

WHEN ART TAKES FLIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALID RASHID

A New Luxury Travel Experience as ExecuJet and Opera Gallery Redefine Private Aviation with Art & Design

At ExecuJet Middle East's private terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport, luxury is redefined through personalised comfort, exclusivity and artistic expression. Within this meticulously curated space, art elevates the entire journey, offering discerning travellers a rich, cultural experience. In collaboration with Opera Gallery, standout pieces like Kenny Scharf's vivid "We're Melting Together Night and Day" and Stephan Marienfeld's dynamic "Blow Up" sculpture infuse the terminal with creative colours and energy. Beyond traditional aviation luxuries, the space also offers exquisite private suites, a luxury spa, and a contemporary Majlis designed by Nada Debs. ▶



Between the wings of jets and the landing strips, where the promise of incredible journeys takes flight, a visionary collaboration between ExecuJet Middle East and Opera Gallery redefines the concept of private aviation, blending luxury travel with an immersive art experience. ***“This partnership brings a unique artistic flair to the facility, transforming it into more than just an aviation hub - but a gallery-like environment where travellers can enjoy world-class art and culture”***, says ExecuJet’s Regional VP. This fusion of fine art and high-end aviation not only elevates the facility but reinforces ExecuJet’s commitment to offering a travel experience that goes beyond the ordinary.

This is believed to be the first time an art gallery has partnered with a private lounge on more than just a surface level. ***“The gallery was involved very early in the design of the space”***, shares Sylvain P. Gaillard from Opera Gallery. ***“We made many visits during the construction phase to understand what ExecuJet would like to offer their clients and how we could curate the space to align with the architecture, volume and natural movement of passengers”***. ►



Kenny SCHARF “We’re Melting Together Night and Day”, 2017
[Oil, acrylic, and diamond dust on canvas]



Stephan MARIENFELD “Blow Up”, 2022
[Bronze patinated, black rope]

Noel ANDERSON “Swing Ralm”, 2022
[Picked and distressed cotton tapestry]

Central to this luxury travel experience is the work of the renowned Lebanese designer Nada Debs. A traditional Middle Eastern Majlis, reinterpreted for modern luxury, stands as the highlight of the lounge, merging contemporary aesthetics with heritage design. **“The Majlis represents a peaceful haven - a space where tradition and modernity meet”**, she explains. Patterns inspired by the profile of a private jet’s wing, reflects this concept, abstracting the shape into the designs on the bench and screens. **“For me, comfort and feeling at home—the sense of belonging—is something I am always striving for. I want people to feel like this is a room they want to come back to”**, Nada shares. Her thoughtful use of local materials and warm colour tones creates a serene atmosphere that invites travellers to unwind and connect with the environment. Transitioning from Debs’ tranquil design, the artistic curation throughout the terminal, led in part by architect Gregory Gatserelia, further elevates the space. The integration of art within the architectural design brings a sense of depth and sophistication to each area. **“The main hall is decisively contemporary”**, explains Gaillard, **“so we used a combination of paintings and sculptures to reflect that”**. The choice of art is tailored to complement each space—floral-themed works by Reza Derakshani enhance the lounges, while conference rooms feature pieces like those by Alessandro Algardi, exploring lettering and calligraphy, bridging business and culture. ►



Pokras LAMPAS
Transition: Reflection-Concrete-Street-Flow, 2019
[Mixed media on canvas]

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Manolo VALDES “Reina Mariana”, 2020
[Aluminum]

Lee GIL-RAE “Millennium-Pine Tree 2022-1”, 2022
[Copper welding]

Nasrollah AFJEHEI "Untitled", 2012
[Acrylic on Canvas]



Reza DERAESHANI "Every Spring Day and Every Autumn Night"
[Mixed media on canvas]



Beyond the artistic elements, ExecuJet's private terminal offers a complete luxury experience. Italian brands like Poltrona Frau, Giorgetti and Minotti have been incorporated to create a seamless blend of design and comfort, ensuring the lounge feels like a "home away from home". **"This balance between sleek, high-functioning design, and sophisticated comfort ensures that clients experience luxury in every aspect of their journey"**, says ExecuJet's Regional VP. Guests can also indulge in private suites, a spa, a cigar lounge, and more, each thoughtfully designed to cater to the needs of their discerning travellers.

This unique partnership between ExecuJet and Opera Gallery seeks to surprise and delight clients. **"Together, we wanted to add that 'wow' moment when travellers are suddenly surrounded by art in an unexpected place"**, Gaillard remarks. By fusing fine art with private aviation, the lounge becomes more than a functional space—it becomes a cultural destination.

In this rare blend of high-end design and culture, the partnership between ExecuJet and Opera Gallery sets a new benchmark for private aviation experiences. Travellers passing through the terminal can now enjoy a seamless journey that's enriched by an unparalleled cultural experience, transforming their travel into something truly extraordinary. ■

This thoughtful curation blends seamlessly with the terminal's functional design, creating a cohesive environment where art and luxury travel harmoniously intersect. Just like wandering through a museum, the space reveals epiphanic moments at every turn, offering encounters with iconic pieces like Kenny Scharf's "We're Melting Together Night and Day", an oil, acrylic, and diamond dust on canvas that captures the vibrancy and movement of contemporary art. Scharf's work is a perfect fit, not just in terms of size but also aesthetics. Sculptures like Stephan Marienfeld's "Blow Up", a bronze piece that encapsulates modern tension, and Lee Gil-Rae's "Millennium-Pine Tree 2022-1" made of copper welding, further enhance the terminal's ambience, adding layers of sophistication and cultural depth.

"The curation was designed to reflect both the elegance of the space and the tastes of our discerning clientele", states ExecuJet's Regional VP. It was imperative that the selection of artwork wasn't just thoughtful, but essential to the terminal's overall experience. **"We wanted it to feel organic, blending with the existing textures and practicalities"**, says Gaillard. **"A lot of the artworks used for the initial display are being unveiled for the first time"**, Gaillard explains. **"We knew that they were almost 'location-specific' and would achieve the desired goal"**.

