



# MIDDLE EAST STONE

International Stone, Marble and Ceramics Show

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES DRIVING A STONE REVIVAL ACROSS INTERIOR DESIGN



*Pictured: Dubai-based interior designer Shamna Rasheed (left) says that new technologies have liberated stone as a design material. Middle East Stone, taking place next week, will explore these advancements*

**15/05/17 – DUBAI, UAE:** It may quite literally be the oldest material on the planet, but advanced technologies are bringing stone back to the forefront of modern interior design, industry experts claim.

Having fallen out of favour to less expensive, more flexible alternatives in recent decades, stone's stock amongst designers is rising once again, fuelled by a surge in software capable of manipulating the material in ways never before thought possible.

Technologies such as robotic waterjets, lasers and engravers have changed the design capabilities of stone, offering – as one designer put it – “liberation” to a once restricted resource.

With the ability to now scythe, shape and pattern all natural stone as the creative eye sees fit, the likes of marble and granite are now seen as truly adaptable, practical and functional – and are manoeuvring their way into a wider spectrum of interior and exterior design forms.

Shamna Rasheed, an interior designer with Wanders Werner Falasi Consulting Architects, explained: “Contemporary architectural production is dominated by the creative use of natural materials – particularly stone – which represents how far we have come with digital simulation and technology. Stone, being an archaic material, has been manipulated over civilizations and has transformed from limited applications to presently being manipulated to follow any shape.

“Natural stone has undergone a process of liberation where the applications are endless from architectural to interior uses. Architecturally, the dominant trend of using stone is in façade cladding, stimulating a character and texture within



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the structure. In interior design, marble can be manipulated into inlays in a modern pattern, which is well trending along with three dimensional stone that adds visual interest to a design with raised arrangements.

“In terms of design, the use of stone is progressing into directions unimaginable allowing us to create an identity within the space, as it is indeed an intricately beautiful natural material unlike any other.”

A report by market analysts BNC – prepared exclusively for Middle East Stone, the MENA region’s biggest dedicated stone exhibition – estimated the global demand for crushed stone as reaching 19.6 billion metric tons by 2020. The Middle East, the report states, is among the biggest markets of crushed stone consumption “due to the high volume of construction activities currently underway”.

Ms. Rasheed will elaborate on stone’s renaissance during ‘Going beyond the visual: manipulating stone to make it user-friendly from a design perspective’ as part of the exhibition’s Stone Conference next week.

Yan Wang, Event Director said: “Stone is the central material at the heart of the thousands of megabuilds taking place across the GCC. That has been the case for a long time. However, what our exhibitors and visitors are getting excited about are the opportunities stone-manipulating machines have created from an interiors point of view.

“Stone now regularly finds its way into intricate flooring patterns, surface design and décor in ways never deemed possible. This has expanded the market, as people seek materials like stone that are not only aesthetically impressive, but tell their own story and speak a material language.”

Middle East Stone – taking place at the Dubai World Trade Centre, May 22-25 – will gather exhibitors from 25 countries including Italy, Brazil, Turkey, USA, Canada, India, Iran, Portugal, Greece, China, UAE and Spain under the theme ‘Bring Stone to Life’, where the focus will be on innovative stone design for the likes of façades, cladding, pavements and flooring.

The Laticrete-sponsored Stone Conference – a series of CPD accredited free to attend knowledge and learning sessions – will take place across the four days, sharing knowledge through case studies, industry insights, technical and architectural processes as well as workshops tailored specifically for exhibitors on how to trade in the GCC.

For more Information on and how to register to attend the events for free, visit [www.middleeaststone.com](http://www.middleeaststone.com)

**ENDS**

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