

# AD50

An overview of the most stunning **projects** in the Middle East and the great **architects and interior designers** behind them

## THE GAME CHANGERS

*Architectural Digest selects the 50 top regional talents in architecture and interior design. The parameters: an incredible body of work and a practice located in the Middle East*

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### LIGHT SPACE DESIGN

The work of Light Space Design is a testimony to all three words in the firm's name. Founded by Omar Chafour in 2002 and covering the Middle East as well as Hong Kong and London, LSD interweaves light, purity of design and infinite space to each and every interior, whether residential, hospitality or office.

**RECENT PROJECTS:** Leila Heller gallery, Vitrol head office, Spa Duniya (all in the UAE). **UP NEXT:** Boutique hotels in Dubai and Oman, Baxter head offices and Dutchies R&B container concept in Dubai. **VIP CLIENTS:** Apple, Dubai Crown Prince office, Dubai Investments, Meraas, Vitrol. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "Our design is creative, technically feasible, detailed and effortless to look at, less is more. Or so we hope!" Dubai: [lightspacedesign.ae](http://lightspacedesign.ae)



## LAURA NAZIR INTERIOR DESIGN STUDIO

Interior designer Laura Nazir made the journey from New York to Jeddah 25 years ago. With a roster of high-profile clients, including royalty and ambassadors, Nazir and her team of architects and interior designers imbue their projects with a relaxed modernism. Beyond the Middle East, Nazir has lent her signature pared-back take on luxury to projects in Paris, London, Beverly Hills, Kenya and Buenos Aires. **DESIGN APPROACH:** "Communication is key. And of course, maintaining client confidentiality. I never advertise my works, the practice is built on word of mouth." Jeddah; [lauranazir.com](http://lauranazir.com)

## VICK VANLIAN

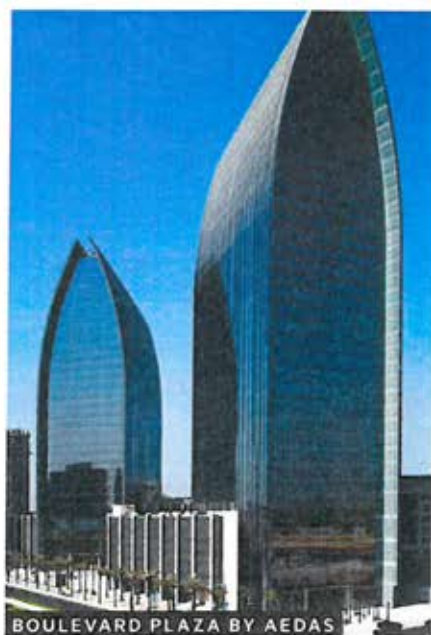
Designer Vick Vanlian's eponymous firm is just over four years old but has built quite a reputation for its bold style, fearless use of bright colours and nostalgic references in modern settings. **UP NEXT:** Residential apartment in Barcelona, a block of furnished apartments in Dubai, presidential guest house in Ivory Coast and a private villa in Locarno, Switzerland. **SIGNATURE STYLE:** "We strive to play on all the senses wherever possible, as they are all part of experiencing any space, be it interiors or architecture. A splash of pop always adds colour, humour and fun to any space." Beirut and Dubai; [vickvanlian.com](http://vickvanlian.com)

## GALAL MAHMOUD ARCHITECTS

Beirut in the mid 90s was an exciting place to take an architectural practice started in Paris in 1987. Three decades later, an office in Abu Dhabi and an established name in luxury tourism, that spirit still animates GM Architects. The firm headed by Galal Mahmoud, Randa Chahine, Anwar Hajj and Elie Waked, has designed spaces across the region, infused with a sense of wellbeing, emotion and mystery. **KEY CLIENTS:** Accor Hotels, Starwood Hotels, Rotana Hotels, Fairmont Hotels, Lebanese Ministry of Culture. **RECENT PROJECTS:** Sofitel Tamuda Bay Resort and Spa in Morocco, renovation of the Bristol Hotel in Beirut and the Rotana Salalah in the sultanate of Oman. **UP NEXT:** The Museum of Civilisation in central Beirut and a Sheraton Resort in Dakar. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "To layer buildings and landscapes with emotive space and form." Abu Dhabi, UAE; Beirut, Lebanon; [gm-architects.com](http://gm-architects.com)

## T.ZED ARCHITECTS

Despite being a little over a year old, this firm already has a client list that boasts names such as Royce Group and IFA Hotels & Resorts. Principal Tarik Al Zaharna believes in a consistent, detail-oriented approach that responds to programme, context, and one that translates from a larger geography to interior



BOULEVARD PLAZA BY AEDAS

spaces and details. **KEY PROJECTS:** Index Penthouse, Cocktail Kitchen, S'wich Gourmet, AKIN Barber & Shop, Limestone House Residence. **UP NEXT:** In Dubai - Loci fine dining bistro in DIFC, Macramé concept store and restaurant on Jumeirah Beach Road, Corcel concept store in Dubai Design District, Royce HQ and KOA, a mixed-use block in Al Barari, Ora Japanese fine dining in Kuwait and Lusail Residences. Luxembourg, Dubai and Sharjah; [tzed-architects.com](http://tzed-architects.com)

## STUDIO M

In 2006, armed with the experience and skill acquired in his formative years working within collaborative environments at some of LA's most esteemed design practices, Abboud Malak formed Studio M Dubai. Known for a wide range of projects from small to large-scale residential to commercial and hospitality, the studio's aesthetic is contemporary yet sophisticated. Malak combines warm materials with clean lines, textural palettes and fine detailing. **INSPIRATION:** The designer credits his clean, crisp aesthetic to the modernist Californian West Coast where he opened his first design studio after graduating from the Art Centre College of Design in Pasadena. **AWARD WINNING PROJECTS:** The Pavilion Downtown, The Index Penthouse, DIFC. Dubai; [studiom.co](http://studiom.co)

## AEDAS

One of the world's leading global architecture and design practices, Aedas is built on the belief that great design can only be delivered by people with a deep social and cultural understanding of the communities they are designing for. The Middle East office, led by managing director Michael Fowler, has been responsible for delivering several significant infrastructure and building projects in the region. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "The practice's unique structure, global presence, and commitment to cutting-edge R&D are testament to our desire to deliver design excellence to clients wherever

they are in the world." **KEY PROJECTS:** Dubai Metro, Dubai Tram, Ocean Heights, U-Bora Towers, Boulevard Plaza, all in Dubai **KEY CLIENTS:** Roads and Transport Authority, DAMAC Gulf Properties, Emaar Properties. 12 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai and London; [aedas.com](http://aedas.com)

## SOM

With a portfolio of more than 10,000 projects in over 50 countries, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) specialises in architecture, interior design, engineering and urban planning. The firm, which celebrates its 80th anniversary this year has received more than 1,700 awards so far. **KEY PROJECTS:** SOM is responsible for the design and construction of some of the world's tallest buildings, including Burj Khalifa in Dubai and One Trade Centre in New York City. **UP NEXT:** The Al Ahmadi Cultural Centre, in Kuwait City, which will promote art, music, theatre and dance. 10 offices worldwide, including Abu Dhabi; [som.com](http://som.com)

## JAFAR DAJANI

Jordan-born interior architect Jafar Dajani studied architecture in the UK, followed by a Masters in interior design, specialising in boutique hotels. Since starting his own design practice in 2013, he has completed several upscale residential projects in Dubai. Dajani is also a furniture designer and an avid arts collector. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** "We try to create functional, timeless spaces through our designs, incorporating colour, texture and accessories in a whimsical style." Dubai; [jafardajani.ae](http://jafardajani.ae)



RESIDENCE BY JAFAR DAJANI