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CASE STUDY
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Age of
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founder of
NGS (page 22)



Kindom Tower forms the centerpiece of the project.
Image: AS+GG.

UAE FIRM TO WORK ON KINGDOM CITY PLANS

GAJ to support US-based Calthorpe Associates on Saudi's \$20bn mega project

TOP STORY

Kingdom Holdings announced the appointment of two architecture firms to carry out masterplanning for its \$20bn Kingdom City project in Jeddah: UAE-based GAJ as urban architect and US firm Calthorpe Associates as lead masterplanner.

The 5.3 million m² Kingdom City development will surround the world's tallest tower, the 1km-high Kingdom Tower.

The value of the contracts to the firms is \$1.6m (SR:6m), according to a statement issued to the Saudi stock exchange.

Kingdom Holding Co, which is chaired by HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud, agreed a deal last year with contractor Saudi Binladin Group which will see the contractor invest SR:1.5bn in building the project in return for a 16.93% stake in the company developing it, Jeddah Economic Company (JEC). Kingdom Holdings retains a 33.35% stake in JEC,

while Abraar International also holds 33.35% and Jeddah businessman Abdulrahman Hassan Sharbatly has a stake of 16.67%.

At a recent meeting of investors, Prince Alwaleed said the tower is on "a solid strategic path".

The tower will cost around \$1.22bn (SR: 4.6bn) to build, according to Kingdom Holdings. Architects for the tower project, US-based Adrian Smith & Gordon Gill Architecture (AS + GG), were appointed back in 2011 and a construction licence was granted to build the tower in February 2012. Saudi Bauer Group won a \$40.8m contract to carry out piling work for the tower in November.

Eng. Talal Al Maiman, chairman and CEO of Kingdom Real Estate Development Company (KRED), said: "The careful strategic planning has paid off and the execution of the greatest, tallest building project in the world for the next years to come has started in our beloved country Saudi Arabia. Our country deserves no less than such a project."

1KM
EXPECTED HEIGHT
OF KINGDOM
TOWER



SMART START

INTERVIEW

Oliver Ephgrave meets Nabil Sherif, founder of NGS Architects, to discover the realities of setting up an architectural practice in Dubai

Many people aspire to set up their own business and Nabil Sherif is someone that is living the dream, having created UAE-based NGS Architects in 2009 at the sprightly age of 28. After welcoming *MEA* into his office in Jumeirah Lakes Towers, the now 32-year-old Sherif speaks frankly about the joys and woes of being the boss of a fledgling design company.

“Overall, what we have achieved has happened at a slow pace. It’s hard work,” he remarks. “It’s something I have created from nothing. I haven’t been injected by finance — there are no bank loans. There are times when it’s hard and there are times when you are happy. It’s an up and down thing.”

Born to an Egyptian father and a Portuguese mother, Sherif’s adolescence was spent in the UK and Egypt, before he opted to study architecture and design in the University of Westminster, London. Before attaining part three in the UK architecture programme, he worked for a number of firms including Sheppard Robson, HOK Sports, Portfurious and Foster + Partners.

Commenting on his stint at the latter firm he said: “At Foster + Partners I worked on some very interesting projects, such as a yacht design scheme and a skyscraper in Dubai. The building never went ahead, but it was the first time I got linked to this region. I was there for around six months, until I did part three.”

Sherif subsequently joined RHWL and stayed for a number of years, primarily working on commercial and hospitality schemes in London. Like most firms around the world, the financial crisis forced redundancies in Sherif’s team, prompting him to come up with an ambitious plan. He continues: “I went to Egypt and sat down with my family and said I’m thinking of doing my own thing. I read somewhere that companies set up during a recession

because things are cheaper, but you go up with the wave when things get better.

“People were saying, ‘Nabil, give it more time’. I thought I knew 60-70% of the experiences in architecture. The rest I’d have to learn the hard way. I just thought of doing it. So I sold my car and used the money to come out here.”

After arriving in the UAE, Sherif bought a trade licence from Ras Al Khaimah as it was “the cheapest option at the time” and set up an office in his living room.

“It’s something I wouldn’t wish on anyone,” he adds. “After a year, I found a way to set up in JLT, Dubai.

“I find Dubai to be a good mix between the Middle East and the UK. In the UK and Egypt I felt like a foreigner — I had an identity crisis. In Dubai we are all in the same boat — we are all trying to settle and find a life.

“I thought it was going to be like another city you can break into. But it had a culture, with people that have been here for 20-30 years who had relationships. You weren’t just going to come from outside and get lots of business by yourself. When I had my licence I bought a brand spanking new computer. I sat down and then thought, ‘what do I do now?’ Thankfully I got my first client two weeks later, which was an interior design project in Montreal, Canada.”

He continued: “We have reached a stage now where we are in talks with a few high-profile clients from abroad to do a couple of villas on the Palm, and we’re doing several creative office spaces for marketing companies. We have labelled ourselves as the ‘creative’ architectural practice.

It is this ‘creative’ element that is fundamental to Sherif. He elaborates: “If I’m paid to design a square block, and I ask the client ‘is there any design element, where can I put my stamp on it?’





“My architecture would be Islamic with old and new — showing historic Islamic architecture with a contemporary touch. I like to work with straight lines and squares. I’m not too much of a roundy person.”

and he says ‘no, it is restricted,’ I’m not inclined to work with that client. I’m more inclined to work with someone that appreciates creativity and wants me to create the brief.”

He concedes that it’s sometime hard for an architect to think as a businessman. “When you are an architect you are behind a computer — you aren’t meeting the client, or knowing what the charges are — you aren’t a business man. Still today I don’t think I’m a business man, but I am trying to get there.

“When you are a businessman opening up an architectural practice, you employ architects. But an architect setting up a practice is more inclined to be emotionally attached to projects and not to charge the full fees, as he may feel that the project would benefit his portfolio. That is more valuable than money. That is the creative mind. These are the things you are trying to come to terms with.”

Describing his own personal style, Sherif comments: “I am Arab. I like Islamic architecture and I like the calligraphy and the art — all of these combined. My architecture, if I had it my way, would be Islamic with old and new — showing historic Islamic

architecture with a contemporary touch. I like to work with straight lines and squares. I’m not too much of a roundy person. Everything is clean and square, even to my logo. I like things that are striking, things that make you think, things that tell a story.

“I’m not the best; I consider myself above average but I enjoy what I do. I’m still finding myself in architecture in terms of skill and design. At the end of the day, it’s important to be paid for something you enjoy doing. We’re looking for that middle ground where we can create something but get paid for it.”

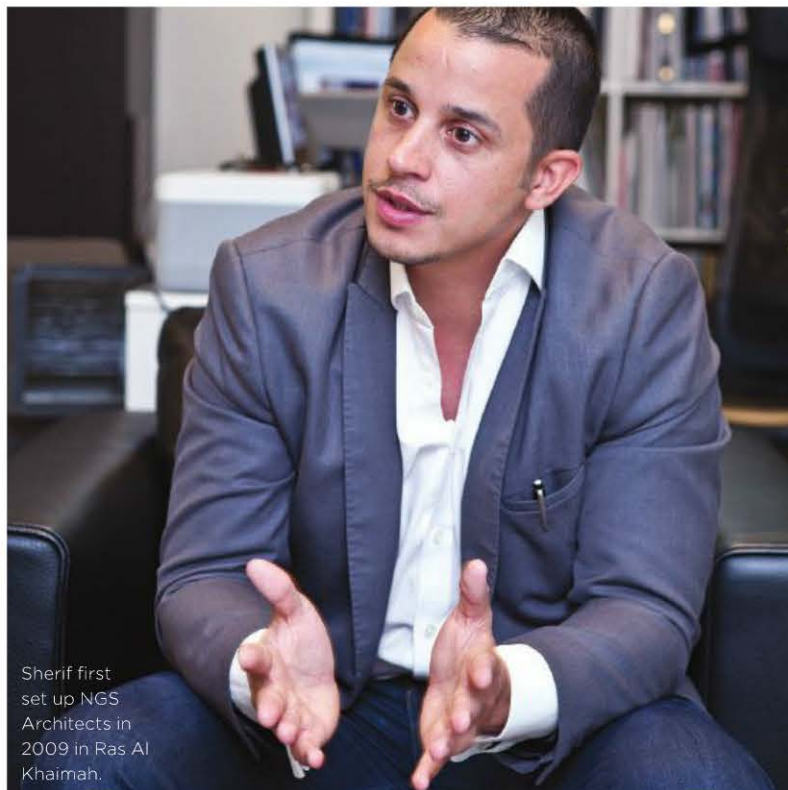
He reiterates that the company has struggled at times. “To be honest, the beginning of 2012 was a bit disastrous — projects were put on hold, or cancelled because the client couldn’t agree contracts or terms. When I approached my first client, I didn’t have anything. They said what have you done for NGS?”

“I didn’t have a portfolio but I knew myself I could do it. They said, ‘Nabil you look young, I don’t want to risk my two million dirhams with you’. If I put myself in their situation, I wouldn’t do it. If I had some kid that has a bit of confidence I would say, ‘hope it works out with you, but not with me’.

Sherif continues: “When you run your own business, your name and relationships are gold. Word spreads. You have to change your personality for the better and adapt to it. If you’re a hothead then you won’t be able to speak to clients or get business. But you learn how to be diplomatic and not take things to heart.

“When you are negotiating contracts it’s an art — there’s a lot of psychology. Another thing that keeps you going is that a lot of architects, in the UK or elsewhere, have failed in business but their architecture is amazing. A lot of businesses buy out architectural practices.”

Yet throughout the conversation, it is clear that Sherif has high ambitions for NGS. He adds: “The idea is to be a major player in the Middle East region. Those are the things that keep me going. I think I’ve been here for a few years and I’m not where I want to be. But then you hear stories. There are many architects that set up their own practice and their first project came four or five years later. Tadao Ando was a boxer before he became an architect. It can happen to you at any time.” 🎯



Sherif first set up NGS Architects in 2009 in Ras Al Khaimah.





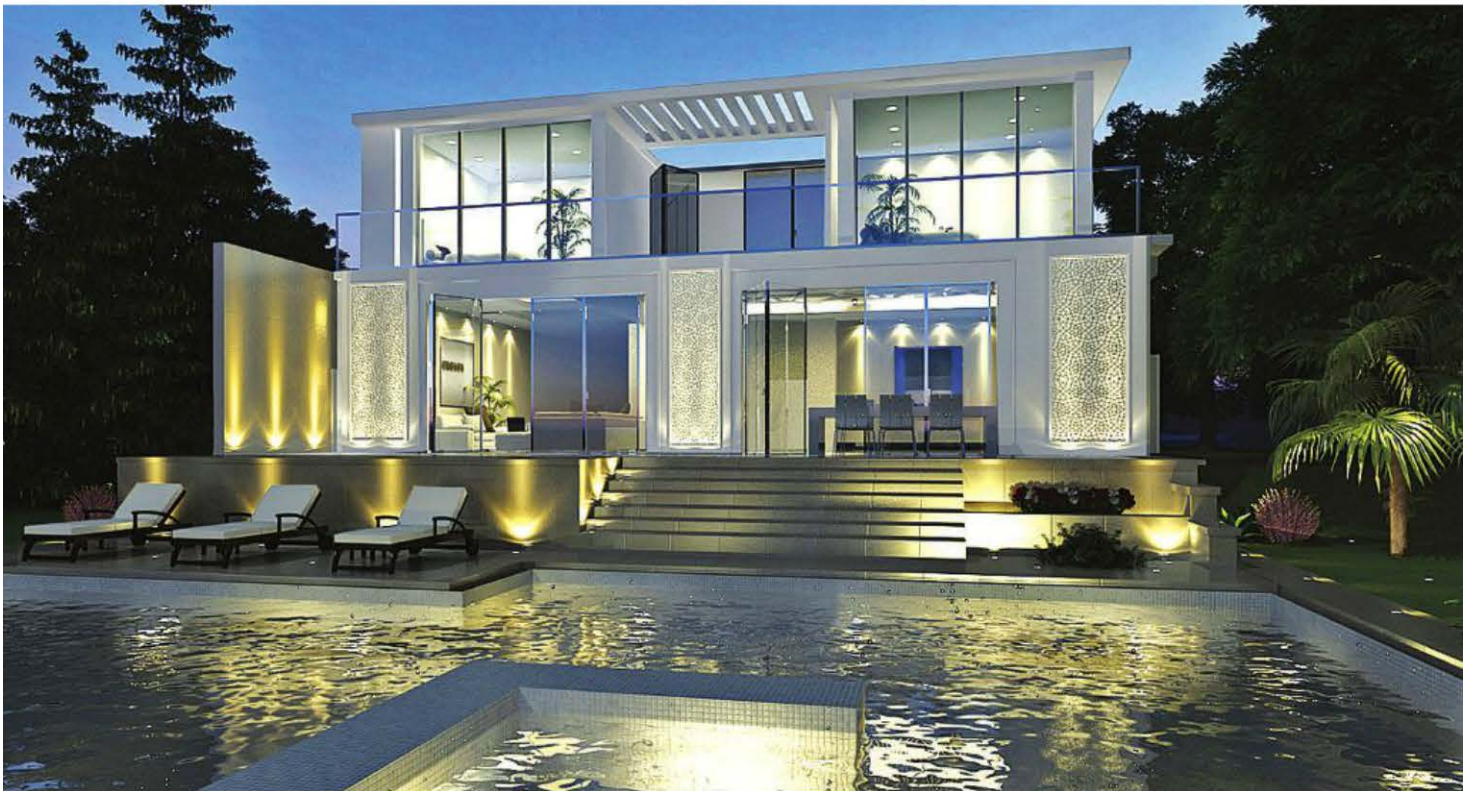
PORTFOLIO: NGS Architects

◀ SLICE BUILDING, DUBAI

In this commercial scheme, horizontal planes act both as a means to reduce sun glare in the office space and give the building a streamline effect. The office comprises a double height entrance lobby with a connecting bridge to both parts of the dissected building, using Islamic geometry.

▼ ISLAMIC HOUSE, DUBAI

This unbuilt project for a private client in Dubai combines Islamic art and architecture to create a luxurious living space. Tranquil water features, geometric patterns and mosaics are all used to give a modern twist on Islamic design.



► **FRED PERRY STORE,
DUBAI**

Fred Perry wanted to achieve a look that was in keeping with their English Heritage and brand image. In its role as a design/sustainable consultant, NGS provided reclaimed Barnstock brick-tiles to provide a rustic look that aligns with the Fred Perry brand.

▼ **PIZZA EXPRESS, JLT,
DUBAI**

For the flagship Pizza Express in the Mövenpick Hotel in Jumeirah Lakes Towers, NGS Architects, along with partners Reclaimed Brick UK, supplied the yellow London brick-tiles to achieve an aesthetic which brought the design together.



PEOPLE



Anis takes over from Thierry Paret.

AIA appoints Anis as regional president

Sherif Anis has been appointed president of the American Institute of Architects' Middle East chapter, taking over from Thierry Paret.

Anis has been on the AIA Middle East board since its inception in 2010, and now works for Gulf Related as design manager.

He commented: "It is my goal to continue the good work we have done and use AIA's global reach and influence."

With a total of 22 years' experience in the USA, London and the GCC, Anis relocated to Abu Dhabi from Boston in 2008 and is actively involved in projects in both Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

Working to foster stronger ties between the AIA, regional architects and MENA governments, Anis and the board seek to foster an understanding of the differences in professional practices between the US and the Middle East.

He continued: "Member firms based in the US continue to become more active in our region and AIA ME can help propel them into this competitive environment."



“The percentage of projects completed on time and within budget is in the range of 30%, with 70% almost always delayed.”

HAMAD AL SHAGAWI, chairman, Saudi Council of Engineers

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60 SECOND INTERVIEW NABIL SHERIF, PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER, NGS ARCHITECTS

Is it hard to be a business- man and an architect?

When you are a businessman opening up an architectural practice, you employ architects. But an architect setting up a practice is more inclined to be emotionally attached to projects and not to charge the full fees, as he may feel that the project would benefit his portfolio. That is more valuable than money.

What is your goal?

My idea is to create and be a major player in the Middle East region. Those are the things that keep me going. It can happen to you at any time.



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My idea is to create and be a major player in the Middle East region. Those are the things that keep me going. It can happen to you at any time.

“The building construction sector has the largest potential for cutting greenhouse emissions responsible for global warming.”
IARIFA HAMZAH, Partner, Al Tamimi Company



GULF INTERIORS

SOURCING DESIGN

JULY-AUGUST 2011

focus: Kitchens

profile: Nabil Sherif

project: Taymouth Castle

preview: ZOW Istanbul 2011



(47) Healthcare Design

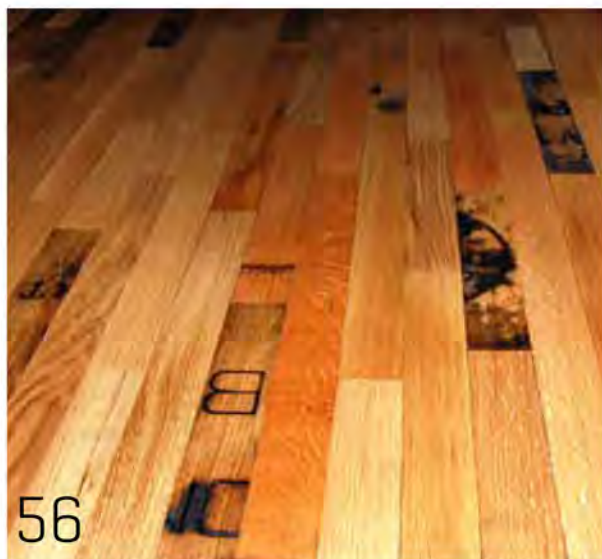
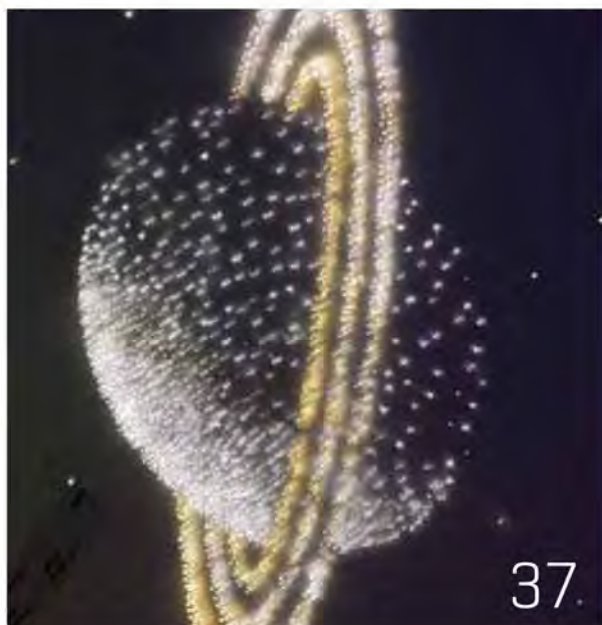


ON THE COVER

The Twist that shouts

Twist is part of a new collection from leading European carpet manufacturer Desso. This vibrant style is part of Desso's Carpetecture collection – Colour Dimensions II. The collection draws on contemporary architecture to produce flooring that complements modern interiors. It is the result of extensive consultation with Desso's Circles of Architects – an initiative that gives architects and designers the opportunity to share their vision for the future of flooring and contribute to the product development process. Read more about Twist in this month's sourcebook dedicated to flooring.

w: desso.com



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PROFILE

Nabil Sherif



Name: Nabil Sherif
Title: Principal Director
Company: NGS Architects
Location: Jumeirah Lakes Towers, Dubai
Currently working on: Residential and commercial interiors and exteriors, residential and commercial landscaping



Always keen to showcase emerging design professionals, Gulf Interiors introduces you to Nabil Sherif an architect whose impressive international experience informs his new regional roots

Creating space,



Top
The contemporary
interiors of a Cairo
residential project by NGS

Bottom
The residence leads out to
an elegant exterior

How did you first become involved in the design industry?

"Originally I had a passion for art at a young age: painting, pencil drawings of landscapes, and using clay to form sculpture pieces. Growing up I needed to see how I could transform my passion for design and creating form into a lifelong career. I chose to become an architect because the idea of creating space linked with form allowed me to combine my art and sculpture background to something that could be identifiable in the public realm.

How has your career evolved from then to present day?

Becoming a Royal Institute of British Architects-qualified architect I was able to work for numerous architectural practices and build my knowledge of the industry as well as gain the passion and drive to own my own practice.

What inspires you to create?

A lot of people have answered this question by saying everything and anything. My answer is more specific. What inspires me to create is to see the positive reaction when someone sees or experiences your work, in turn that gives me a satisfaction that allows me to create forms and interior spaces that clients themselves can become self-inspired.

How would you describe your personal style/signature?

It is contemporary and minimalistic with classic and cultural undertones.

What are your favourite materials or mediums to work with?

The materials are: tanned oak, stone, American black walnut, polished concrete, brushed stainless steel and glass. Mediums: The use of water and light adds to the overall architecture of a building or space.

Can you describe a few notable highlights of your career to date?

My architecture internship in New York in 2001. To be working at such a young age in a city with one of the world's most interesting skylines was very inspiring and exciting to say the least. Working on signature projects at Fosters + Partner; such as the design of luxury yachts, skyscrapers and the experience of delivering high-end building models for presentations to clients.

Also, starting my own architectural practice in 2010. This was the realisation of a personal dream. While working for top architectural firms was exciting and extremely beneficial in terms of my experience, knowledge, and development as

Slice Building exterior, Dubai



an architect, setting up NGS was the opportunity to take my creativity and passion for design and form to another level.

What would be your dream creative project given free reign and resources?

My dream project would be to design and construct my own home on a cliff somewhere.

Which designers do you admire?

Tadao Ando – the minimal use of concrete and the addition of water and light to create a strong and equally convincing building for the purpose it was built for. Frank Gehry for his fluid forms that create spaces triggering an emotion and bring a new definition to architecture.

Talk us through your approach to a project.

I would like to think this [our approach] is an important element that has helped NGS become sustainable in the economic crisis. First and foremost we are all about exceeding what the client has requested of us from the time of appointment.

Usually at the beginning of any project (once the client is happy to employ our services) we sit with the client and formulate an extensive brief through what I like to call my 'guidebook of questions.' Getting answers to these questions will create what is effectively a well-thought out brief that is potentially the guidebook for the construction of that particular project.

We have several different types of contracts a client can choose from depending on what type of involvement they want NGS to have. We can be architectural consultants, concept designers, prepare full design packages to go out for tender, represent the client through the tender stage, represent the client through construction phase, or manage the whole project from initial design proposal to construction completion.


What's next for you – what projects are you embarking on?

The most important thing when starting off an architectural practice, that you hope will succeed, is to make sure the foundation is strong.

In parallel to forming a well-oiled business structure it is important that you choose the projects that will best represent the standard and quality you want to set from here on out.

At the moment we are involved mainly with private individuals and corporate clients who are either present in the GCC, or are basing themselves over here and would like to partner with an architectural practice that is educated about the GCC region but also has qualifications from the UK.

Presently we have a couple of commercial projects in Abu Dhabi's twofour54, and in Dubai we have a few projects on an international basis for numerous private clients. In the pipeline we are in talks with high-profile clients that could really boost the direction and credentials of NGS Architects in the near future."

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Nabil Sherif

Published on: July 24, 2011

section: Profile

Circulation: 12000

Name: Gulf Interiors

Language: 1

Pages: 15, 16

An interview with Nabil Sherif, Principle Director of NGS Architects. "Originally I had a passion for art at a young age: painting, pencil drawings of landscapes, and using clay to form sculpture pieces. Growing up needed to see how I could transform my passion for design and creating form into a lifelong career. I chose to become an architect because the idea of creating space linked with form allowed me to combine my art and sculpture background to something that could be identifiable in the public realm."



Abu Dhabi's skyline is a mix of traditional and modern architecture. The city is a blend of old and new, with a rich history and a vibrant future. The architecture is a reflection of the city's identity, combining traditional elements with modern design. The city is a blend of old and new, with a rich history and a vibrant future. The architecture is a reflection of the city's identity, combining traditional elements with modern design.

PROFILE Nabil Sherif

Name: Nabil Sherif
Title: Principle Director
Company: NGS Architects
Location: Abu Dhabi
Current workplace: NGS Architects
Education: Bachelor's degree in Architecture, American University in Cairo, Egypt

As a young man, Nabil Sherif was passionate about art. He spent his childhood painting and drawing, and he loved to create form. He wanted to see how he could transform his passion for design and creating form into a lifelong career. He chose to become an architect because the idea of creating space linked with form allowed him to combine his art and sculpture background to something that could be identifiable in the public realm.

Creating space,



As a young man, Nabil Sherif was passionate about art. He spent his childhood painting and drawing, and he loved to create form. He wanted to see how he could transform his passion for design and creating form into a lifelong career. He chose to become an architect because the idea of creating space linked with form allowed him to combine his art and sculpture background to something that could be identifiable in the public realm.

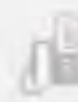
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Maintaining your Property

IOA Chairman talks about Facility Management



BUILDING DREAMS IN JLT



Nabil Sherif, Principal Director and Founder of JLT-based NGS Architects, talks to JLT Times about his passion for design, the inspiration behind his business, and the challenges he encountered when he decided to substitute employment with entrepreneurship.

It isn't often you meet an artist who is as passionate about art as he is about business. Nabil Sherif however, has managed to seamlessly merge the two. Principal Director and Founder of NGS Architects, Sherif is just as comfortable talking colours and composition as he is talking balance sheets and bottom lines, and everything about his persona, from his cool confidence to his ready smile, is underlined with a determination to succeed.

Sherif's appreciation for art and fascination with aesthetics began at a young age, and an internship at a prestigious New York architectural practice at 21 further cemented his desire to pursue his passion for architecture and design.

His dream started when he embarked on an architecture degree at Westminster University's Institute for Design and Technology in London, and graduated with honours at the age of 28. In 2008 he was certified by the prestigious Royal Institute of British Architects.

During and post qualification, Sherif has worked in some of the largest leading architectural practices, including RHWL, Benoy, HOK, and Fosters + Partners, rapidly progressing to the role of Project Architect. With an impressive range of projects in his portfolio, from residential homes and commercial buildings, to interiors and landscaping, by 2009, Sherif's career was well underway.

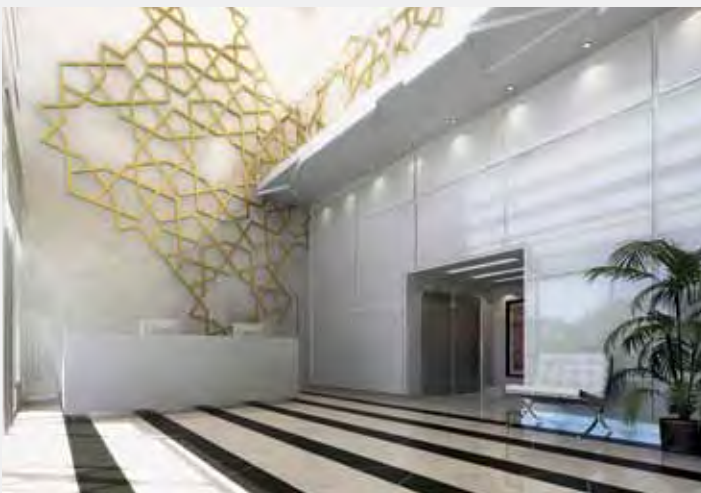
“I was used to working 80-hour weeks on some of the most dynamic projects an architect can hope to work on,” he says. “And although I enjoyed the challenge, I wanted to put that time into something more constructive. At that time though, I didn't know what it was.”

It was during a family reunion in Egypt, his father's birthplace, that Sherif began toying with the idea of entrepreneurship. The opportunities available in the UK, which was in the midst of the global financial crisis, seemed limited, and Sherif wondered whether or not to move abroad to fulfil his dream of

setting up his own practice. Despite the encouragement he received from his family, Sherif returned to London still unsure whether or not to take the risk.

“Everything that happened when I returned home seemed to point me in the direction of taking that risk,” Sherif reveals. “I came back to find that fellow colleagues were let go, including members of my own team. Salaries were being reduced and we would be expected to work even longer hours to compensate for the lack of manpower. It was as if my question of whether or not to start my own business was being answered for me.”

What happened next was either luck or destiny as Sherif found his plans materialising with very little effort. He packed up his belongings, found a tenant for his apartment and sold his car to contribute towards his start-up capital, just when he no longer needed it to run around preparing for the move. Within one month, he was en route to Dubai to try his hand at entrepreneurship.



"I met my first client in the most unlikely of places the same night I got my first architectural consultancy license at the RAK Free Zone," he smiles. "I was on my way home and stopped for a quick bite at a cafeteria and to meet a group of friends. As luck would have it, a friend of a friend had been visiting from Canada. He was a lawyer who commissioned me for an interior job for his Montreal residence."

It has been two years since Sherif met his first client, and today he is the founder and part-owner of Firmus Global, a full-service consultation practice for international trading in building materials, as well as the founder of NGS Architects, a multidisciplinary practice specialising in the residential, commercial, retail, landscape and multi-use sectors. Drawn by its convenient location, competitive prices and diverse range of office solutions, Sherif registered both companies with the JLT Free Zone, with NGS Architects based in Jewellery and Gemplex, and Firmus Global in Goldcrest Executive Towers.

The journey wasn't easy though, and Sherif has had to make difficult choices along the way. Although his passion was architecture, for almost a year he focused mainly on Firmus whilst working on the foundation of NGS in the background, recognising that the revenue generated could then be invested in the future of NGS. Now that Firmus is well-established, Sherif has made the decision to step back and focus on NGS, putting his first passion, qualification, unique style and attention to detail to good use.

Defining NGS's ethos and differentiating it from its peers was also challenging, but for Sherif, it is imperative to be unique in an industry overflowing with competitors. He believes that the best approach is a simple one. The practice's approach engages the knowledge and experience of the entire team, and encourages collaboration both within the design studio and with co-architects, consultants and specialists, a process that ensures that the final design is an informed, intelligent and creative reflection of the brief.

"Every project we take on we commit to 100%, and we utilise all the high quality resources at our disposal with the aim of always exceeding our client's expectations," Sherif explains. "Respecting the environment and culture in which a building is raised is key to how we work and a central part of the conversations we have with our clients from the very beginning of a project. The difference between a good-built and a great-built is attention to detail."

He goes on to explain that his practice is committed to providing high quality, sustainable solutions, and although they challenge repetition and pride themselves on being unique, their structures are never at odds with their surroundings.

Sherif's designs are clearly influenced by his diverse Egyptian-Portuguese heritage and UK upbringing, and as a result, his work, though contemporary, has strong cultural undertones.

Drawing inspiration from his clients' satisfaction – his high referral rates

bearing testimony to their contentment – the 31 year-old architect is determined to continue to invest in the growth of his business until it develops into a major industry player.

Sherif's ability to work within every budget, together with his customised approach that enables clients to either commission NGS as architectural consultants, concept designers, or prepare full design packages to go out for tender, also makes him popular among those looking for a personal touch. Alternatively, clients can also appoint NGS to manage the entire project, from initial design proposal to construction completion. However, as flexible as NGS Architects is, there is one thing Sherif does not compromise: his style.

"My work is minimalistic with classic cultural undertones, and I prefer to embark on projects that complement my own vision and expertise," he explains. "If a client has a very definite image in his mind with very little room for creativity, it would be difficult to conform to that sort of rigidity."

At present, NGS Architects has a number of commercial projects in Abu Dhabi, together with international projects for private clients, and the practice's professionalism, creativity and attention to detail is much sought-after in an industry cluttered with profit-seekers. With several high profile clients in the pipeline, the future of NGS Architects is limited only to the heights of its vision.

For more information, visit www.ngsarchitects.com





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JLT Residents Details

Nabil Sherif

Architect and Entrepreneur

Nabil Sherif is a 31 year-old architect who lives, works and operates his business in JLT. Hailing from the UK with a mixed Middle Eastern and European heritage, Nabil chose Saba Tower in JLT for its reasonably priced living options, family oriented atmosphere and proximity to his office.

"I chose to start my architectural practice, NGS Architects, in JLT as it offers cost-effective and comprehensive solutions, from starting up my actual business, obtaining my consultancy license to finding suitable office space. The location is perfect as it provides easy access to both Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and the DMCC staffs are really supportive. I've been recommending DMCC and JLT to friends who want to open their own businesses in the region.

"JLT's also a great, family-friendly community, with all the amenities and facilities you need. Not only is it a five minute drive to work, but I can walk to Carrefour, there's a mosque in the community and the buildings also have useful facilities. Everything I need is at my doorstep."

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Special Report

A very modern prince

January 2012

Young, internationally educated, and an accomplished sportsman and writer, His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Dubai, is a very modern ruler in waiting. *Vision* talks to him about his father's influence, Dubai's place on the world stage and the challenges of leadership

by Leonard Stall



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January 2012

Current Issue



Following numerous social and economic milestones of the past four decades, *Vision* considers the nation's global standing as it embraces the future



Nabil Sherif

Architect

From: Egypt

Says: 'Here, everyone is equal, no matter what their background'

One of Dubai's brightest young architects, Nabil Sherif has an Egyptian father and a mother from Madeira.

Raised a Muslim with what he calls a "mixed culture", it was the way of life that attracted him to Dubai – "a place in between Europe and Egypt, which offered opportunity aplenty in a Middle Eastern cultural setting.

"I wanted to set up on my own and Dubai seemed ideal. No other country in the Middle East caters for the way of life I had become used to, but still allows newcomers an opportunity. Here, everyone is equal no matter what their background, and you don't have to be part of the local culture to succeed."

Today, Sherif's NGS Architects is growing fast from its base at the Jumeirah Lakes Towers freezone.

Image: Abe Peñamante

[UAE 40th Anniversary](#)



Celebrating 40 years of the UAE

Dubai celebrates the 40th anniversary of the United Arab Emirates

[UAE 40th Anniversary](#)



Our Dubai

Throughout its history, Dubai has welcomed residents from all corners of the planet. *Vision.ae* speaks to a selection for their take on the emirate which has shaped them and whose destiny, in turn, they have helped shape



03

Nabil Sherif

Architect
From: **Egypt**



'Where else could you have such a bright future?'

One of the brightest and most talented young architects in Dubai, Nabil Sherif, has an Egyptian father and a mother from the island of Madeira.

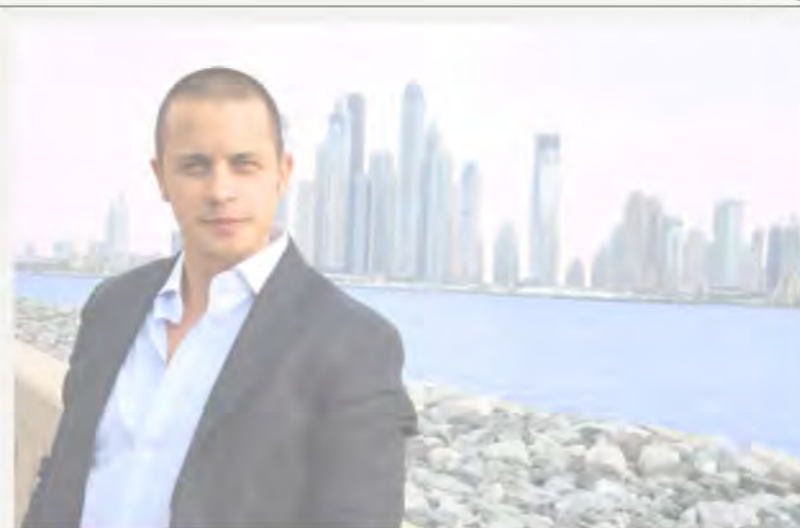
Brought up as a Muslim with what he calls a "mixed culture", it was the way of life that attracted him to Dubai – "a place in between Europe and Egypt which offered plenty of opportunity alongside Middle Eastern culture."

By the time Nabil arrived in June 2008, hot on the heels from postings with two prestigious London-based architectural practices, Foster + Partners, and RHWL, his brother had already made the move.

"I was determined to set up something on my own and Dubai seemed the perfect place. There is no other country in the Middle East region that caters for the way of life I had become used to, but still allows newcomers an opportunity. Here, everyone is equal, no matter what their background, and you don't have to be part of the local culture to succeed.

"I didn't mind about opening my business around the global financial crisis. I had done my research and decided that I would start up when things were difficult and ride the wave, but get myself and the business ready for when things pick up strongly again!"

Nabil's NGS Architects is growing fast from his base in Jumeirah Lakes Towers, with a licence from Dubai Multi Commodities Centre. "Where else could you go to have an opportunity like this, where you can live, work, set up an office and find clients from across the Middle East region, and have such a bright economic future?"



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NABIL SHERIF
DUBAI (UAE) -
ARCHITECT



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23 followers



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