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Art For Art's Sake



Sayyida Ghalya's Museum of Modern Art is a bold entrant into Oman's culture and heritage scene, addressing the modern Omani man while focusing on old legacies



Art, culture and history now has a new venue of presentation in Oman. A welcome addition to the Omani cultural scene, Sayyida Ghalya's Museum of Modern Art opened recently under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq bin Taimour Al Said. Located near the Muttrah Fort, the museum is a dream project of Her Highness Sayyida Dr Ghalya Bint Fahr bin Taimour Al Said.

Working towards this end since 2005, the museum is the fruition of her vision, perseverance and determination.

New entrant on the block

As Murtadha Abdulkhaliq Al Lawati, curator of the museum says, the museum is unlike any other in Oman. "It doesn't describe the legacy of Omani heritage through ages but rather addresses the Omani people and how they dealt with the modern world with its new inventions. The Omanis are known to be innovative and have a history of inventions and industry. This is what the museum focuses

Murtadha Al Lawati

The museum curator says the place is unlike any other in Oman, focusing on Omani people and how they dealt with the modern world with its new inventions





4th Anniversary



on - it aims at promoting the inventions of the Omanis to the world and how they used the tools of modern age to create objects of his own," he explains.

The museum is a group of typical Omani houses from the period 1950 to 1975 that tell the stories of the Omanis and their deeply rooted heritage, customs and traditions. The Musabbeh's room, the Majlis (living room), the winter room, the children's room, the exhibition room, the kitchen, and the bride's room describe the early Omani lifestyle.

The museum also includes some smaller divisions such as the clothes museum and the modern gallery which are still under construction. Ghalya's Museum of Modern Art aims at hosting artistic exhibitions and workshops as well as other creative and cultural events. Connoisseurs are quite naturally full of appreciation for Her Highness Sayyida Dr Ghalya bint Fahr bin Taimour Al Said.

Simplicity to sophistication

The museum is a true and vivid reflection of what has been achieved since the dawn of our Blessed Renaissance. It is an applied example of the development of the Omani intellect, from



The typical old Omani houses from the period between 1950-'75 tell stories of customs and traditions through different rooms and early modern Omani lifestyle

simplicity to sophistication - an intellect that realises the value of our old life with all its nuances and details.

The past must not be rejected, but rather embraced and cherished, and the Museum's ethos is the old proverb, 'He who has no past, doesn't have a present, and shall not have a future.' The museum focuses on two issues:

What has surrounded the Omani people, and what has lived within them.

The existence of this museum reflects the gradual development of the Omanis' intellect through the years of the Renaissance. Having been limited to the acquisition of tools and objects, this intellect has now moved to a new level; and the artifacts exhibited with-



Artist Alia Al Farsi's paintings are among the first to be exhibited here - the museum aims at hosting artistic exhibitions and workshops as well as other creative and cultural events

in the museum, illustrate this evolution. This underlines the importance of private museums and their role in human culture and civilisation. And it is because of this role, that the Ministry of Heritage and Culture has acknowledged the museum as an official institution and allowed for its establishment."

"This museum is truly a unique initiative as it opens new horizons for art and culture to pave a new trial for Omani museums," says Murtadha. No matter how valuable and elevated a civilisation's production may be, it will never be safe without specialised museums that preserve their heritage for the coming generations.

"This is what her Highness has sought in the preservation of the artifacts of this great civilisation. Her goal was to broaden our understanding of our surroundings to realise their value in depth rather than the typical shallow stereotypes."

"Omani heritage is very rich: You can categorise it into three different areas

- Omani antiquities, Omani culture - something alive in Oman today - and modern Oman. We believe Oman is one of the few countries that has maintained its traditions and culture, and our aim is to take it further on from 2011," explains Murtadha.

The special clothes museum to open later this year will focus on Omani costumes, garments and establish links for Omani designers with world fashion. "We have also launched a small story book on wisdom, because we believe wisdom is the key to understanding everything. We want to encourage people to read. Our aim is to come up with a library that talks about Oman the past, Oman today and Oman tomorrow." The museum logo symbolises both man and woman in its form. "There are lots of hidden stories that will either vanish with the passing of people, and we have a choice of keeping them alive and preserving them. That's what our founder is focused on," says Murtadha.

Modern Museum

- The Museum has been created by collating a group of typical Omani houses dating from the middle of the 20th century
- Apart from the houses, the smaller divisions include the clothes museum and the modern gallery
- The objects displayed in the museum reflect Omani life by displaying the historic contents of their homes, art, artifacts and inventions.
- You can see silver jewellery, traditional weapons, old books, photos, rugs, tapestry and more.
- Contact the Museum on 24711640

