

Creating *timeless* designs!

Viktor Udzenija, principal architect
and CEO at Viktor Udzenija
Architecture + Design, talks
about his current projects and the
importance of everlasting designs

Viktor Udzenija sitting on his
design piece, Little Rocker



A stunning residential project by Viktor Udzenija in Jumeirah, Dubai

Tell us something about your professional journey from London to Dubai?

After finishing my studies in Munich (Germany), I was picked up by my then professor architect Richard Horden, who used to work with Lord Norman Foster for many years and got me recommended to join the office of Foster + Partners in London. After several years in the headquarter offices in London, I got offered to move to Dubai to overlook the construction and delivery of the Index Tower in DIFC. During the years spent on the Index Tower, I had fallen in love with Dubai and upon completing the project decided to stay in the country and set-up my own studio.

What do you feel is your practice's strongest skill and how have you worked to develop that over the past years?

We strive to come up with new and unique designs for every project. I focus on designs that are timeless in both their aesthetic interpretation and the materials used that will age well over the time. We give the highest regard to elements of sustainability as well. Developing designs that are taking into consideration all of these aspects whilst also ensuring great attention to detail and quality is something that is at the core of our practice.

What were some of the key influences that inspire the design and structures you make?

During developing a project design, I am influenced by many important factors, be it the environment which is always one of the most crucial factors, where the building is located, what are the characteristics of the given location in terms of weather, sun path, views, and surroundings. The client's brief is very important as it indicates how the building will be used, who will use it, etc.

You have an inclination towards product designing as well. Tell us something about it and the pieces you have designed so far?

I love working on all scales of designs—be it a large commercial development or a tower, or an interior space of a residence all the way to a piece of furniture or a light object. I don't like to set limit when it comes to my creative process. One of my first individual pieces of furniture design was the Little Rocker. A rocking horse carved out of a solid block of marble. It was shown at Design Days Dubai with Carpenters Workshop Gallery, and later at the very first retrospective exhibition of best designs from the Middle East titled 'Wasl'. I am currently working on several new designs for a luxury residential project, which we are soon delivering in

London as well as a new range that will be shown in an upcoming gallery exhibition.

Talk us through a few of your current projects.

We are soon delivering our first F&B project. It is the new Marea restaurant in DIFC, Dubai, this two Michelin star Italian restaurant is expanding and we were chosen to design the first new concept outside of NYC. The project is well under construction and will hopefully open early spring 2019. At around the same time, we will be delivering our first ever project in the UK, super luxurious private residences at Knightsbridge in London. One of our key projects underway is mixed-use retail and residential development in Prague in Czech Republic. We are very excited to be expanding our reach outside of the Middle East region, which just shows us how much our work approach is appreciated.

What kind of changes do you want to see in design and architecture in this region?

I think the most important change that we as architects are keen on developing is the appreciation for our craft and expertise. Sustainable design is also a factor that is slowly becoming more apparent in this region. We can't ignore the environment and our impact on it and vice-versa. ■