosting guests and delegations from around the world, representing Emirati culture and hospitality. Alongside it she grew her own platform as an Emirati content creator, developing her voice and collaborating with brands. She is proud she never limited herself to one path.

“ *We don’t have to place ourselves in one box.* ”

That journey did not follow a straight line, and she now counts that as one of its strengths. She gained experience across different roles and environments. Her biggest challenge, she says, was learning not to measure success by a single job title or one expected path. Over time she understood that every experience adds something — that the detours were doing quiet work of their own.

Today she is focused on growing both professionally and creatively. Through Instagram she shares lifestyle, beauty, food, culture, and experiences, working with brands that fit naturally with her content and audience. Her background in Tourism and Cultural Communication shapes the way she approaches it all. Looking ahead, she would love to explore more opportunities that bring together content creation, events, hosting, culture, and communication.

The most valuable lesson has been a simple one: growth does not always happen according to the plan you first imagined. She learned to carry her skills from one experience into the next — communication that helped her in hosting, events, leadership, and guest experience now helps her speak to an audience online. The tools stayed the same; only the room changed.

She wants to be remembered as an ambitious Emirati woman who created her own path while staying connected to her identity, culture, and values — representing Emirati women in a way that is positive, modern, and authentic. Her advice, the same she would give her younger self, is not to be afraid when life takes you somewhere different from what you planned. Trust your abilities, keep learning, take the opportunities that challenge you, and never compare your journey with anyone else’s. Sometimes the unexpected parts are the ones that show you who you really are.



Representing Emirati hospitality — and building her own voice alongside it.

Photograph · Courtesy Budoor Khalid

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

A record of the people building the Gulf.

GULF TIMES NOW IS A GULF BUSINESS-AND-CULTURE TITLE published from Abu Dhabi. Where a feed forgets by morning, we keep a record – of the founders, makers and originals who are quietly building the region, and of the ideas moving it forward.

We work in two rhythms. **Online, at gulftimesnow.com**, we publish every day: business, markets, real estate, technology, energy, and the practical guides people actually search for – residency, licensing, living and working across the GCC. In print and in this reader, **the**

magazine slows down to tell the longer story: the profile, the journey, the idea worth remembering.

Abu Dhabi is our home beat – the emirate we cover first and closest – but our lens is Gulf-wide, from Kuwait and Oman to Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi. Everything we publish is reported and verified; every quote belongs to the person who said it.

This edition, **The Entrepreneurs' Issue**, is the first of a series. Each one puts a room full of builders on the record – and asks the same question: how did you actually do it?

| The feed forgets by morning. *We keep the record.*

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BETWEEN ISSUES

THE NEXT EDITION

Built something? *We want the story.*

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01

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Pitch a founder, maker or original for a coming issue – personal story or business story.

02

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SECTION 05 · THE POWER LIST

05

The Abu Dhabi 10

Beyond our contributors — ten names the emirate itself is built around.

An independent editorial selection by Gulf Times Now. The individuals featured are public figures profiled here as commentary; they are not affiliated with, and do not endorse, this publication. Portraits are reproduced from Wikimedia Commons under their stated licences and credited on each entry.

The Abu Dhabi 10

Ten people the emirate is built around – founders, leaders and originals whose work reaches far beyond it. Profiled in brief, in the order we'd introduce them.

Nº 01	Nayla Al Khaja	Filmmaker & studio founder	Nº 06	Razan Al Mubarak	Conservation leader, IUCN president
Nº 02	Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber	ADNOC CEO & Masdar founder	Nº 07	Noura Al Kaabi	Cultural leader & minister
Nº 03	Khaldoon Al Mubarak	Mubadala group CEO	Nº 08	Hazza Al Mansouri	Astronaut & fighter pilot
Nº 04	Zaki Nusseibeh	Presidential cultural advisor	Nº 09	Amal Al Qubaisi	Architect & former FNC speaker
Nº 05	Hussain Al Nowais	Industrialist & investor	Nº 10	Ali Mabkhout	Footballer, national-team striker

Influence here is quiet, patient and built to last —
these are the ten who set the emirate's pace.

THE TEN, IN ORDER



The Abu Dhabi 10

N°
01



Nayla Al Khaja

FILMMAKER & STUDIO FOUNDER
The UAE's first female film director

Nayla Al Khaja is the UAE's first female film director and CEO of Nayla Al Khaja Films, which she founded in 2005. She also started The Scene Club, the country's first independent film club. Her debut feature "Three," a psychological thriller, premiered across the MENA region in February 2024. Variety has named her among the most powerful personalities in Arab cinema.

PHOTOGRAPH WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC0

N°
02



Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber

ADNOC CEO & MASDAR FOUNDER
Led the UAE's COP28 climate summit

Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber is managing director and group CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and the UAE's Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology. In 2006 he founded Masdar, Abu Dhabi's clean-energy company, and still chairs it. He served as president of COP28, the UN climate summit the UAE hosted across 2023, drawing global attention as a serving oil chief.

PHOTOGRAPH ARCTIC CIRCLE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC BY 2.0

N°
03



Khaldoon Al Mubarak

MUBADALA GROUP CEO
Runs Abu Dhabi's sovereign investor and Manchester City

Khaldoon Khalifa Al Mubarak is managing director and group CEO of Mubadala, Abu Dhabi's sovereign investment company, which he has led from its early days. He is founding chairman of City Football Group and chairman of Manchester City, and also chairs Abu Dhabi's Executive Affairs Authority. He has sat on the Abu Dhabi Executive Council since 2004.

PHOTOGRAPH WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC BY 3.0

The Abu Dhabi 10

N°
04



Zaki Nusseibeh

PRESIDENTIAL CULTURAL ADVISOR

Sheikh Zayed's interpreter turned culture statesman

Zaki Nusseibeh is cultural advisor to the President of the UAE and chancellor of United Arab Emirates University. From the late 1960s he was the personal interpreter and adviser to the nation's founder, Sheikh Zayed, and later to his successor. He served as a UAE Minister of State from 2017 to 2021, building up the country's cultural diplomacy.

PHOTOGRAPH WIKIEMIRATI / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC BY-SA 4.0

N°
05



Hussain Al Nowais

INDUSTRIALIST & INVESTOR

Abu Dhabi industrialist behind AMEA Power

Hussain Al Nowais is an Abu Dhabi-born industrialist with more than 35 years building businesses across energy, heavy industry, banking and infrastructure. He is chairman of AlNowais Investments and of AMEA Power, a developer of renewable-energy projects across Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and vice chairman of Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank. He co-founded the community initiative Sandooq Al Watan.

PHOTOGRAPH TAYLOR TA / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC BY-SA 4.0

N°
06



Razan Al Mubarak

CONSERVATION LEADER, IUCN PRESIDENT

First West Asian to lead the global conservation union

Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak is president of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the first person from West Asia and only the second woman to hold the role. She is managing director of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and of Emirates Nature-WWF, which she helped establish in 2001. In 2010 she became the youngest person to lead an Abu Dhabi government entity.

PHOTOGRAPH KDUTHLER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC BY-SA 4.0

The Abu Dhabi 10

N°

07



Noura Al Kaabi

CULTURAL LEADER & MINISTER
Built Abu Dhabi's twofour54 media hub

Noura Al Kaabi is an Emirati minister and media executive from Abu Dhabi, currently a Minister of State. From 2012 she chaired twofour54, Abu Dhabi's media free zone, nurturing the emirate's creative industries, and led Abu Dhabi Media. She served as the UAE's Minister of Culture from 2017 to 2023 and has been named among the region's most powerful women.

PHOTOGRAPH UAE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC BY-SA 4.0

N°

08



Hazza Al Mansouri

ASTRONAUT & FIGHTER PILOT
First Emirati in space

Hazza Al Mansouri, born in Al Wathba near Abu Dhabi, is a military pilot and the first Emirati to travel to space. In September 2019 he launched aboard Soyuz MS-15 to the International Space Station, becoming the first Arab astronaut to visit the ISS. During the eight-day mission he carried out a programme of scientific experiments with international space agencies.

PHOTOGRAPH ROBERT MARKOWITZ / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · PUBLIC DOMAIN

The Abu Dhabi 10

N°
09



Amal Al Qubaisi

ARCHITECT & FORMER FNC SPEAKER
Arab world's first woman to head a national assembly

Amal Al Qubaisi is an Emirati architect and politician from Abu Dhabi who became the Arab world's first woman to lead a national assembly, elected speaker of the UAE Federal National Council in 2015. She had earlier been the first woman elected to the council in 2006, and previously chaired the Abu Dhabi Education Council. She trained and taught as an architect.

PHOTOGRAPH GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · PUBLIC DOMAIN

N°
10



Ali Mabkhout

FOOTBALLER, NATIONAL-TEAM STRIKER
The UAE's all-time leading goalscorer

Ali Mabkhout is an Emirati striker and the UAE national team's all-time leading goalscorer. He spent most of his career at Abu Dhabi's Al Jazira, which he joined in 2007 and where he became the club's record scorer while winning multiple UAE Pro League titles. He also holds the record for the most goals scored in the UAE top flight.

PHOTOGRAPH MOHAMMAD MOUSSA / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS · CC BY-SA 4.0

QUICK READS

In Their Own Words

One line from each of them — the sentence worth carrying out of this issue and into your own week.

“

My goal is for Emirati art to reach the world.

KHALID AL MUTAWAA · N° 01 · PAGE 8

“

Real estate builds the framework of a city. People, culture and creativity are what give it meaning.

KALPESH KINARIWALA · N° 02 · PAGE 12

“

There is a lot of information online. People still don't know who to trust. That is the gap I want to close.

HAMID AL ALI · N° 03 · PAGE 14

“

The design stage should be joyful, hopeful and full of positive energy — not just a means to a fee.

FAYEZ JAZMATI · N° 04 · PAGE 16

“

My grandfather protected a country, my father protected clients' finances — I want to protect businesses from poor decisions and preventable penalties.

AMEER HAMZA · N° 05 · PAGE 18

“

A property can be sold once, but trust creates lifelong relationships, repeat business, and referrals.

HARIKRISHNAN VALLOLI · N° 06 · PAGE 20

“

Don't wait until everything is perfect before starting. You'll never have all the money, all the equipment or all the knowledge. Start with what you have.

SEAN BARCOE · N° 07 · PAGE 24

“

I don't try to recreate someone else's work. My strength is seeing a moment in a way that feels authentic to me.

AIGUL · N° 08 · PAGE 26

“

Stop photographing everything. The moment I picked a lane and went all in, my voice came through for the first time.

SHOAYB KHATTAB · N° 09 · PAGE 28

“

I trust my creative voice, experiment fearlessly, and let different mediums make work that feels genuinely unique.

ROUDHA ALJURAISHI · N° 10 · PAGE 30

“

I hadn't planned on winning the prize — and that is what made it matter.

THE QR COLLECTION · N° 11 · PAGE 32

“

The most meaningful photographs and films are the ones that make us feel something.

MARIYA · N° 12 · PAGE 34

“

Extraordinary achievements are just countless ordinary steps, taken without giving up.

EDMOND MARGARYAN · N° 13 · PAGE 38

“

Taking a risk and believing in yourself can really change your life.

ATIBA NASAR · N° 14 · PAGE 40

“

We don't have to place ourselves in one box.

BUDOOR KHALID · N° 15 · PAGE 42

UNTIL THE NEXT EDITION



THE MAGAZINE

*Every quarter, we put on record the people building the Gulf. If that is you — or someone you know — **we would like to meet you.***

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— THE LAST WORD · SEAN BARCOE

“Don’t wait until everything is perfect. Start with *what you have.*”

Sean Barcoe

Founder, BarCoe · From the military cockpit to the creative studio

@Sean_Barcoe

20yrs

US ARMY PILOT, 20+ YRS

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