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Fashion!

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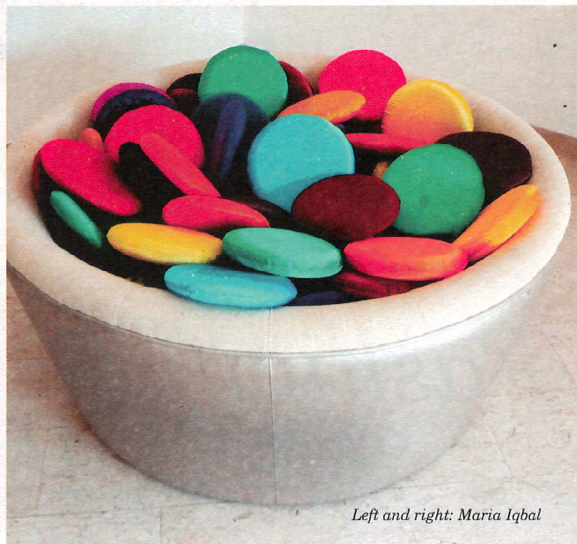
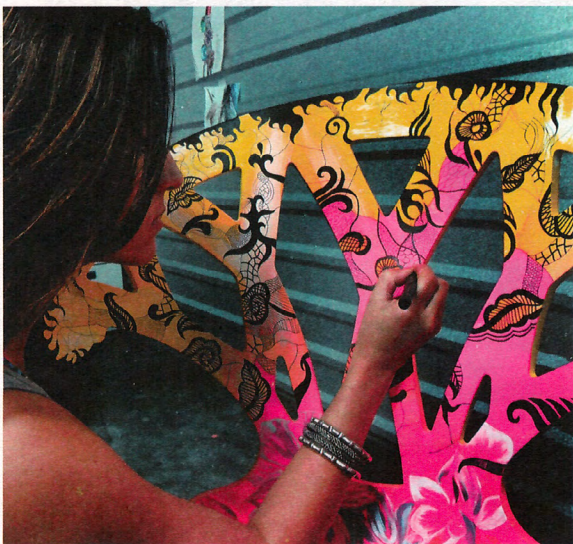


Latifa Saeed

Designed in Dubai

There's a creative crowd of talent right on your doorstep

We're sandwiched between two highlights of the city's design calendar: Design Days last month and Index next month. But you don't have to wait for a show to find talented designers right here in Dubai. There's a host of handmade, handcrafted and locally manufactured furniture and textiles that will make you think again about buying mass-produced items with high shipping costs (and a high carbon footprint).



Left and right: Maria Iqbal

The Emirati designer

Artist-turned-designer Latifa Saeed recently launched her first furniture collection, Braided, through Tashkeel, using local craftsmen and manufacturers.

Her unique, eye-catching and tactile seating collection features stuffed linen tubes meticulously upholstered – or ‘braided’ – onto a wooden frame.

“I was inspired by childhood memories of my parents braiding my hair,” says the designer, who trained as a fine artist and graphic designer.

Each piece took three months to finalise, with help from local craftsmen and companies who were willing to experiment to perfect its seamless aesthetic.

“Braided is made with local materials and processes but to international standards,” she adds. “This really benefits the customer as they know exactly where it has come from, how it’s made and there are no shipping costs.”
Braided, from AED30,000, tashkeel.org



The custom-made designer

A Maria Iqbal design is more than memorable. Her signature pop-art style is vibrant, eye-catching and artistic, and her custom-made furniture is produced in her Al Quoz studio.

Born in Afghanistan and raised in UAE, Maria uses the tradesman, materials and amenities close to hand. “Everything I need is here in Dubai because there are lots of skilled craftsman, that is not an issue” she

says. “I have my own team, my own painters and carpenters in my studio, so everything is local and loved.

“I am a pop artist and that can translate onto anything. I have chosen to express myself onto furniture as it comes most naturally to me. When I started I painted new or second-hand chairs and tables, but now I make my own furniture. They are all one-off pieces, custom-made to order so each piece is unique.” mariaiqbal.com

