

NEWSLETTER: CITY PULSE DUBAI

Dubai gears up for autumn

Works on paper, Mozart in motion and a bold new Italian arrival set the tone for the season.



Rebecca Anne Proctor

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Welcome back to AL-MONITOR Dubai.

As Dubai gears up for a busy **autumn season**, we highlight the last few days of a group exhibition showcasing works on paper by local and international artists at **Carbon 12** in Dubai. Elsewhere, we offer a glimpse of what is expected to be a fascinating exhibition opening at the **Louvre Abu Dhabi**, charting 1,000 years of trade in the Indian Ocean. For those eager to head to the opera for a brand-new season, **Dubai Opera** will open its 10th anniversary season with the Ukrainian National Ballet's adaptation of **The Marriage of Figaro**. And for **Italian food** lovers, get ready for a new upscale Italian restaurant opening in September in Downtown Dubai.

If you want to receive this newsletter or our other new weekly City Pulse newsletters — for Doha, Istanbul and Riyadh — [sign up here](#).

Happy reading,

Rebecca

P.S. Have feedback or tips on Dubai's culture scene? Send them my way at contactus@al-monitor.com.

1. Leading the week: 'The Two Walks'



Sarah Almehairi. Scepter Snap. 2026. Paper on mat board. (Courtesy of the artist and Carbon 12)

For those who love works on paper, you can still catch a few days of a group exhibition at **Carbon 12** in Dubai presenting new and archival works by a range of local and international artists.

Titled **The Two Walks**, the artworks have been selected by writer and curator **Judy Karkour**. Bringing together **14 artists** with distinct material and artistic backgrounds, the exhibition explores paper as a medium that challenges scale as grandiose and awe-inspiring.

Participating artists include Sarah Almehairi, Faris Alshafar, Olaf Breuning, Bernhard Buhmann, André Butzer, Nadine Chandour, Monika Grabuschnigg, Amir Khojasteh, Nour Malas, Solimar Miller, Philip Mueller, Mayar Obedo, Edgar Orlaineta and Amba Sayal-Bennett.

Each artist uses paper and manipulates it in different ways for their artwork. The title of the show, **The Two Walks**, refers to the imaginary corridor or the liminal space that souls use to travel between diverse worlds and realms. The works reflect how there is something unique and intimate in **working with paper**. Within this more delicate medium, artists have the ability to express often-hidden or not readily seen existential ideas and thoughts through innovative techniques. The works on show emphasize and celebrate **paper's transformative potential**.

On view are **Almehairi's** collage works presenting the compositional characteristics of intuitive layering and building; works by **Faris Alshafar** informed by time-bound sensory experiences and how memories of these experiences are often perceived as self-contained, layered universes; **Olaf Breuning's** Not Even Drinks Make Us Happy (2005), which reflects the present times over the last 20 years through his innate comic style; **Bernhard Buhmann's** collage, Shelter (2026), perhaps an apt title for the times we are living in, which continues his exploration into the tensions that arise between individuality and collective norms; and **André Butzer's** Untitled #001 (2013), revealing a naive sketch of a face that resides between abstraction and figuration.

Dates: Sept. 1–6

Location: Dubai Design District (d3), United Arab Emirates

Find more information [here](#)

2. Word on the street: Rocambolesco



A view of the vibrant new Italian restaurant Rocambolesco. (Courtesy of Rocambolesco)

A new upscale Italian restaurant called **Rocambolesco** is opening in Dubai next month. The new creative dining concept, which operates under the Italian idea of **convivialità**, meaning conviviality, friendliness, or the pleasure of sharing a meal and spending time together with others, will feature a two-story layout with indoor spaces, bar seating and an outdoor terrace.

Located at the **SO/Uptown Dubai Hotel**, it will be operated by Eclectic Hospitality, a joint venture between Infini Concepts and Alba Hospitality, and led by executive chef **Luigi Stinga**, former chef of **Talea**, the Italian restaurant at Mandarin Oriental Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi.

Moving far beyond a standard burrata-and-pasta lineup, the dishes will blend traditional comfort with artistic presentation with a focus, of course, on the notion of convivialità, or sharing.

Location: SO/Uptown Dubai Hotel

Find more information [here](#)

3. Dubai diary



This map by Italian cartographer Vesconte Maggiolo in 1531 is on display at the Louvre Abu Dhabi in this undated photo. (Ismael Noor/Seeing Things)

• ‘Spices and Wonders: Sailing the Indian Ocean’ at Louvre Abu Dhabi

Louvre Abu Dhabi’s upcoming exhibition will chart 1,000 years of movement across the Indian Ocean. Developed alongside France’s Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts, **Spices and Wonders: Sailing the Indian Ocean** maps the ancient and medieval maritime networks linking the Middle East, Africa and Europe with South and Southeast Asia. Running from antiquity through the 17th century, the exhibition will present spices, textiles, ceramics and special cargo to illustrate how commercial trade drove the global exchange of people, technology and artistic ideas. A second edition of this touring exhibition will be presented at The Guimet from May 12 to Sept. 6, 2027.

Date: Oct. 14–Feb. 14, 2027

Location: Louvre Abu Dhabi

Find more information [here](#)

• Middle East Film & Comic Con Returns

After attracting more than 46,000 visitors last year, Middle East Film & Comic Con will return in September. This event, held annually at ADNEC Center in Abu Dhabi, returns for its 14th edition, with a celebrity lineup including John Cena, One Piece stars Mackenyu and Jacob Romero, Guardians of the Galaxy and Mission: Impossible actor Pom Klementieff, and Star Wars actor Joonas Suotamo. This year’s program also includes Artist Alley, cosplay, gaming and trading card tournaments, alongside comic creators including Jim Cheung, Federico Vicentini, Brett Breeding, Dexter Soy and Ken Lashley.

Date: Sept. 11–13

Location: ADNEC Center Abu Dhabi

Find more information [here](#)

• The Museum of Islamic Ball at Dubai Opera

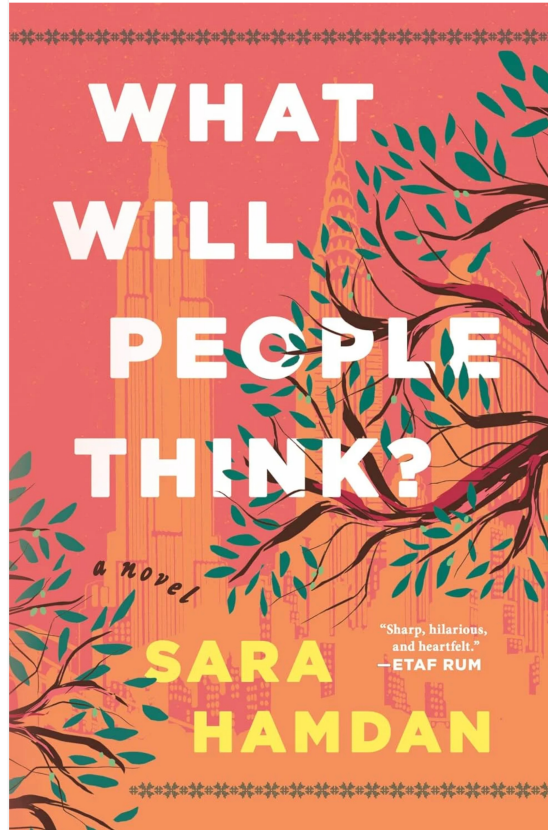
Dubai Opera will open its 10th Anniversary Season with the Ukrainian National Ballet's adaptation of The Marriage of Figaro. The staging will also mark Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's 270th birthday. This acclaimed production transforms the comic opera masterpiece into a captivating ballet. Set on Count Almaviva's estate, the story follows Figaro and Susanna's wedding plans, which are threatened by the count's pursuit of the bride. Disguises, mistaken identities and intrigue unfold, leading to a celebration of love and forgiveness. Featuring a musical composition by renowned Ukrainian composer Oleksiy Baklan, this performance is set to combine exquisite artistry, sumptuous costumes and music for the iconic venue's decade in business.

Date: Sept. 17–19

Location: Dubai Opera, Downtown Dubai

Find more information [here](#)

4. Book of the Week: 'What Will People Think?'



In *What Will People Think?*, Dubai-based author **Sarah Hamdan** charts how media fact-checker and secret stand-up comedian Mia Almas navigates a conservative Palestinian-American upbringing alongside a vibrant New York City stage life. Almas's burgeoning comedy career and forbidden workplace romance are upended when a sudden spotlight exposes her secret, inadvertently unearthing a 1940s family scandal. Hamdan's popular debut novel, filled with a heartening exploration of what it means to discover and subsequently embrace hidden parts of yourself, demonstrates how love in its various forms can make one feel whole.

5. View from Dubai



Traditional gold designs representing cultures from across the Gulf at Al Romaizan Gold & Jewellery are seen on Aug. 19, 2026, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (Benjamin Cremel/Getty Images)

6. By the numbers

- Since opening its doors in August 2016, Dubai Opera has established itself as a premier cultural location in Downtown Dubai, staging more than **2,500** performances spanning opera, ballet, theater and concerts.
- The opera house has hosted over **6,500** international and local artists.

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