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| Interview with Randa Missir | Founder & Curator of Pik'd Gallery, Beirut



Cluster Crafts is pleased to welcome collector and Director of PIK'D Gallery Randa Missir to our journal. PIK'D Gallery, champions renowned artists across an international radar alongside Lebanese designers celebrating the high-end and collectible contemporary art and design. Hear from Randa as she unfolds insights into PIK'D Gallery, the importance of networking, and what captures her visual aesthetic in visiting design fairs. Struck by the diversity and high-end quality of curated works, PIK'D Gallery provides an elegant and sophisticated approach to contemporary craft. In the near future, Cluster Crafts will explore a potential collaboration directly with PIK'D Gallery, providing a unique opportunity across platforms.



Randa Missir

With a focus on contemporary ceramics and glass, PIK'D highlights museum quality pieces across your collection. 'Created only once and unrepeated' - one of a kind is your standing ethos behind the collection. We're keen to hear why this particular aspect of craft is fundamental to your collection and how this guides you in discovering new talent?

I believe that the combination of the toughness, resilience and resonance of the ceramic with the transparency and brilliance of glass is beautiful. As to new talent, discovering it is not always very easy, as I always tend to choose the handmade crafts of established artists. What also complicates the search for new crafts is the absence of ceramics expositions in major cities and destinations. I always had to travel far in order to find the pieces that captured my heart.

What was the driving force and intention behind opening PIK'D Gallery and sharing your private collection?

It all started as a personal hobby. I was always very fond of ceramics and had started a collection of my own, and could not get rid of any piece I loved. I was also catering to the turnkey projects of my husband's clients, who is an interior designer. Once I found myself with hundreds of ceramics and glass-blowing pieces, the idea of opening a gallery dawned on me.



PIK'D Gallery, situated in Beirut, Lebanon provides an international gallery context. Geographically, does the physical placement of your gallery have agency over the connections built in the art world? In what ways can a gallery develop its audience reach and manage an international focus?

Lebanon is a cosmopolitan city and is known for the affluent lifestyle of its residents. The country is also a hub for art and culture, which inevitably attracts international aficionados of art. I also took the initiative to showcase my crafts, starting in the Beirut Art Fair. PIK'D was also scheduled to make an appearance in international fairs.

When initially starting your collection, was this built through systematic or intuitive intention, or did it naturally evolve in material focus over time? How might those interested to start a collection tap into this market?

At the time I was starting my collection, I can undoubtedly say that I was guided by my intuition. In my opinion, art does not abide by a systemic approach. As to starting a collection, it is by no means an easy undertaking. First, there has to be an unwavering passion for ceramics and/or glass. Second, the collector must be extremely patient, given that finding the right piece requires being in the right place at the right time, and often traveling to great lengths. Third, it is no secret that a collector must dispose of a minimum of financial capabilities in order to purchase the desired crafts.



From visiting Collect, to Frieze amongst many others, the role of a collector can be particularly investing in travelling to art and design fairs internationally. What do you hope to find when attending an art / design fair? How might the networking aspects of such events open up new possibilities for PIK'D and the artists you discover?

When attending art and design fairs, I expect to find pieces that fit into the culture of PIK'D. However, I can honestly say that the pieces that I love most were not found in international art and design fairs, but rather in niche galleries across the world.

The networking aspects of such events are very important and crucial to develop a state of the art gallery. I have often met artists at these fairs, who were not showcasing their crafts but were instead there, like me, looking at the pieces and trying to find one that spoke to them. As to PIK'D, the international art and design fairs have opened up my eyes and inspired me to take my gallery to the next level of art and culture, and have often helped shape the style of the crafts showcased in my gallery.



What aspects of emerging artists work stand out to you and how can artists early in their career engage the minds of a collector?

In my opinion, the emerging artists that stand out are the most genuine ones. I have always found it extremely easy to recognize genuine and authentic crafts that are self-inspired. The mind of a collector is exposed to a great number of crafts that do not meet the requirements of authenticity and creativity that comes from within. It is therefore quite easy to recognize when a craft is shaped by the personal experience of the artist. I can only advise young artists to stay true to themselves and to not shy away from their inner creative, even in the face of opposing trends and critics.

How has opening up PIK'D Gallery and your private collection to the public eye expanded the development of your gallery? What are the benefits of opening up a collection and would you advise more collectors in doing so?

The benefits of opening up a gallery are tremendous, at least for an art lover like me. Opening up my private collection to the public has enabled me to participate in enriching the culture of Beirut's people in specific, and to the greater population as a whole. I love the idea that I get to have a role in shaping the culture of home decoration and the promotion of art.



Do you have any particular intentions to support the young, rising talent of designers or how might your collection evolve? How might this take shape?

Supporting the young, rising talent of designers is crucial for the sustainability of the art industry as a whole. I take it upon myself as a collector to grant young artists whose work greatly appeal to me, the opportunity to showcase their private collection in my gallery. I also encourage every private collector to do the same, for the sake of keeping the industry alive and ever-changing.

What does the future hold for you and your gallery?

Once the pandemic is over, I am eager to take PIK'D to the international art scene even further, and to showcase my collection throughout the world.

Thank you for reading,
Cluster Crafts