

Interior designers upbeat on growth

Dubai market primarily driven by new residential, retail and hospitality projects

DUBAI

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Interior design firms expect the brisk business that they have enjoyed in Dubai over the last two years to continue next year, driven by new residential, retail and hospitality projects.

“There have been more showrooms opening in Dubai in the last three years. We are also seeing design-oriented cafes,” said Cristina Romelli Gervasoni, Fair Director of Downtown Design.

The four-day show, which opened in Dubai yesterday, has attracted more than 50 global and regional exhibitors, including Dubai-based Loci, De Castelli, Vitra, Emeco and Fritz Hansen, among others.

Among Dubai’s major projects is the Dubai Design District. The project, which is under construction, will be located adjacent to the Business Bay area, and will play a role in developing the emirate’s fashion, design and luxury sectors.

Construction projects that are expected to be completed by the end of this year in the

Gulf countries are estimated to be worth \$128.46 billion (Dh471.8 billion), up 92 per cent compared to 2013, according to data by management consultancy, Ventures Middle East.

The local interior and fit-out market has improved in the last five to seven years due to “projects booming and visitors growing,” said Nisreen Asaad, assistant to the managing director at Italy-based Sicis, which manufactures glass mosaic for floors, walls and furniture. A 24-carat gold mosaic panel (measuring 164cm x 225cm) at Sicis is priced at Dh10,000-Dh150,000.

The company, which supplies its products to hotels and palaces, expects sales growth of “80 per cent” in 2014 over the previous year, Asaad said.

Similarly, Lasvit anticipates a 20-30 per cent rise in sales this year over the previous year, according to area manager Jan Flidr. The Czech Republic-based manufacturer of light fittings showcased a \$600,000 kinetic sculpture in the shape of a flower, called Alice.

On challenges facing the local design market, Gervasoni said that designers are working separately and not collaborating. At the show, designers from the region will have the opportunity to collaborate with global designers and broaden their exposure.