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GRAND DESIGNS

Global design experts – including Design Days Dubai fair director Cyril Zammit – offer sage advice on how to start a serious collection

01. Vaso Corais De Acau, Coletivo Amor de Madre **02.** Thesaurus cosole, Barcelona Design Gallery **03.** Aurelia Flower Side Table, JCT Haute Couture **04.** Iwan Maktabi

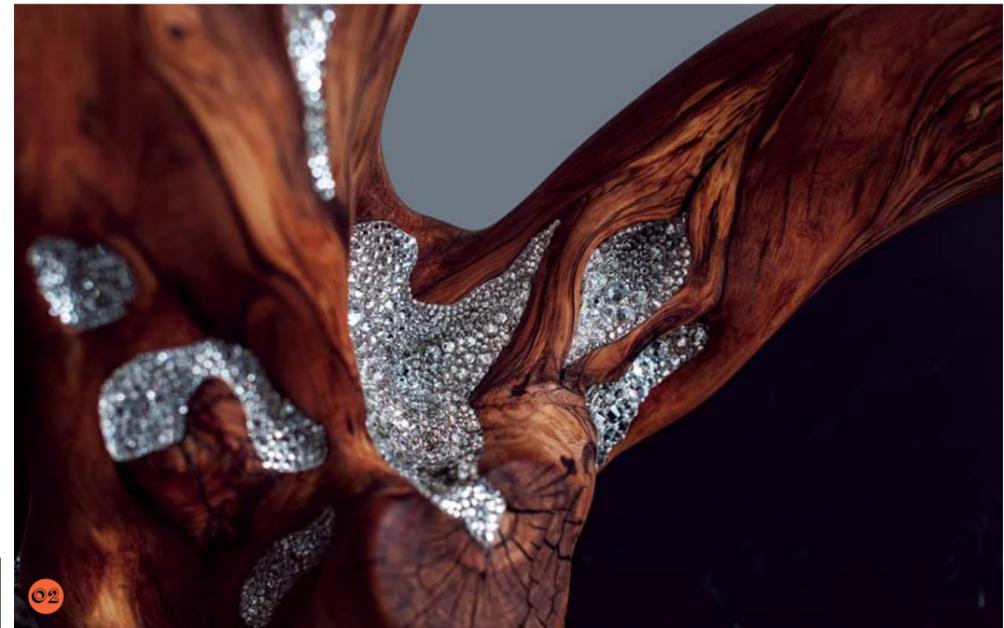
1. DISCOVER WHAT YOU LIKE

“Collections are not about budget or size,” says Olivia Yassudo Faria, director of Coletivo Amor de Madre in Sao Paulo. “They’re about curatorial guidelines. Understand your interests and focus on them.”



2. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS

“Collecting is a slow process of learning,” explains Emirati designer and exhibitor at this year’s Design Days Dubai, Aljoud Lootah. “The more you learn about a designer, the thought and production process, the more your appreciation is increased.”



3. TRUST THE EXPERTS

“Galleries know their designers,” says Aurélia Bire Tenèze of J.C.T. Haute Couture Interiors in Paris. “They have insight on the work they represent and anticipate trends. They are great resources.” Design Days

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Dubai fair director Cyril Zammit agrees. “A gallery owner will act as a sponsor for its designers. Often, the gallery will finance the prototyping phase, the production of the series, putting their trust and resources into the designer. Consider then that a gallery bring these creations to the other side of the world to a fair like Design Days Dubai, even more resources – such as shipping, booth layout and representation. Do you need more proof?”

4. OH, AND TRUST YOUR JUDGMENT TOO

“Prefer what you like,” recommends Olivia Yassudo Faria, director of Coletivo Amor de Madre. “It’s always the best option.”



5. NAME YOUR PRICE

“You don’t need a high budget to start a collection,” says Ammar Kalo, a Sharjah-based designer exhibiting at this year’s Design Days Dubai. “There’s no rule anywhere that dictates objects in design collections have to be of a certain value, size or medium. I would consider a beautifully crafted, hand-printed postcard to be part of a design collection. The world is filled with hidden gems of great design, you just have to be patient enough to find them.”





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“Be careful, it’s addictive, once you start collecting you will never stop!”

05. Unfolding Unity Stool, Aljoud Lootah **06.** White Corian with brass and brass inlay, Nisreen AbuDail and Nermeen Abu-Dail **07.** Squad Design Square One, Tarek ElKassouf



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6. INVEST IN YOUNG TALENT

“Design Days Dubai has been often described by the international press as a place where young and emerging talents are seen first,” says Zammit. “This is where you can also start building up a great collection. In fact our fair mostly presents contemporary design, so there’s a big possibility that your investment will grow in value, too. We have a range of items at various price levels, the entry level price being around US\$500.”

7. TOUCH

“The beauty of design is touch,” explains Zammit. “Unlike art, design is tactile and the feeling of a fine polished surface will be an important motivator for your purchase of an object. I see more and more design creations sold over the internet, but I would only buy a piece if I had seen it before somewhere in person, or if I totally trust the gallery. Call me old-school but to me there is a strong relationship that I need to create with a rare object. It will be with me for years and speed dating is not my cup of tea.”

8. FURNISH FIRST AND COLLECT LATER

“We all need furniture and it’s the best way start at home,” says Zammit. “This is where you can enjoy your collection every day. When a person furnishes their environment, they hunt for a piece that will last. Investing in a limited edition piece of design means you’re placing your money in your daily routine. Design pieces will take place in your space, subsequently it blends into your life and becomes one with your surroundings,”

9. START SMALL

“Just start anywhere,” says Sharjar-based designer Kalo. “Find well-designed objects that you like, and slowly start building a collection. These objects could range from cutlery, to ceramic vases, to furniture pieces.”

For Rola Wazni, director at Carpenters Workshop Gallery, it’s about adaptability. “Lighting is a good place to start as pieces are often small and very portable, if you change your



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mind it’s easy to move to another room. Or alternatively, start with something really practical that your space is in need of, then build the rest of your collection around it.”

10. CAREFUL NOW

While advice on galleries and following your instincts is all well and good, Nisreen Abudail of Naqsh Collective in Jordan has some final words of warning. “Be careful, it’s addictive, once you start collecting you will never stop!”

Design Days Dubai, March 14 to 18, designdaysdubai.ae