

As always, Dubai is representing one of the most attractive cities, because of the visionary project of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum....but also because of all its apparent contradictions that we all love so much.

Skycrapers built onto sand, villas built on the sea and .....a small exhibition compared to the importance of the market.



**INDEX International Design Exhibition** is the largest event for the architect and design industry in the Middle East attracting more than 700 exhibitors from 45 countries taking place at Dubai World Trade Center. Taking place from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, the 12<sup>th</sup> annual edition of **The Office Exhibition** is relatively small but well displayed, with 120 exhibitors from 20 countries.

The UAE market is showing interesting signs of growth, confirmed by quick conversations I had on stand with some exhibitors, and it is indeed surprising to see the absence of major office furniture manufacturers at Index.

Some Dealers and distributors are grouping on stand some of the brands of their portfolio, with a very positive effort of showing the most updated product solutions to the visitors. Sometime the final effect is to let visitors think that manufacturers are exhibiting, when in reality dealers are. It is really good to see several dealers so committed and ready to invest in this difficult sector, when big multinationals are not comfortable in doing so.

Even more than in the past, the show has been divided in 10 “national pavilions” with three main areas, where nationalities of exhibitors were strongly underlined grouping companies in dedicated spaces. Chinese, Italian and American companies were very easy to be found by being recognized from their national flag or common booth.



As you can see from the pictures, many chinese companies were present, mainly showing task chairs in any sort of size, material and comfort. Interesting to be noted, they were not only similar to most of the better known european or american chairs as most people might expect. Some of them were offering innovative perspective of comfort as proudly a couple of exhibitors were telling me. The price gap between european and chinese chairs has also been reduced, and I believe this is a wonderful news for the market. Very few components for desking were present.



Cindy Zhou, Sales Manager of Zhejiang UE Furniture Co.Ltd has proudly explained me how the quality of their chairs has reached the highest European standard, as shown on the back of the catalog, where all LGA, Bifma, Ukas labels are present.

The Italian area was showing much more differentiation, with companies showing full height removable partition walls, desks, metal storages, seatings.



To be noted Dieffebi won the Honorable Mention award for the Casgood product category with CWave. A very elegant and functional storage system designed by Blini.





The US/Canada pavillion, called "the Campus", was grouping companies as HNI, Trendway, Nightingale, Lanscape Forms, Indiana furniture, National, Art Cobell,.

A special mention should be going to the bench of Landscape Forms Inc. that was probably the best product shown at Index, unfortunately not arrived on time for participating to the **IIDA 2013 Index & Office Exhibition Product&Design Awards** selection, as sadly said by Jamie May, Vice President Global Sales, but I am personally convinced it should have won.





The OFS brands have been awarded again with a Best of Category Freestanding Product, designed by Korb.

The most impressive booth was the Sedus one, as always very well identified by highly visible different colors, but, surprisingly this company known for their great ergonomic chairs, have won an award for multifunctional furniture for open informal meeting spaces.





Another really interesting product, already seen at Salone del Mobile in Milan, is the monitor lift of Arthur Holm. A great demonstration of how innovation, design and functionality can easily become a beautiful product. During these depressed business times in the office furniture market, it is also very good to keep the hope to see buyers appreciating and buying beautiful, expensive features as the Holm one, in a desk







Another emerging product trend for Index this year has been represented by chairs or small desks for education, school/learning environments.

“Design Talks”, the free-to-attend seminars and workshops have been held by industry experts at Index, despite it becoming very difficult to attract people to attend. Anyway, everything has been well organized, probably deserving for the future more presence in general, from manufacturers and visitors.

I do agree with the exhibition motto of this year: “Design is everywhere”

Even in Dubai.