



DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – Aug 4, 2014: Kamelia Zaal, Creative Landscape Director at Al Barari Firm Management LLC at Greenworks Nursery in Al Barari Development in Nad Al Sheba in Dubai. (Pawan Singh / The National) For Weekend. Story by Nick

Bringing the 'beauty of Islam' to Chelsea

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ABU DHABI // A landscape designer from the UAE has made it to the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show next year.

Kamelia bin Zaal is the only Emirati to be selected for the five-day event, which starts on May 19.

It is the first time she has made it to Chelsea, and has already turned heads with her garden, titled "The Beauty of Islam", which will be up against 14 other competing entries. "I feel blessed and privileged to have been selected for Chelsea 2015 and, most importantly, it's an opportunity to shine a positive light on Arab culture and Islam," she said.

Ms Zaal studied landscape garden design at the Inchbald School of Design in London.

After returning to the UAE, she began her career as a freelance garden designer. She established her own landscape architectural practice, Second Nature, in 2006, and worked on commercial and residential projects.

According to the show's brief, her garden "will give opportunity to the visitors, to explore the relationship between humankind and the Earth, which is prominent in Islamic culture".

"Planting and hard landscape patterns reflect those found within Islam. The poetry, calligraphy and textures within the garden reflect both the beauty of Arabic and Islamic cultures.

"A sculpture within the garden also represents Islamic art. The wide variety of plants within the garden, including jasmine, rosemary and papyrus, represents the spread of Islam and Arab culture, and the growth of the Arab empire through trade, most notably the Spice Route," it says.

Ms Zaal follows in the footsteps of Sheikh Zayed, the founding President of the UAE, who was a patron of the Royal Horticultural Society. He was a passionate gardening enthusiast and exhibited many of his own gardens, earning three consecutive gold medals in 2003, 2004 and – posthumously – in 2005.

One of the most notable gardens was his 2003 entry, titled "Garden from the Desert", which was designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole.

It reflected Sheikh Zayed's vision to transform the desert landscape with the mass planting of trees and lush vegetation.

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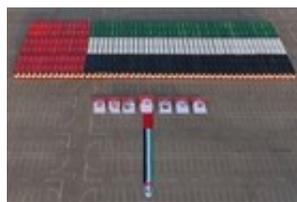


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