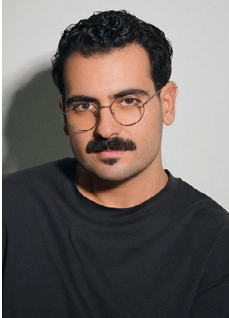




NEW ARAB VOICES



Clockwise from above: Reza Babajani, Kristina Dittmar, Tarek Moukaddem, Chloé Le Reste, Michael Wong, Eleonora Vergnano, Abdo Khanachat



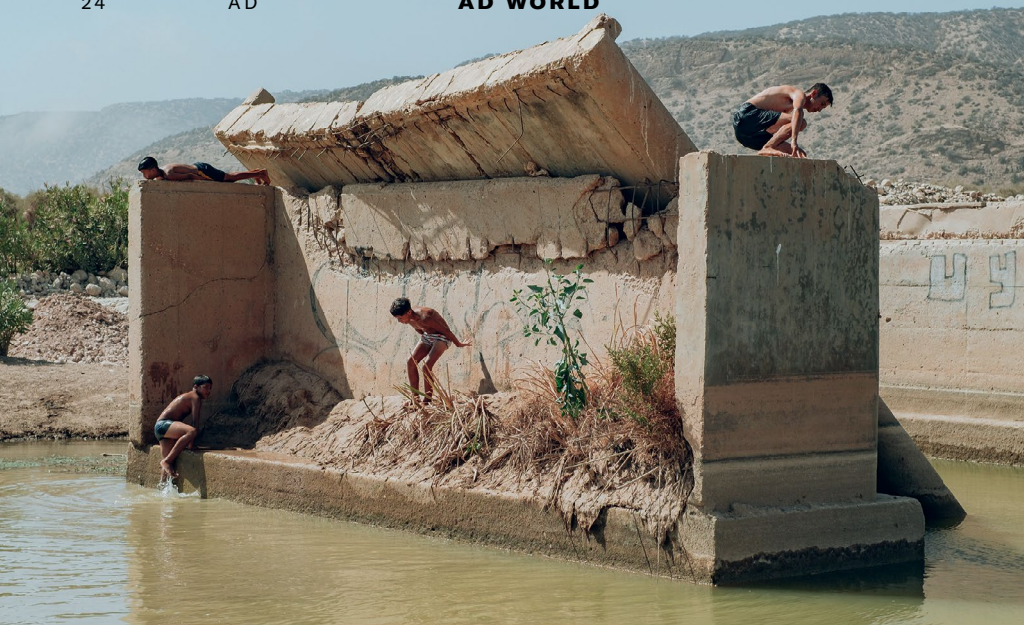
VANTAGE POINT

For the third edition of *New Arab Voices* (page 72), *AD*'s contributors documented the work of nine emerging design talents, crafting portraits shaped by light, movement and the intimate spaces where creativity unfolds. Lebanese photographer Tarek Moukaddem captured Youssef El Hadi at his home in Beirut, and Shaha Raphael in her mountain retreat, embracing a natural, documentary style. "I wanted the photographs to feel like spending the day with the designers, a very natural, personal view," he explains. In Paris, Chloé Le Reste intertwined portraiture and space when photographing Zineb Kertane and Badih Ghanem, using her architectural eye to balance detail, atmosphere and individuality.

Studio Limbo's creative director Abdo Khanachat, who worked alongside photographer Chady Kal, shaped a series of contemplative yet cinematic portraits of Chafic Mekawi and Majid Al Bastaki in the UAE. "The way someone inhabits a frame can reveal as much as what they say," he reflects, pointing to the subtlety of expression that guided their shoot.

Munich-based Michael Wong sought clarity and light when portraying Moroccan designer Selma Lazrak. "I wanted a clean, contemporary aesthetic, giving space to the essence of the project," he notes. Italian photographer Eleonora Vergnano worked with Palestinian designer Lameice Abu Aker, echoing the strength and delicacy of her designs through an almost analogue sensitivity: "Photography became a way to amplify her creative language." In Toronto, Kristina Dittmar brought her signature tenderness to the portraits of Tamara Solem Al-Issa, chasing movement and light to reveal captivating moments.

Alongside these images, Iranian designer and calligrapher Reza Babajani was tasked with developing the typography for the project. Drawing on flowing Persian Shekasteh-Nastaliq script, he sought to balance legibility with fluidity, allowing letters to flow dynamically across the page. "The strong visual and formal qualities of calligraphy supersede even legibility for me," he explains. The result is a series of inscriptions that honours tradition while embracing a contemporary graphic identity.



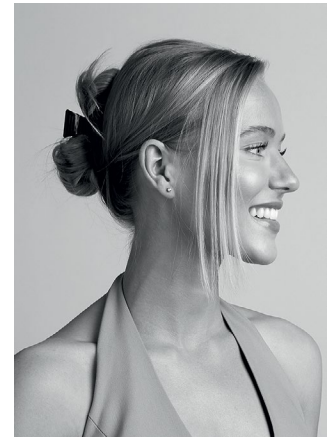
Iman Zaoin

Moroccan-Italian photographer Iman Zaoin often explores the lives of marginalised communities in her work, alongside themes of memory and identity. For her first feature in *AD* Middle East, Zaoin turned her lens towards a modern-rustic home in Essaouira (page 134), focusing on the relationship between architecture, landscape and daily life. “I aimed to honour the care and thought that went into the home, and translate those values into images,” she says. The villa’s natural light “revealed different moods and brought objects to life”, allowing her to capture the soul of the house in a way that felt layered and intimate.



HENRY WINDRIDGE

Dubai-based contributor Henry Windridge focuses on the inspiring and the extraordinary in travel, hospitality and lifestyle. In this issue, he went behind the scenes of two newly unveiled spaces in Paris and Istanbul (page 153); connecting the two is a delicate homage to louche 1970s glamour. “I’ve always loved a bit of disco chic,” Windridge laughs, “but actually the elevated design aesthetics of that era deserve their renewed spotlight.” The author also helps brands and studios that want to expand their footprint in the region through his consultancy The Exceptional. “Thanks to *AD* and the talent in the region, the Gulf is on everyone’s radar,” he notes.



SOPHIA CLIFFE

In this issue, British fashion and beauty photographer Sophia Cliffe brings her glossy, luxe aesthetic to a playful shoot pairing bags with design-forward seating (page 58). “We let the bags and chairs guide the shoot by responding to their lines, colours and textures,” she explains. Sometimes this meant leaning into colour pairings or bold colour blocking; at other times it was about echoing forms and details. The most unexpected moment came with a glass table, whose rope legs “looked almost like tentacles”, inspiring Cliffe to style it as though it were “wearing” the bags – a playful gesture that brought personality and movement to the project.

