the lowdown: artistic offerings

SUMMER IS THE PERFECT TIME TO STUDY UP ON THE EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES DUBAI HAS TO OFFER
BEYOND THE GRID

IN A NUTSHELL
Islamic geometry meets op art illusion

THE LOWDOWN
Saudi artist Luwah Al Hamoud has created colourful geometric designs based on the laws of proportion, practised in traditional Arabic calligraphy with principles of numerology. They may be traditional in concept but they are minimalist in form and resemble the illusionary and accessible style of op art.

INSIDER'S TIP
Discover why Islamic geometry has remained relevant across centuries. The enduring symmetry and three-dimensionality means it can be constantly reinvented while sticking to traditional principles.

CONTACT
Taban Art Space, DIFC, Dubai, Sun to Thurs, 9am to 9pm until June 28. Tel: (04) 323 0820. Taxi: DIFC, tabanartspace.com

INNER AND OUTER SPACE

IN A NUTSHELL
A legendary US street artist and his achingly cool murals

THE LOWDOWN
Kerry Scharf moved to New York in 1978 and immediately became friends with prominent artists Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. The trio embraced street art and were mentored by Andy Warhol on the pop-art aesthetic. Scharf’s large-scale fantastical mural-type paintings feature plastic toys, cartoons and imagined creatures, which celebrate and criticise the modern world.

INSIDER’S TIP
Although they seem loud, bright and fun, Scharf is also asking his audience to consider more serious issues such as environmental concerns and the excess of capitalism.

CONTACT
Leila Heller Gallery, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai. Sat to Thurs 10am to 7pm until August 31. Tel: (04) 321 6942. Taxi: Alserkal Avenue, Al Quoz. leilahellergallery.com

OUT OF FOCUS/UNION

IN A NUTSHELL
Conceptual art that discusses themes of migration

THE LOWDOWN
With six artists from the Indian subcontinent, Iran and Iraq, the very current issue of global migration and displacement is the focus of this exhibition. You will find blurred black and white photographs and drawings as well as a painting made of ashes. Are all attempting to ask whether borders are confined and defined or, in reality, are they an uncertain and blurred line?

INSIDER’S TIP
The paper manuscript that divides the gallery is intended to be the unifier of the exhibition. It is written in Arabic, Urdu and Farsi and highlights the region’s shared linguistic heritage.

CONTACT
The Farjam Foundation, DIFC, Dubai. Sun to Thurs 10am to 7pm until June 30. Tel: (04) 323 0303. Taxi: DIFC, farjamcollection.org
I WILL BUILD A TALL CITY INTERCONNECTED BY CUL DE SACS

IN A NUTSHELL
A fantastical world behind a crochet curtain.

THE LOWDOWN
The shapes that form most cities as well as how we connect and interact with each other in urban environments are the key themes of this exhibition by Iranian artist Nargess Hashemi. The gallery is full of handmade crochet curtains and drapes that hang from the ceiling to the floor and invite you to discover what’s behind them.

INSIDER’S TIP
Notice the colour of the threads used in the crochet; the artist intends them to resemble nature. Think green for grass, blue for water and sky and black for shadowy space between buildings.

CONTACT
Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai. Sat to Thurs 10am to 6pm until July 26. Tel: (04) 323 5052. Taxi: Alserkal Avenue. Al Quoz, ride.net.

THE DIVING BELL & THE BUTTERFLY

IN A NUTSHELL
Systematic and logic-based art from 11 artists.

THE LOWDOWN
This exhibition’s poetic title comes from a novel about a French journalist who was paralysed but managed to write a book using only his left eyelid. Whether you’ve read the book or not, the title is simply a literary device to unite artists who find creative freedom in a restrictive system.

INSIDER’S TIP
Keep an eye out for the work of Julia Bibini. Using only paper and a laser cutter plus a good dose of mathematics, her art pieces are mesmerising and beautiful.

CONTACT
Showcase Gallery, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai. Sat to Thurs 10am to 7pm until June 30. Tel: (04) 329 0940. Taxi: Alserkal Avenue, showcaseae.com.

MADE IN TASHKEEL

IN A NUTSHELL
A collection of art produced in Dubai’s only artist studio hub over the past year.

THE LOWDOWN
For those who don’t know, Tashkeel is an artist’s paradise tucked away in a leafy part of Dubai’s Nad Al Sheba district. With a host of studios and equipment as well as regular workshops and exhibitions, it’s a place where artists gather and produce. The annual summer exhibition showcases the best of each year’s work.

INSIDER’S TIP

CONTACT
Tashkeel, Nad Al Sheba, Dubai. Sat to Thurs, 9am to 10pm until August 30. Tel: (04) 336 3313. Taxi: Nad Al Sheba (near police station), tashkeel.org.
ELEMENTS: MOHAMMED AHMED IBRAHIM

IN A NUTSHELL
A solo exhibition by one of the UAE’s most important artists.

THE LOWDOWN
Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim lives in Khorfaikan on the east coast and for the past three decades he’s been producing his unique form of art, consisting of brightly coloured and oddly shaped sculptures as well as paintings made of signs and symbols. He also collects the mountain rocks from his local vicinity and wraps them in wire – as a way of trying to capture the soul of the UAE’s natural habitat.

INSIDER’S TIP
Take your kids along to this one. Although art exhibitions can be a bit daunting for the whole family, this one is full of colours and shapes and is a lot of fun. Don’t miss the entire building covered from ceiling to floor in his black and white marks and symbols.

CONTACT
Gallery 3, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah. Sat to Thurs 9am to 9pm, Fri 4pm to 9pm until June 16. Tel: (06) 568 5050. Taxi: Al Mareijah Square, sharjahart.org

UNTOLD STORIES: RETOLD

IN A NUTSHELL
A replay of the most recent exhibitions from UAE’s Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

THE LOWDOWN
Have you heard of the Venice Biennale but never managed to go? Now is your chance to see what the fuss is all about. The exhibitions from the past two years are on show at Warehouse 421 in Abu Dhabi.

Transformations: The Emirates National House is a celebration of traditional architecture and Rock, Paper, Scissors: Positions in Play is a group exhibition of artists who create playful art works.

INSIDER’S TIP
This dual presentation also offers a rare glimpse behind the scenes into the making of a National Pavilion exhibition. Visitors can learn about the Venice Biennale and the ways in which the UAE’s participation continues to serve as a powerful platform for cultural exchange.

CONTACT
Warehouse 421, Mina Zayed, Abu Dhabi. Tues to Sun 10am to 8pm until June 24. Tel: (02) 6768803. Taxi: Mina Zayed, warehouse421uae

HABIBI FUNK

IN A NUTSHELL
A multimedia display of funk music fusion from across the Arab world.

THE LOWDOWN
Habibi Funk is a record label founded by a Berlin-based DJ called Jannis Stuertz. It is dedicated to re-releasing the music of funk artists from Cairo to Casablanca and across the Arab world. This exhibition comprises photography, video and music, which aims to revitalise Arabic musical history of the 1970s and 1980s with a focus on the obscure and forgotten performers of the region.

INSIDER’S TIP
This is part of an ongoing artistic and musical collaboration.

CONTACT
East Wing, Building 2, Dubai Design District, Dubai. Sat to Thurs 10am to 7pm until September 1. Tel: 050 553 3879. Taxi: d3. east-wing.org