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Home / Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn gets hands-on at UAE exhibition

Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn gets hands-on at UAE exhibition



Lorenzo Quinn, "Now and Forever." (Supplied)

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REBECCA ANNE PROCTOR

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DUBAI: Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn has long been fascinated with the idea of universality. His exhibition at the Leila Heller Gallery in Dubai, "Now and Forever" highlighted his preoccupation with creating accessible pieces addressing themes such as unity over separation, harmony over chaos and love over hate.

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He is best known for his work on hands, as seen at the Leila Heller Gallery, as well as in Dubai's DIFC Sculpture Park.

"I wanted to sculpt what is considered the hardest and most technically challenging part of the human body," he said. "The hand holds so much power — the power to love, to hate, to create, to destroy."

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15

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33

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55





He is best known for his work on hands, as seen at the Leila Heller Gallery, as well as in Dubai's DIFC Sculpture Park. (Supplied)

"I like my works to address themes of universality across all cultures," Quinn told Arab News.

During 2021's Art d'Egypte at the Giza Pyramids, Quinn presented his sculptural work "Together" depicting two large hands in mesh material with their palms united as if in a prayer — it is now on show at Dubai's DIFC as part of the show "Tales Under the Gate."

"Together" was inspired by the pandemic and expressed the longing for contact during times of forced separation.



Lorenzo Quinn, "Now and Forever." (Supplied)

"In a world filled with negativity, struggle and hate I want to fight with love and art is my way of doing so," Quinn said. "Some of the best art is done in tragic moments. I try to look for a positive outcome, a positive view of that sad moment and create art from it."

Such ideas were exhibited in his Leila Heller Gallery exhibition through gigantic sculptural phrases including "Forever," "Patience", and "Spirit."



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Quinn, the son of US-Mexican actor Anthony Quinn, has dabbled in a number of professional worlds and was once an actor himself.



Lorenzo Quinn, "Now and Forever." (Supplied)

As an Italian who grew up surrounded by classical Roman and Renaissance sculptures, particularly those of Michelangelo and Donatello, tradition and heritage has long inspired his contemporary artworks.

His work has also been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, in New York and in Palma in Mallorca, Spain.

Ultimately, Quinn believes art offers an escape and a chance for a change in perspective. "I make art for myself and for people who wish to come along for a ride through my dreams."



Topics:

Beyonce champions designer Georges Hobeika on Renaissance tour



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US superstar Beyonce on Thursday hit the stage in a custom-made catsuit by Lebanese designer Georges Hobeika on her Renaissance World Tour concert in Cologne, Germany.



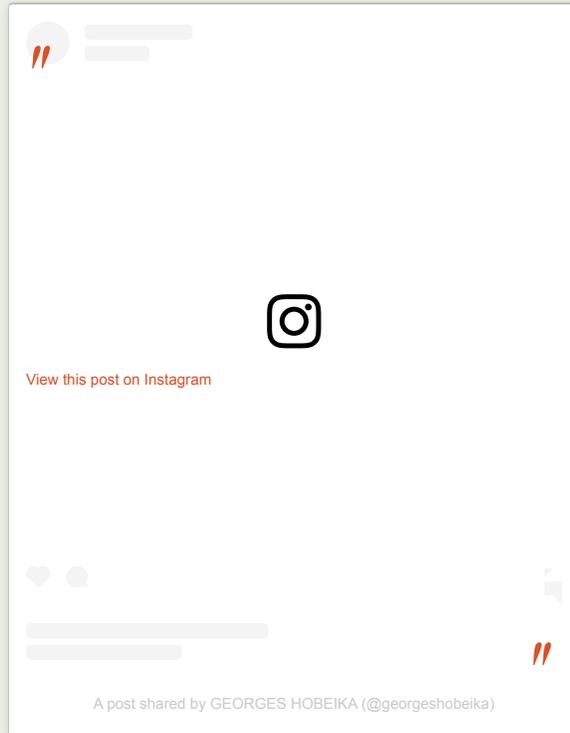
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37



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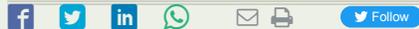
The suit was embellished with nude-illusion panels, pearls and silver sequins. The 41-year-old singer paired the ensemble with black velvet gloves, thick-heeled pumps and custom Tiffany & Co. jewelry.



"@beyonce radiates brilliance as she graces the stage of her Renaissance World Tour concert in Cologne, Germany, adorned in a breathtaking custom-made catsuit by Georges Hobeika," the designer wrote on Instagram, sharing images of his creation.

During the concert the Grammy-winner helped with a gender reveal. "I wanna do this right because since the beginning of the show, I've seen this sign that says, 'Do my gender reveal,'" Beyoncé said on stage.

The fan passed an envelope to the singer, who revealed the baby was a girl.



Topics: BEYONCE GEORGES HOBEIKA

Arab models walk for LuisaViaRoma in Italy





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149

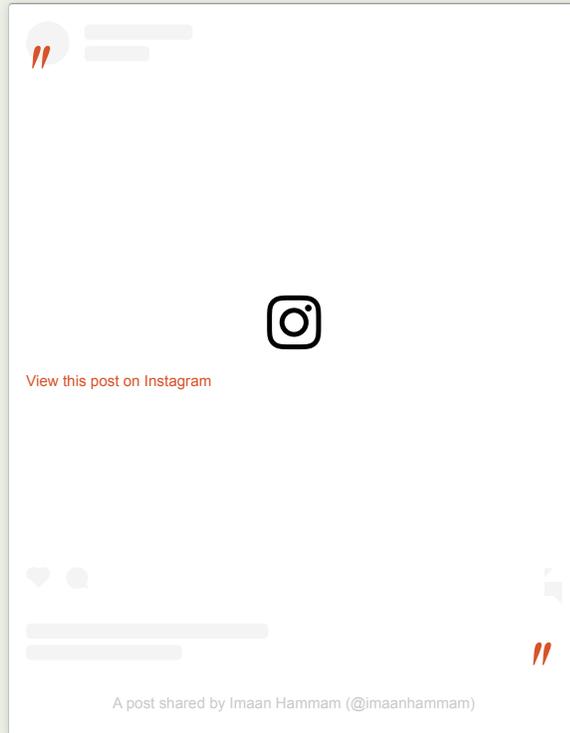


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DUBAI: Models Imaan Hammam, Nora Attal, and Mona Tougaard recently walked the runway for Italian luxury retailer LuisaViaRoma at Piazzale Michelangelo in Florence, Italy.

The show, titled “Runway Icons,” was a partnership with British Vogue and was attended by A-list stars including Leonardo DiCaprio, Julia Fox, Tina Kunakey, Tobey Maguire, and Charithra Chandran.

The models showcased more than 100 looks from over 50 designers including Amina Muaddi, Alexander McQueen, Christian Louboutin, Fendi, Ferragamo, Jimmy Choo, Maison Margiela, Ralph Lauren, Versace, Victoria Beckham, Blumarine, Michael Kors Collection, Mugler, and Chloe.



Hammam, who is of Dutch, Moroccan, and Egyptian descent, wore two outfits. The first was a black ballgown with a voluminous skirt, while the second was a zebra-printed figure-hugging dress.

Sharing images and videos from the show with her 1.6 million followers on Instagram, Hammam said: “Runway Icons. Thank you so much @luisaviaroma @britishvogue (and @edward_enninful for such an amazing evening.”



British Moroccan model Attal wore a turquoise halter-neck dress with fringe and feather detailing while Tougaard, who is of Danish, Turkish, Somali, and Ethiopian descent, donned an embroidered sheer brown dress with a daring neckline.

To close off the show, Attal and Tougaard walked side by side as they graced the runway alongside the other models.



Attal wore a turquoise halter-neck dress. (Getty Images)

The show kicked off with a performance by Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, and Russian model Natalia Vodianova opened the runway wearing a Giambattista Valli gown with voluminous white tulle layers.

The runway featured US supermodel Ashley Graham, who wore Dolce and Gabbana, and Eva Herzigova who stepped out in a midnight sequined Giorgio Armani gown.

The catwalk stars were also joined by Irina Shayk, Winnie Harlow, and Stella Maxwell.

Shayk donned a shimmering black gown with a halter neck from Tom Ford and paired it with black platform heels. Harlow showed off a silver mini dress with rhinestone embellishments, which she wore with thigh-high leather boots.

Maxwell wore a plaid off-shoulder top with matching mini skirt with a train.



Topics: [LUI SAVIAROMA](#) [ITALY](#) [IMAAAN HAMMAM](#) [NORA ATTAL](#)

[MONA TOUGAARD](#)



Saudi star Yasin Ghazzawi on ‘King of the Ring,’ ‘The Office,’ and seizing the moment



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WILLIAM MULLALLY

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250



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- ‘The world is about to witness the rise of Saudi talent,’ says Yasin Ghazzawi

DUBAI: Yasin Ghazzawi has waited a long time for his big moment. The Saudi actor spent the better part of a decade knowing that he had talent and sure that he was capable of so much more, but had no pathway to follow. Then, in 2018, Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Culture launched a series of free workshops to help develop the country’s nascent creative community, and the young performer started skipping work to attend each one.

Now, as the star of “King of the Ring,” currently showing in cinemas across the Gulf, a cast member of MBC’s Arabic-language remake of “The Office,” and with another major global streaming show on the horizon, Ghazzawi’s moment has finally come.

“I’ve learned that to succeed, you have to seize the opportunity. But if you’re not ready for it, you’ll never hold onto it for long. I have to give credit to the people that helped get me here — the government, the acting instructors and the workshops, because that’s when it all started to happen for me, and for a lot of people,” Ghazzawi tells Arab News. “The world is about to witness the rise of a lot of great Saudi talent.”





The Saudi actor spent the better part of a decade knowing that he had talent and sure that he was capable of so much more. (Supplied)

Ghazzawi loves an underdog story. It's partly because he's always seen himself as one, even now, taking each rejection, failure or false start as another step in his journey to inevitable success.

"My whole life I've been an underdog," he says. "Big guys tend to get counted out, and I'm here to count them back in. I really feel like manifestation got me here, too."

Over the hours that he tells Arab News his tale, there are too many ups and downs to recount in detail. There was the singing teacher in California that told him he had generational talent and tried to connect him with Miley Cyrus's voice coach only for Ghazzawi's father to tell him there was no future in it, and pushing him to complete a business degree instead. There was a failed audition for "The Voice" years later; the viral videos with Telfaz11 that got him noticed but didn't earn him the momentum he'd hoped for; the projects that didn't pan out; and the years spent waiting for the phone to ring.



Yassin Ghazzawi in "King of the Ring." (Supplied)

When the phone did finally ring, it was at a time he least expected it — the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Ghazzawi was locked down at home with his immune-compromised mother,



working a day job, and unsure when the film industry might pick back up again. He says he watched Jack Black in the wrestling comedy “Nacho Libre” on repeat with his siblings, idly hoping something like that would come along for him.

The call came from a director friend. “Are you still acting?” he asked Ghazzawi. “Because I’ve got a script here. I can’t tell you anything about it, but the character reminds me so much of you.”

The script was for “King of the Ring.” It’s the story of Musaab, a young overweight Saudi man who struggles to get anyone to believe in him as much as he believes in himself. He dreams of becoming a pro wrestler. The project needed a hero in more ways than one, as the day they were set to begin filming in Abu Dhabi, the original lead actor dropped out, leading to a frenzied dash to find a replacement.



Ghazzawi on the set of MBC's "The Office." (Supplied)

“I’m thankful that happened now,” says the film’s director Mohammed Saeed Harib. “Because Yasin came in and he brought the character with him. Musaab was inside of Yasin all along, waiting to get out. The raw emotion he brought with him is what defined the movie.”

Ghazzawi quit his job, said goodbye to his family and found himself on set just days later. He dived headfirst into the role, even training to be a pro wrestler himself.

“Yasin told me, ‘I don’t want a stunt double. I want to do the moves myself. I want to prove to you — just like this character is proving in the film — that I can do this,’” director Harib recalls.

For Ghazzawi, that drive to go above and beyond was more than just dedication to a role.



"Growing up overweight, I've spent my whole life with people counting me out," he says. "Even last week, I was playing a pickup basketball game and the neighborhood guys wouldn't pass me the darn ball. I just shrugged, grabbed the rebound, hit a fast break and scored on my own. It's always like that. Doing my own stunts was part of the same fight.



Ghazzawi on the set of MBC's "The Office." (Supplied)

"Plus, there's no way they were going to find a big guy like me to be my stunt double, so it would have looked super fake. Can you imagine?" Ghazzawi adds with a laugh.

A year after the film wrapped production, as the actor waited for the world to see what they had created, he landed a role on the MBC remake of "The Office." Ghazzawi played Ziad, the localized version of the beloved character Kevin, played by Brian Baumgartner in the long-running US hit, which was itself a remake of the 2001 BBC original, in which the character was called Keith.

While Ziad only had a few lines in each script, Ghazzawi wasn't going to let such a huge opportunity slip by. He would throw in improvised lines and actions as they filmed that left the rest of the cast and crew struggling to keep up, changing the shape of the series in the process.

"I knew that if I said something, the camera would pan to me. So I thought, 'What's the worst that can happen? I get cut? I get told off? I can deal with that.' Because the best thing that could happen is they start reworking the entire scene around my new contribution, which is exactly what started happening," he explains. "I would go from one line to a full scene, and I think some of the other actors didn't like that."



Yassin Ghazawi (blue shorts) in training for "King of the Ring." (Supplied)

While the show was not an instant hit on MBC Shahid, where it was placed behind a paywall, it has slowly built a cult following, with the infamous "fire drill" scene, in which the cast destroys the set, going viral across the world, garnering tens of millions of views.



“When that scene blew up on TikTok and Twitter, it really lifted me,” Ghazzawi says. “People were legitimately laughing across the world at a Saudi TV series, and I don’t think that’s ever happened before the same way. I was so proud of what we created.”

While it’s unclear if the series will get another season, Ghazzawi’s days of waiting for his big break are over. Next up is a global streaming series coming in 2024 — he can’t yet give details — as well as numerous projects in development that he’s writing with his friends and colleagues — building on the skills he learned in those free ministry workshops.

“Every day I’m getting better as a writer and as an actor, and there’s still so much to experience at the same moment that the world is coming to us. I just saw a friend opposite Gerard Butler in *Kandahar*, and if he can do it, so can I,” he says. “Get me a Leonardo DiCaprio movie. Get me a Will Smith movie filmed in NEOM. Let’s go. I’m ready. Saudi is ready.”



Topics: [YASIN GHAZZAWI](#) [KING OF THE RING](#) [THE OFFICE](#)

Celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck on his Spago Riyadh experience



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HEBSHI AL-SHAMMARI

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145



RIYADH: Austrian–American celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck has more than 40 years of experience and numerous accolades to his name, including two Michelin stars for his restaurant Spago Beverly Hills and one for his steak restaurant CUT in Singapore. He recently opened Spago Riyadh, and sat down with Arab News to discuss why he decided to expand into Saudi Arabia.

“I really think that Saudi Arabia is at the beginning of a culinary revolution. The country is so welcoming to us. We know many of our guests, from LA to London, come from Saudi and have been asking for a similar experience in their (country),” he explained. “Saudi consumers are well-traveled ... They have a wide range of experiences with different cuisines and are extremely open-minded. They’re the perfect guests for us as we always like to do something new and exciting.”





Wolfgang Puck (left) in the kitchen. (Supplied)

Spago Beverly Hills has been a huge success, and Puck explained that much of that is down to access to fresh, top-quality ingredients.

“California is one of the best places for ingredients: the best veggies, fruits and berries,” he said. “We also have the ocean, prairies ... (This) allows us to get the freshest produce in-house and use our techniques to try and get the best possible outcome on the plate. Plus, we are multicultural, so we get influences not only from Europe, but many Asian countries as well.”

Cooking was a natural career choice for Puck, he explained. “My mother was a chef, so it’s in my DNA. In this case, the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” he said.



Puck emphasized the importance of maintaining focus and setting clear goals. (Supplied)

In addition to the chef’s obvious talent in the kitchen, he has built a worldwide restaurant empire with more than 30 eateries and lounge concepts around the world. Puck advised those who wish to follow in his footsteps to complement their culinary studies with business know-how.

“I always tell aspiring chefs to learn the numbers and the essence of building a financially successful restaurant. (That will) open doors that are closed to so many people,” he said.

As a kitchen team leader, Puck emphasized the importance of maintaining focus and setting clear goals.



"I'm always inspired by young chefs and their willingness to learn," he said. "If I can help them along the way, I feel as though I am truly giving back to the industry."



Topics: [WOLFGANG PUCK](#) [SPAGO RIYADH](#)

London's Cromwell Place hosts Lebanese art show



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RAWAA TALASS

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132



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- 'LEBANON | UNTITLED' featured works from some of Lebanon's most famous artists, and some up-and-coming stars

DUBAI: Between June 7 and 11, London's arts hub Cromwell Place played host to a pop-up show of modern and contemporary Lebanese art.

According to organizers, the show — "LEBANON | UNTITLED" — was the largest and most comprehensive display of Lebanese art in London to date. Displayed across two rooms, more than 50 paintings, mixed-media works, and sculptures created by 33 artists were shown. The exhibition was a collaboration between Janet Rady Fine Art, founded by the London-based curator and dealer Janet Rady, and Artscoops, a Middle East art-focused e-platform founded by Beirut mother-daughter duo, May and Raya Mamarbachi.





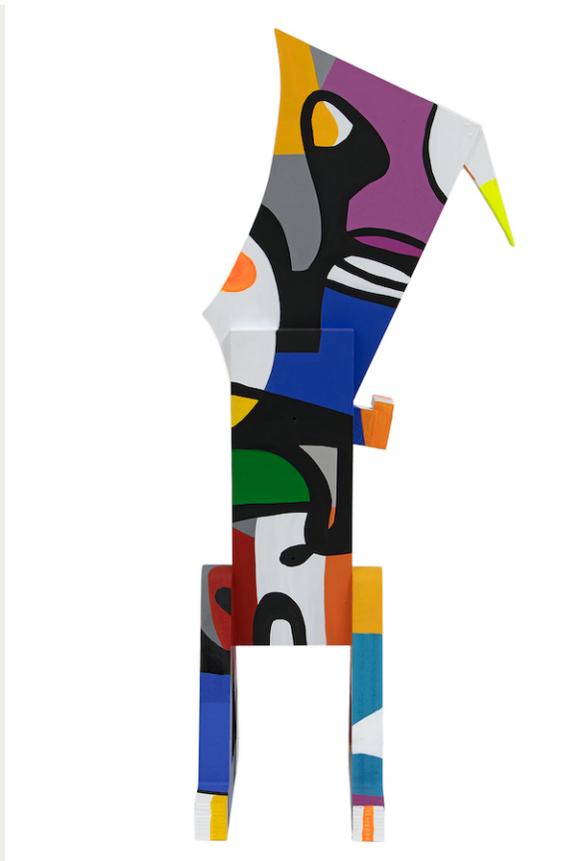
Etel Adnan, Sun. (Supplied)

“The importance of this show is two-fold,” Rady, who has a background in Islamic art, told Arab News. “It showcases Lebanese artists to the Lebanese audience in London, because they don’t get to see the works here. But then — equally and perhaps even more importantly — it’s an opportunity for people who don’t know anything about Lebanese art at all. I’m sure they know where Lebanon is, but they’ve probably never been there. They don’t know the history of the artists, the history of culture, and the people. And I think, for them, it’s a real eye-opener.”

The paintings were hung in a non-chronological order, close to one another, “as if you were in your own home,” Rady added.

The exhibition featured a variety of works — abstract, figurative, still-life and landscapes — by some 20th-century titans of the Lebanese art canon: Etel Adnan, Aref El-Rayess, Huguette Caland, Paul Guiragossian, Bibi Zogbe, Helen Khal, Alfred Basbous, and Hussein Madi. There was also a serene landscape image, portraying traditional houses against the sea and mountains, by Marie Hadad, one of Lebanon’s first female painters.





Charles Khoury, Untitled. (Supplied)

“Lebanon has had a long artistic tradition,” explained Rady. “The Lebanese artists know how to paint; they’ve been very figurative and experimental in their works. I’m doing my Iraqi show in the gallery next door, and you can tell it’s a completely different aesthetic, even though the countries are geographically close to each other, they’ve just had different visual histories.”

The show also highlighted some lesser-known names, including nature-loving Samia Osseiran Junblat, who was born in the 1940s and educated in Beirut, Florence and Tokyo. A colorful 1960s painting of hers was on display. Another interesting artist on view was the New York-born, late-era modernist Willy Aractingi, who died in 2003. His bold and vibrant pictures depict natural scenery. The show included Aractingi’s “The Crow and the Fox” painting, inspired by the timeless fables of 17th-century French fabulist Jean de La Fontaine.





Willy Aractingi, *Le Corbeau et le Renard*. (Supplied)

The late Lebanese artist and critic Laure Ghorayeb, who died earlier this year in her early nineties, was also featured in the show with a figurative Chinese ink on canvas work called “Beauty is our common link and we are the future generation.”

A number of contemporary artists including Hiba Kalache, Adlita Stephan, Zena Assi, and Lana Khayat, and Ayman Baalbaki also took part in the show. The latter grew up during the Lebanese Civil War, and is known for portraying abandoned areas and bullet-filled buildings in Beirut that have been damaged by armed conflict in recent decades.

For the Artscoops team, putting this show together felt like a milestone.





Laure Ghorayeb, Beauty is our common link and we are the future generation. (Supplied)

"It's our first show. We've had a lot of footfall and I think people are very interested," Raya Mamarbachi told Arab News. "It's been a lot of work, but we're really excited to be here."

With the recent reopening of the Surssock Museum in Beirut, Mamarbachi said that Beirut's cultural scene is slowly coming back to life again after a few troubled years.

"You do wonder where the crisis is, because in the past two-to-three months, five galleries have opened in Beirut. The scene is moving and buoyant," she said.

As for the peculiar title of the show, Mamarbachi explained: "Lebanon is always in a state of flux and change, so this is why we did not title the exhibition."



Topics: CROMWELL PLACE

