



emirates Woman

woman of the year awards 2017

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017
SERDAAL BALLROOM,
THE WESTIN MINA SEYAH

POST-EVENT REPORT



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THANK YOU

Motivate would like to extend a big thank you to sponsors of *Emirates Woman*, Woman of the Year Awards, without whom this event would not have been possible. We do hope that the evening was as enjoyable for you as it was for us. We are very proud to have been supported by the region's big brands, celebrating inspirational women of the UAE.

We look forward to working with you all in the very near future on yet another successful event.

Thank you,
Motivate Events Team

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YOU ARE INVITED....

More than 400 guests attended the *Emirates Woman, Woman of the Year Awards* to celebrate the achievements of the winners of our six awards categories...

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THE VENUE



SERDAAL BALLROOM, THE WESTIN MINA SEYAH DUBAI

A peaceful retreat on Jumeirah Beach, the resort offers the perfect destination for the entire family to unwind and recharge, with a breath-taking array of recreation activities and close proximity to major Dubai attractions. Featuring exceptional views over the Arabian Gulf, our impressive neoclassical architecture fills our five-star luxury beach resort in Dubai with charm and inspiration.

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EVENT BRANDING



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Tory Burch, sponsors of the Artist category, set up an elegant display of mannequins in Tory Burch outfits.

Mina Liccione, MC and founder of Dubomedy, presented the 'Artist of the Year' award on behalf of Tory Burch to Layla Kardan.



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Darah Shawqi Alghanem, Director of Business Development at Grand Optics presented the Achiever of the Year award to Shafeena Yusuff Ali.



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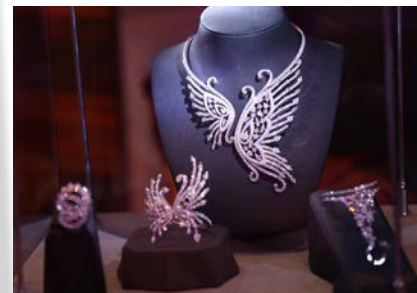


YOUNG TALENT CATEGORY SPONSOR

55fifty7 sponsored the Young Talent category. Through its display of unique jewellery, 55fifty7 allowed *Emirates Woman* guests a chance to sparkle on the pink carpet and capture the moment through the photo booth.

During the event, diamond-shaped origami pieces were distributed to the guests containing chocolate courtesy of 55fifty7. One guest was also lucky enough to walk away with a custom designed gold and diamond bracelet hidden in their origami piece.

Maryam Hussein, co-founder and principal designer at 55fifty7, later presented the 'Young Talent of the Year' award to Saima Khan.



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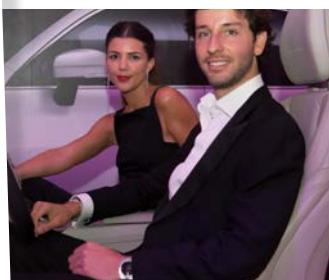




OFFICIAL CAR SPONSOR & VISIONARY CATEGORY SPONSOR

Volvo, our official car sponsor for the event, also sponsored the Visionaries category. Guests had the opportunity to test out the brand during the event. Two Volvo cars were also displayed at the entrance of the venue allowing guests to interact with the car on arrival.

Ozge Ugurluel, Marketing and PR manager at Volvo CRS MENA & CIS, presented the 'Visionary of the Year' Award to Shabana Karim



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Grand Optics surprised the guests by presenting a pair of sunglasses to each table. Branded stickers were subtly placed on random chairs, one per table. Guests were advised to look for the stickers and to collect their prize at the end of the event.



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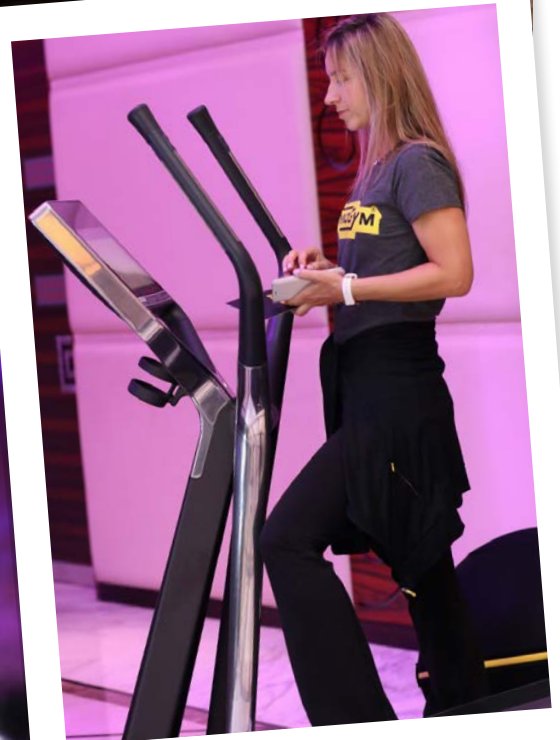




The Wellness Company

ACTIVATION PARTNER

Technogym had a display of gym equipment in the pre-function area. The black tie dress code of the event did not stop our ladies in gowns from trying out the machine during the event.



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Events Library

FLOWER PARTNER



The Events Library arranged the Emirates Woman, Woman of the Year flower centerpieces, winner's bouquet and the winner's 'Flower Wall'.

Each guest was also provided with a single pink rose upon leaving the event, courtesy of Events Library.

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We would like to extend a special thanks to Jacobsons Direct, our official vote-processing partner for Emirates Woman, Woman of the Year awards.



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GOODY BAGS

Each guest received the coveted *Emirates Woman* goody bag, packed with treats from our generous sponsors.



- Bath and Body mist + vouchers
- Bioderma
- Nuxe
- No. 7
- Blow dry vouchers
- Aldo Bags
- 55Fifty7 notebooks
- 55Fifty7 origami chocolates
- Tory Burch voucher
- Volvo chocolates
- Events Library roses
- Grand Optics lenses
- Rituals gel douche
- Cups N Cakes
- Shiseido skin care kit



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EMIRATES WOMAN WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2017 WINNERS

THE
ACHEIVER



SHAFEENA
YUSUFF ALI

LAYLA
KARDAN



THE
ARTIST

THE
HUMANITARIAN
& OVERALL
EMIRATES
WOMAN,
WOMAN OF
THE YEAR



JUMANA
ABU-HANNOUD

SHABANA
KARIM



THE
VISIONARY

THE
YOUNG
TALENT



SAIMA
KHAN

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THE ACHIEVERS

**CLARE
WOODCRAFT**
CEO OF EMIRATES
FOUNDATION



**ALANOUD
BADR**
FOUNDER AND
DESIGNER
OF LADY FOZAZ



**JOELLE
MARDINIAN**
CEO OF JOELLE
GROUP



WINNER

**SHAFEENA
YUSUFF ALI**
CEO OF TABLEZ FOOD
COMPANY



**OMAIRA FAROOQ
AL OLAMA**
MANAGING DIRECTOR/
FOUNDER OF ALF
ADMINISTRATION (ADVANCED
LEARNING FORMULAS)



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THE ARTISTS

**AYAH AL
BITAR**

FOUNDER AND CEO
OF AYA THE ART OF
LIVING



MAY BARBER

OWNER AND
MANAGING
DIRECTOR OF THE
CARTEL WEARABLE
ART GALLERY AND
FASHION CONCEPT
STORE



**TARSILA
SCHUBERT**
ARTIST



WINNER

**LAYLA
KARDAN**
ARTIST/SINGER/
SONGWRITER



**SARA
JAPANWALLA**
FASHION ILLUSTRATOR
AT CAPPER
WORLDWIDE



THE HUMANITARIANS

**MADA
ALSUWAIDI**
SENIOR COUNTRY
PROGRAM OFFICER
AT DUBAI CARES



**DR MARGIT
GABRIELE
MULLER**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AT ABU DHABI
FALCON HOSPITAL



**NADINE
ARTON**
FOUNDER OF
NADINE ARTON,
GLAMONYOU AND
AMAL PROJECT



**MARIAM
FARAG**
HEAD OF
CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY AT
MBC GROUP



WINNER

**JUMANA
ABU-
HANNOUD**
MANAGING
DIRECTOR, GULF
AREA OFFICE OF SOS
CHILDREN'S VILLAGES
INTERNATIONAL

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THE VISIONARIES



WINNER

**SHABANA
KARIM**

CEO AND FOUNDER
OF THE NAIL SPA &
MARQUEE SALON



**KAREN
MCLEAN**

FOOD BLOGGER AT
SECRET SQUIRREL
FOOD

**DANA
HOURANI**
CONTENT CREATOR



**HIND HABIB
AL MULLA**

OWNER/DIRECTOR AT
HOME BAKERY LLC



AYAH TABARI
FOUNDER/ DESIGNER
OF ALL THINGS
MOCHI

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THE YOUNG TALENTS



ARWA AL BANAWI
FOUNDER AND CREATIVE
DIRECTOR OF ARWA AL
BANAWI

**MANAAL AL
HAMMADI**
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
OF MANAAL AL
HAMMADI



**AISHA SAEED
HARIB**
HEAD OF CORPORATE
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY, GENERAL
COORDINATOR FOR THE
NATIONAL SERVICE YOUTH
COUNCIL IN THE MINISTRY OF
YOUTH, AND SOLDIER IN THE
NATIONAL SERVICE AUTHORITY
ARMED FORCE



**HIND HABIB
AL MULLA**
OWNER/DIRECTOR AT
HOME BAKERY LLC

WINNER

SAIMA KHAN
CEO & FOUNDER
OF STEPUP



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PRE-EVENT COVERAGE

CINEMA

The Emirates Woman, Woman of the Year VOTE NOW cinema ad featured in VOX Cinemas MOE, Mercato, Marina and Yas Mall from 20th July till 30th August 2017.



RADIO

The Emirates Woman, Woman of the Year VOTE NOW radio ad aired on Dubai 92 in the morning and evening, from 1st August till 14th August 2017.



"Vote now for your Emirates Woman, Woman of the Year 2017. Honouring the outstanding accomplishments of women in the UAE, the Emirates Woman, Woman of the Year awards celebrate achievers, visionaries, humanitarians, artists and young talents. This is your opportunity to recognise the UAE's brilliant women; the thinkers, the doers, the kind, the brave, and the strong. To vote, go to emirateswoman.com."

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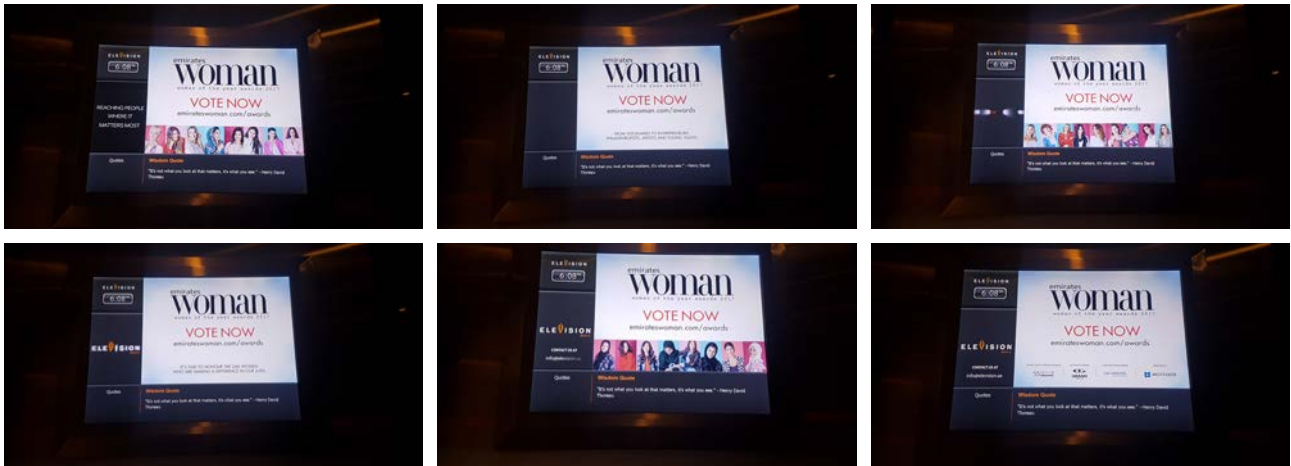
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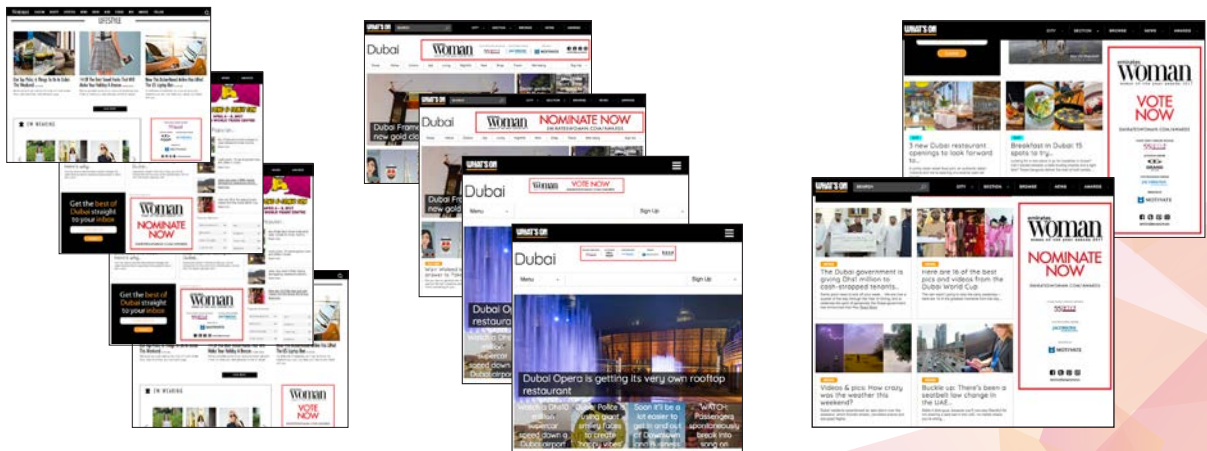
PRE-EVENT COVERAGE

ELEVISION

Digital lift advertisements ran across the Dubai Media City and Dubai International Financial Centre network in July and August.



ONLINE MPU's, HP's, LB's ran across on gulfbusiness.com, whatson.ae and emirateswoman.com



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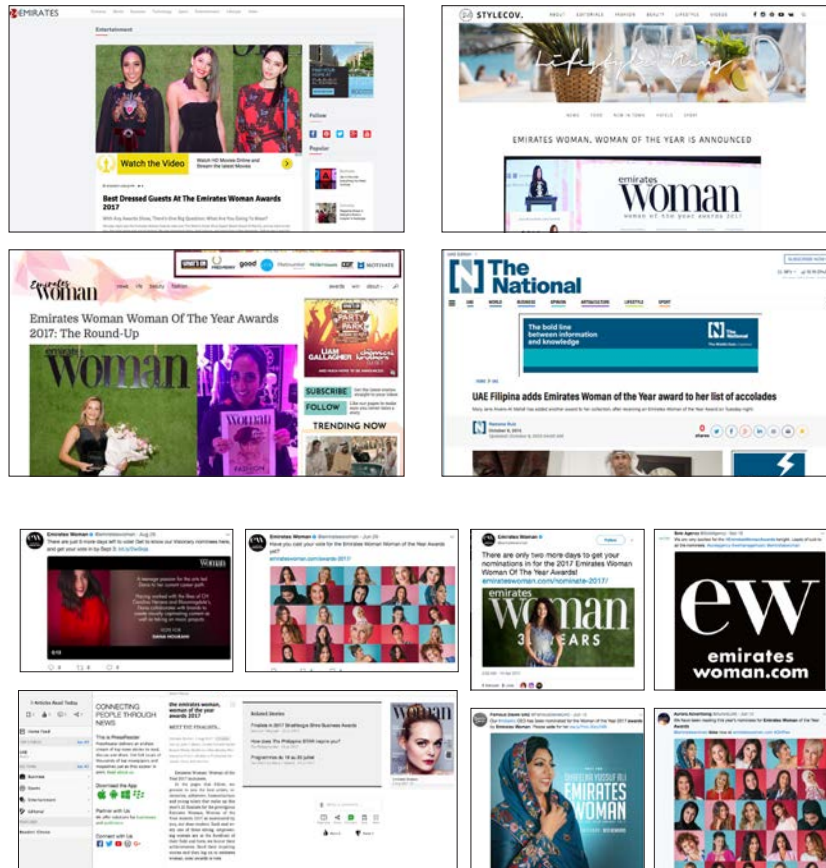


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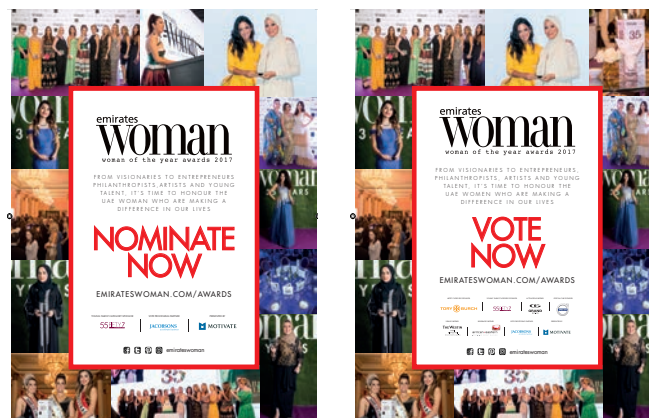


PRE-EVENT COVERAGE

ONLINE ARTICLES



PRESS ADS



The press ads ran in the following titles: *Emirates Woman*, *identity*, *good*, *Emirates Man*, *The Week*, and *Campaign*.

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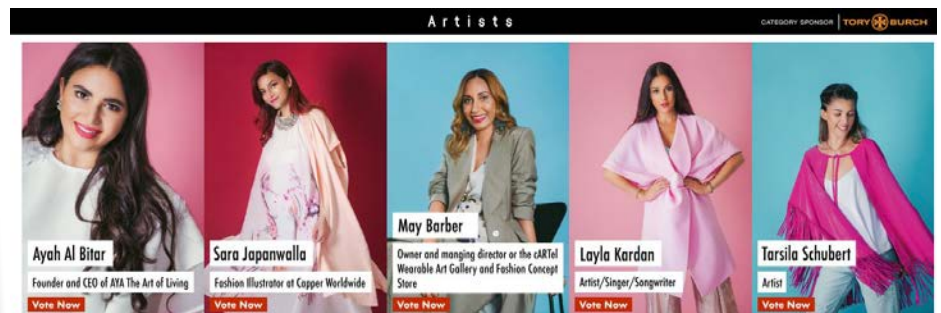
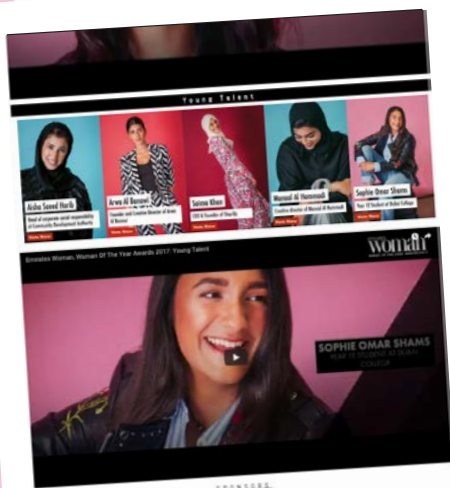
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emirateswoman.com

The sponsors' logos were placed on each page of the website, pertaining to each awards category.



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JULY 2017 ISSUE

the emirates woman, woman of the year awards 2017

MEET THE FINALISTS...

Styling: Jade Chilton, Carmel Gill and Rachel Bassett
Words: Maddison Glendinning
Photography: Kristina Nabieva
Production Assistant: Diana Bell-Heather

In the pages that follow, we present to you the best artists, visionaries, achievers, humanitarians and young talent that make up this year's 25 finalists for the prestigious *Emirates Woman: Woman of the Year Awards 2017* as nominated by you, our dear readers. Each and every one of these strong, empowering women are at the forefront of their field and here, we honor their achievements. Read their inspiring stories and then log on to emirateswoman.com/awards to vote

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JULY 2017 ISSUE

achievers

ALANOUD BADR
Founder and Designer of Lady Fozaza

"It wasn't easy starting off being so public as a Saudi woman because I didn't fit the typical profile," says Alanooud Badr, the founder of clothing label Lady Fozaza. She fought against the stereotypes to become one of the region's most successful designers with the likes of Kim Kardashian West, Lady Gaga and Nancy Ajram having worn her pieces. One of her greatest accomplishments so far was "that was their biggest and most successful launch." She has since branched into jewellery design, working alongside L'azurde on limited edition collections over the past three years.

Alanooud believes the opportunities offered here in the UAE helped not only her business, but also her own growth. "The ability to make your own decisions as a woman without a man was the most important thing. It allowed me to grow, and blossom as an individual."

JOELLE MARDINIAN
CEO of Joelle Group

It was after moving to Dubai that Joelle Mardinian started her eponymous company. "When I came to Dubai, I landed my show on MBC which has now been running for 13 years. My fans led me to set up my own business as people were always asking me about my salons, doctors and treatments. In 2008, I opened my first salon, Maison de Joelle, in Jumeirah and never looked back." Just shy of one decade later, Joelle's portfolio now includes the aforementioned salon, as well as Joelle Paris and Clinica Joelle, with 13 salons across the GCC. Being in the public eye, Joelle admits she feels pressure to set a good example to her followers. "There's a lot of responsibility with having so many people look up to me. I don't know each of them, but I love them. I always try and make sure I am leading those who follow me well."

CLARE WOODCRAFT
CEO of Emirates Foundation

"Throughout my career and from an early age, I have been fascinated by how individuals, governments and businesses can make the world a better place through focused and effective interventions," Clare Woodcraft explains of how she found herself at the helm of Emirates Foundation. When Clare joined the Foundation, she was charged with overhauling it. "My role was to transform the Foundation into a single-mission organisation supporting youth development in the UAE for young people aged 15-35."

Whilst there are many things for Clare to be proud of from the past six years, the measurable impact the Foundation has had on the community is a particular highlight. "We know that we have impacted the lives of over 60,000 youth in the UAE, we have over 40,000 active volunteers in our volunteering programmes, we are creating new social entrepreneurs and have engaged with over 5,000 youth interested in science and technology."

SHAFENA YUSUFF ALI
CEO of Tablez Food Company

It was a shared love of travel and food that led Shafena Yusuff Ali to set up her business Tablez, which, in addition to developing its own homegrown brands (Peppermill and Blossombury's among them), brings internationally renowned food concepts to the region. "I was determined to bring the tastes and experiences of the culinary world to the GCC and India. It has been a very fruitful journey these last six years with Tablez growing rapidly and having concepts like Famous Dave's, Genghis Grill and Sugar Factory in our portfolio."

Professionally, Shafena says her biggest achievement so far is her customers. "Every time they recommended the restaurant to someone, I am successful; every time a guest comes back, the team has achieved what they set out to do; and every time a satisfied diner leaves my restaurant having been given good food and great service, is an achievement for me."

OMAIRA FAROOQ AL OLAMA
Managing Director/Founder of ALF Administration (Advanced Learning Formulas)

Omaira Farooq Al Olama started her company ALF Administration in 2010 after setting a gap in the market for "training UAE nationals in terms of mindset, creativity, critical thinking and work ethic" and feeling like she "had to do more for my country and for my people."

Since its launch, the company has found enormous success. "We worked with two major banks to help retain their nationals. Previously around 55 per cent of UAE nationals would leave in the first two years but we have brought that number down to 10 per cent."

Her grandmother (and the women in her family) inspired her to follow her dreams. "In the 1940s she was one of the only Emiratis who could speak and write English so she encouraged women to sit with her so she could read to them and help them write. I come from a family where the women all support each other."

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JULY 2017 ISSUE



AYAH AL BITAR
Founder and CEO of AYA The Art of Living

Although Ayah Al Bitar only launched her label in October 2015, the young Saudi Product and furniture designer has found tremendous success in the time that has followed, so much so that she rebranded at the start of this year "to elevate my design house to the next level". Of her designs, Ayah says, "I have a strong belief in merging tradition with modernity to create dialogue and social conversation and trigger social change through design. I [intended] by reinventing our heritage and by addressing our culture in a modern perspective, marketing Islam and the Arab world in a positive manner."

Over the years, "private clients, GCC royals, VIPs and embassies" have purchased her innovative designs and it's clear that Ayah is wholeheartedly passionate about her work. "Setting up my own business has been, and continues to be, a unpredictable journey, but I am very proud and love what I do."



SARA JAPANWALLA
Fashion Illustrator at Copper Worldwide

Since beginning her career as a fashion illustrator in 2012, Sara Japanwalla has worked with brands like Bloomingdale's, Ralph Lauren, Harvey Nichols and Maserati. The latter, she explains, was her biggest achievement. "I was selected as one of 100 creatives from around the world by Maserati to contribute to a limited edition coffee table book. I felt honoured to be an artist representing Dubai on a global campaign."

Dubai is a city she holds close to her heart. "I love the energy and diversity of this bustling, vibrant city. Fashion in particular is something I enjoy observing in Dubai. I love how women here carry themselves with a sense of boldness. They know what suits them and how to interpret trends to make it work for them. No-one pulls off colour and prints like the women in Dubai. I like to capture that eclectic vibrancy in my illustrations."



MAY BARBER
Owner and Managing Director of the CARTEL Wearable Art Gallery and Fashion Concept Store

Before launching the CARTEL, May Barber enjoyed a career as an "award-winning architect who later ventured into the art world before landing in fashion." It was in 2013 that she launched the business, which she describes as "a triangle of art, architecture and fashion. This entrepreneurial venture was a movement to launch and support emerging talents and uplift the local taste and consumption of fashion into something more meaningful, rich and avant-garde."

Whilst the store's accomplishments have been many, there are two that stick out in May's mind. "One of the most prominent exhibitions was presenting the world's first 3D printed haute couture by Iris Van Herpen for the first time in the Middle East. I am also extremely proud to be one of the first platforms to showcase and support local designers and 'export' these talents, such as Rina Thani and Rula Galalini, to global markets via our partnership with Farfetch.com."

artists



TARSLA SCHUBERT
Artist

Beginning her career as a street artist nine years ago, Tarsila Schubert has since worked with the likes of Hermes, Pepsi and Sephora, and was "the first woman to paint a mural in Jordan for the FIFA Women's World Cup." Most recently, Tarsila has opened Blue Care Art Factory, a 10,000 sq. ft. space in Downtown Dubai. "This is where the best creatives in Dubai have their residency and collaborations with revolutionary firms and individuals take place to bring real art to this city. Unfortunately Dubai is often perceived as a plastic city thanks to stereotypes, but we are trying to change this."

As for what inspires her art, Tarsila says "Culture is what shapes my paintings. Culture is intrinsic in somebody's personality and it comes out naturally. Having a real and unbiased view of somebody's soul through culture is the best inspiration anybody could ask for."



LAYLA KARDAN
Artist/Singer/Songwriter

Deciding to pursue a music career was not a decision Layla Kardan took lightly. "I learnt from a young age that I had a natural talent for singing and songwriting but I wasn't encouraged or supported to follow my passion, as the story usually goes for Middle Eastern girls. After completing my Masters degree in business, I worked for almost 13 years until I realised that if I didn't follow my dream, I would always feel unfulfilled."

Even with an EP and an album on the way, Layla says "some of my family are against the idea of me singing which is trying" and adds that "the social stigma that comes with being a female performer in the region" is another hurdle. However, she remains undeterred, telling EW: "I want to be the first Middle Eastern female crossover artist in the electronic soul/pop genre on the global stage."

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JUMANA ABU-HANNOUD
Managing Director, Gulf Area Office of
SOS Children's Villages International

"I have been passionate about humanitarian work all my life," Jumana Abu-Hannoud explains of her natural transition into a career built around caring for others. Prior to her current role as the Managing Director of SOS Children's Villages International where she is "expanding its network of partners towards a sustainable future through developing strategies, mobilising resources and spreading awareness of children's rights and healthcare issues," Jumana worked for I.H.H. Princess Haya for five years helping to implement national, regional and international strategies around education, peace and health, and also served as a Public Relations Officer for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Despite the heart-breaking nature of her work, Jumana says the people she meets constantly encourage her. "I find my inspiration in the strength that people show during diversity – it makes me reach within myself for my own courage and determination."



MADA ALSOWAIDI
Senior Country Program Officer
at Dubai Cares

After realising her passion for development work in university, Mada Alsowaidi joined Dubai Cares in 2013 at age 23. "The challenges I faced at the start of my career were related to my age," she explains. "Being a young woman, travelling around the world and meeting with professionals, experts and government officials intimidated me then. However, it allowed me to grow immensely and gain experience." Mada is now responsible for managing 12 programmes in 10 countries. "When I travel, I meet with governments, village leaders, teachers, parents, single mothers and children who have faced poverty, domestic violence, health problems or child labour. I also meet young mothers who missed school due to early pregnancy or child marriage." It is these interactions that inspire her to help. "It allows me to understand the challenges they face and put in place programmes that address these hardships and truly have an impact on their lives."

NADINE ARTON
Founder of Nadine Arton,
GlamOnYou and Amal Project

"I was very ambitious, fearless and always wanted to make a difference in any way possible," Nadine Arton says of her background in investigative journalism that focused on foreign aid and the diplomatic field. Most recently, Nadine (who also runs two successful fashion lines – one named after herself and the other called GlamOnYou) launched The AMAL project, which "aims to help traumatised and underprivileged children in conflict zones." The project focuses mostly on the Zaatari camp in Jordan where Nadine and her team have built recreational centres where the children living there can play and learn and Nadine says they're "looking to bring AMAL to other places as well." The project has not been without its challenges. "It's very difficult to work with big NGOs, the UN and government entities, especially if you're a private initiative like us. You have to make yourself heard, so we had to be persistent and daring."



DR. MARGIT GABRIELE MULLER
Executive Director at Abu Dhabi
Falcon Hospital

"I always knew I would become a veterinarian and I found birds of prey incredibly interesting," says Dr. Margit Gabriele Muller who is now responsible for all administrative and veterinary operations at Abu Dhabi's Falcon Hospital. "I had the opportunity to develop it from a very small veterinary clinic to the largest falcon hospital in the world, renowned as a leading institution for falcon medicine." Her biggest personal achievement to date is "receiving the Abu Dhabi Award from HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan," however her success wasn't without its struggles. "When I joined the hospital in 2001 I underestimated the problem of being a woman in the relatively male-dominated world of falconers. The first two years were incredibly difficult as I had to gain the respect and trust of the falconers and my staff who weren't used to a female leader. However, that helped further develop my perseverance and internal strength."



MARIAM FARAG
Head of Corporate Social Responsibility
at MBC Group

After working for the United Nations in several capacities from 1999, Mariam Farag took her experience to MBC in 2013 where she became "responsible for driving its corporate responsibility vision and strategy in the region and globally." Women entrepreneurship is a subject close to her heart and earlier this year, Mariam helped launch a competition called 'Masroura Amal' which "focuses business ideas or startups for extra support through capacity building, training, funding and media exposure." As to why it was important, she explains: "It had two purposes – to highlight successful stories and to tell every mother, daughter and wife that she has a role to play in the region's socioeconomic development and that she too can make a difference." Mariam adds: "For me, this is not a job but rather a passion and a way of life."



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SHABANA KARIM
CEO and Founder of The Nail Spa & Marquee Salon

Before launching The Nail Spa in 2002 after seeing a gap in the region's beauty industry, Shabana Karim "started intense market research, both here and abroad, looking for my company's niche. I travelled extensively, carefully studying and learning about the industry as I wanted to create the best possible nail salon I could."

Now, 15 years later, The Nail Spa has evolved to include Marquee Salons and there are over 16 locations across the UAE. With "no plans to slow down," Shabana says it is her staff that inspires her daily. "We have so many wonderful women who have been working with us since the beginning. Many of them send money back to their families and I always love to hear about their achievements, whether that's being able to send their children to great universities or buying their own homes which will support their families for many years to come."

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AYAH TABARI
Founder/ Designer of All Things Mochi

Ayah Tabari launched All Things Mochi after a trip to Goa in 2013 where she discovered the incredible work of the local artisans. Fast-forward four years and the brand has worked with "seven different embroidery communities worldwide." Ayah says she "employs artisans in their own country and we never discontinue our collections, hoping to be able to provide them with ongoing support." Ayah sees her brand as a way to merge two things she's always been passionate about. "I always wanted to work in the non-profit or charity sector but I was also interested in fashion so it came naturally to combine my love for both."

The nomination for her award is bigger than just herself, she tells EW. "All Things Mochi was set up to bridge the gap between talented artisans and the marketplace so winning would not only mean a lot to me, but it would also validate their work."



DANA HOURANI
Content Creator

A teenage passion for the arts – "mainly music and fashion" – led Dana Hourani to her current career path as a content creator. "When social media picked up, I began expressing these passions as a hobby and it then organically turned into a job when brands started to reach out for collaborations." That was two years ago, and prompted Dana to create her own official platform where "I created styling content as well as playlists." Nowadays she works "with brands to curate content in a way that tells a story rather than just the regular, functional posts, as well as taking on creative music projects."

In a field that is now highly saturated, Dana says her biggest challenge is "always trying to think of the next step, the next story, and attempting to be ahead of the curve. I try to reinvent myself and encourage a new form of creativity. It is a never-ending journey of self-discovery."

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KAREN MCLEAN
Food Blogger for Secret Squirrel Food

Two years ago, Karen McLean left her career as a chartered accountant to start her now highly successful food blog, Secret Squirrel Food. "It takes a lot of courage to take the leap out of what you've always known and into a life of passion as an entrepreneur. I love that I can now make a difference and put a smile on people's faces." It was her grandfather that first inspired her passion for food. "He owned four restaurants in Vietnam and I spent my childhood cooking in the kitchen with him. He taught me how to appreciate food," she tells EW.

Karen describes the blog as "a collection of my recipes that celebrate the pleasure of eating simple, natural and wholesome food. All my recipes are refined sugar-free, dairy-free and mostly gluten-free." She adds: "I'm very passionate about healthy food and it's my vision to promote healthy eating in the Middle East."



PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA PERRY

HIND HABIB AL MULLA
Owner/Director at Home Bakery LLC

After starting to cook at age 10, Hind Habib Al Mulla has since turned her childhood hobby into a career, founding Home Bakery in 2011. "I had no professional baking experience or culinary education – it was trial and error while I figured out the basics," she recalls. However it wasn't long before word got out and Hind looked to set up her own store. "Being a local business, it was difficult to get a location. People look at locals as incompetent and I was turned down a lot but that didn't stop me."

Thanks to her incredible creations (and determination), Hind soon found some high-profile supporters. "H.H. Sheikh Mohammed, Sheikh Hamdan, Sheikh Maktoum and Sheikh Majid were all regular customers and they helped me to get into Galleria Mall. They believed in what locals can do and achieve and I'm so glad they gave me the chance to prove myself and my business."

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AISHA SAEED HARB
Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at
General Community Development Authority, General
Coordinator for the National Service Youth
Council in the Ministry of Youth and Soldier in
the National Service Authority Armed Forces

Giving back to the community is a mantra that Aisha Saeed Harb lives by. "My full-time job is as a corporate social responsibility manager where I create packages for the private sector to help them give back to the community and the less fortunate. I also work with H.E. Shamma Bint Suhail Al Matri, the Minister of Youth, as I run the National Youth Service Council and I recently graduated as a soldier from the National Service Authority."

Aisha began helping others in 2011 when she established her first NGO – Social Bandage. "It was designed to create social campaigns and create opportunities for youth to invest their free time in. My first campaign was called 'Give A Wheelchair' where I sold T-shirts to raise money to buy electronic wheelchairs. We raised enough to buy 600. Of her roles, Aisha says: "I'm very passionate about philanthropy and helping others is my career objective."



ARWA AL BANAWI
Founder and Creative Director of Arwa Al Banawi

With her expert take on tailoring, it's hard to believe that Arwa Al Banawi once worked in the banking industry, however it was that job that inspired her new career. "I was working in a corporate environment and the suits I wore bored me. I wanted to change up the style and cuts and that's when I came up with the idea for my brand."

Having grown up in a fashion-savvy family – "my mum wore Chanel pieces that were designed by Coco herself and vintage Yves Saint Laurent, my father loved bespoke suiting and my grandfather owned cool, retro Versace shirts" – Arwa says it was inevitable that she would end up in fashion. Her ultimate goal, she says, is to "inspire women to be better, to be empowered by what they're wearing and not be held back by society's notions that women can't be their own boss."



MANAAL AL HAMMADI
Creative Director of Manaal Al Hammadi

Manaal Al Hammadi has been designing abayas since she was 14 years old, and her eponymous brand celebrated its 10-year anniversary in October of last year. "I started by designing for myself when I began to wear abayas as I always wanted to wear something that showed my personality and ambition. Soon, by word of mouth, it formed into a brand and I've never been more in love with anything else." Of her inspirations, Manaal says: "Dubai inspires me – the various forms of architecture, the blend of culture and modernity and the youth and their will to stand out."

The designer hopes that if she wins, it will inspire other women in the region. "I am a feminist and winning this award will give me another great reason to keep pushing and supporting women around me and around the GCC to make their dreams a reality on a daily basis without any regrets."



SAIMA KHAN
CEO & Founder of Step-Up

Although age has never been a personal barrier to Saima Khan chasing her dreams, she has come up against resistance because of it in her professional life, particularly when trying to garner support for her company Step-Up. "The club serves as a platform for youngsters to be exposed to several social and humanitarian activities such as planting trees, beach clean-ups and building wells. It's a great challenge to convince companies to lend resources to a young company founded by 18-year-olds." So how does she do it? "I tell them that millennials are a powerful generation of influencers, full of ideas, and that investing in us is like investing in a potential future business."

Professionally, Saima says her biggest accomplishment was becoming a delegate of the United Nations Youth Assembly whilst personally it "is the transformation I've undergone. Volunteering did what so many people and experiences couldn't do – it changed me internally for the best."



SOPHIE OMAR SHAMS
Year 12 Student at Dubai College

Sophie Omar Shams has been playing rugby since she was four years old and it fills her with as much joy now as it did then. "I train every day, whether that's strength-conditioning, skills sessions or coaching younger players. What appeals to me about rugby is its tactical aspect and the importance of relying on your teammates to be successful."

Despite only being 17 years old, Sophie has already represented the Middle East "at a senior level in the Mixed Team for the Touch Rugby World Cup in Australia in 2015" and currently plays senior level ladies rugby for the Heartbeat Tigers. Though she's found great success, there were hurdles to overcome on her journey. "Being the only girl in a boys' team. I had to deal with discrimination from the opposition. This didn't scare me, in fact, it made me more determined to play to the best of my ability."

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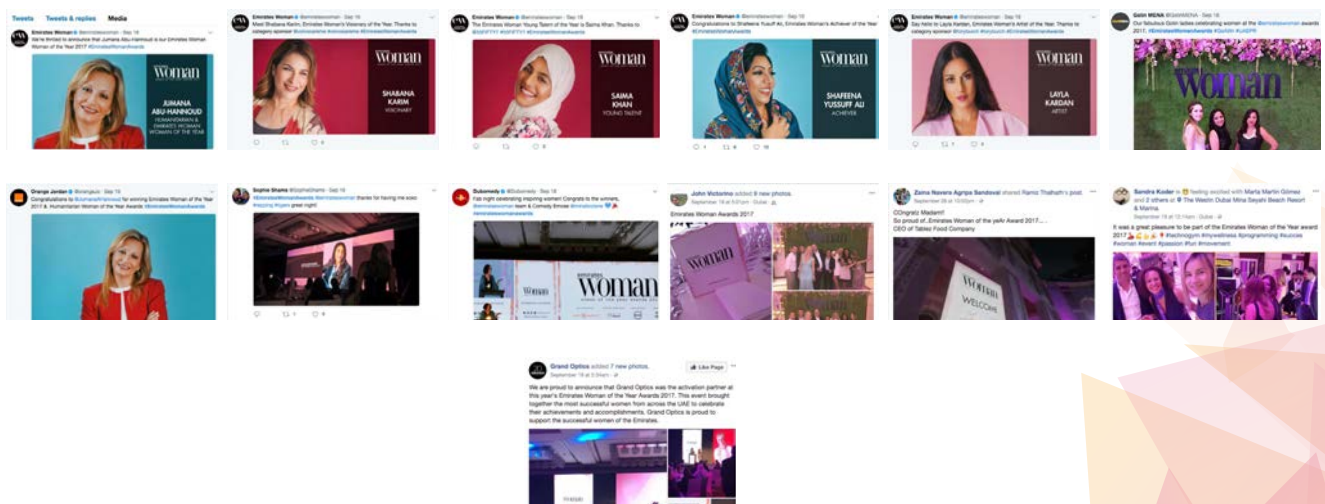
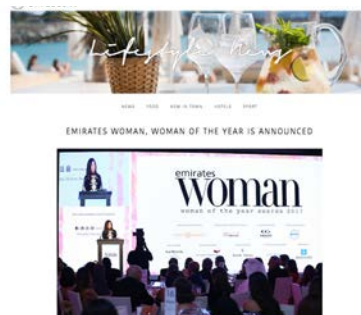
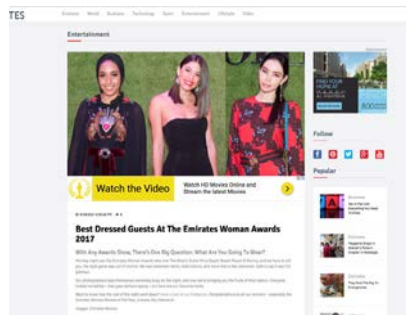


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