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|| Q&A: Interior designer to the stars Jo Hamilton is heading back to INDEX

Jo Hamilton is returning to Dubai!

Following her hugely successful double appearance at INDEX's 2017 OFIS-sponsored Design Talks, the designer and television personality is returning for 2018, where she will once again feature as a keynote on a series of expert-led panel discussions.

Founder and creative director at Jo Hamilton Interiors, the designer-cum-speaker, writer and broadcaster is widely regarded as one of the UK's leading interior designers, famed for her confident grasp of colour, intelligent use of space and luxury aesthetic.

Her consultancy - running since 1995 - has overseen a whole catalogue of high-end, international developments in the likes of London, New York, Miami, Geneva and Dubai, ranging from exclusive city apartments to stylish country retreats; from bars, clubs and restaurants to homes, offices and hotels.



INDEX is thrilled to be welcoming Jo back to Dubai next month, with her appearance sure to draw huge interest once again.

Please feel free to use the below Q&As as you wish. Jo Hamilton is also available for phone and email interviews.

What made you so enthusiastic about returning to Dubai and to INDEX?

Many things! The design scene in Dubai has really come a long way in the last five or ten years, and nowhere is this more evident than at INDEX. Dubai has a thirst for beautiful design. There is a great sense of progress and a willingness to do things differently which I find refreshing and very exciting. But what is key is that this is all underpinned by an appreciation of workmanship which, again, was very clear in the breadth and quality of exhibitors at last year's event.

Our theme for 2018 is Design for Expression. What does that mean to you?

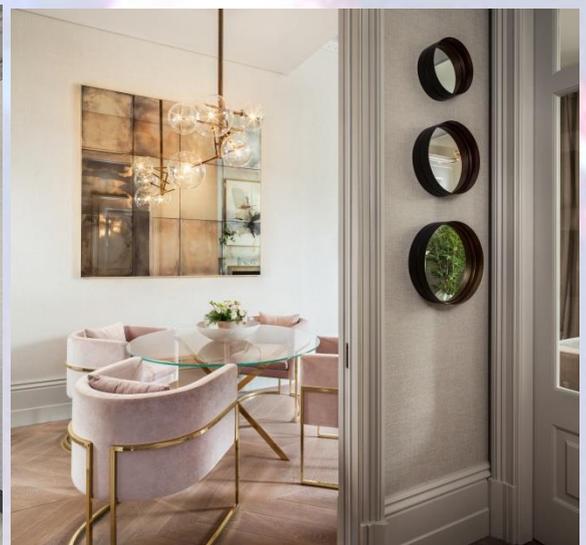
Design is a form of expression, and when I design a client's home, hotel, office, or whatever, I go to great lengths to see the world through their eyes so that I express their views, aspirations and hopes for the property in my designs. In fact, one of the best compliments I get from clients is when they say that I have interpreted their style perfectly in my designs even though they didn't think they had one. And that's what great design can do for people: it gives them an outlet to express themselves, so it's great to be celebrating design for expression.

In what ways do you find yourself incorporating the personality of your clients into your interiors?

There are so many ways to incorporate a client's personality into a design - and it's very important to do this, and do it well, because the client is the most important element of any design. Speaking to a client to find out how they want a space to feel and how they will use that space comes first. From this, I might find that they are a relaxed person and so would favour a calming colour palette, or that they have a very utilitarian outlook and would therefore suit simple, clean lines. However, all the time I am also picking up on elements of their personality and their journey through life. For example, a client may have spent time in South America, so I would bring this out with nods to that part of the world in my designs through furniture or perhaps art.

How can people decorate their own home and make it a reflection of their own individuality?

Art is, of course, very much a subjective matter and so it's a great place to start in creating a unique interior that reflects a client's individuality. Quite often I'll base an interior on the colour palette from a piece of art that itself acts as the focal point of a room. It might just be a little hint of blue in a painting that I'll pick up on in a rug, a sofa, or curtains, and from there I'll introduce other colours depending on which palette we're using - whether that is a complementary scheme, split complementary, harmonious, etc.



Pictured: Jo Hamilton Interiors designs in Greenwich, NY (left), and Kensington, London (right)

A year down the line since we last chatted with you, what trends have since grown or are en route to becoming the big styles of 2018?

Mixed metallics have been a growing trend for some time now, with silver-toned metals having shifted to one side to allow for warmer toned metallics, brass, gold, bronze and copper into schemes. Bronze is really starting to take centre stage though and will be big in 2018. Beautiful, simple bronze hardware and accents can add a huge amount of reserved elegance to a design.

You'll obviously be looking to meet potential clients at the show. What, in your opinion, is the key to a successful relationship between designer and client?

Communication is key, right from the start. The client needs to not only be heard, but to also feel that they are being heard. The moment that I start speaking to a client, even before we've been appointed, I'm

listening to hear what they're asking for. That's not just literally, in terms of a sofa or a pendant light, but also reading between the lines - how they want the space to feel, do they entertain a lot, how do the family dynamics work and how might this impact the scheme, etc. All these, and more, can have huge influence on the interior scheme I design, and hearing the client means that I can meet and exceed their expectations.

What projects of the last 12 months from anywhere in the world have you found particularly inspiring and why?

It's been an incredibly exciting year for Jo Hamilton Interiors - we've worked across the globe for a variety of clients from different cultures and backgrounds, so it's hard to pick just one! A particular highlight has been designing a 95-acre English estate for a very high profile client from overseas. The blending of cultures fascinates me and has made the property a pleasure to work on. The property itself is steeped in history and was used by Churchill as an escape during the war, so again that adds a very interesting angle to the design.

INDEX is home to a vast pool of international manufacturers, all offering something different. Is it possible to integrate many different products into one space - and, if so, how is it best done?

The access that INDEX provides to such a vast pool of international manufacturers and suppliers is wonderful and means it is possible to shop around for the best products in one place. I love it when interiors tell a story and when that happens the result always has an element of bold and fun eclecticism. In fact, one thing that I really don't like in interiors is when a scheme is too matchy-matchy, so integrating different influences, manufacturers and suppliers can play an important role in this. The best piece of advice I could offer is to try to find pieces from a range of different sources but make sure that each piece adds something new, perhaps it's colour, texture or tone, and that all the individual items also work as a whole.

ENDS

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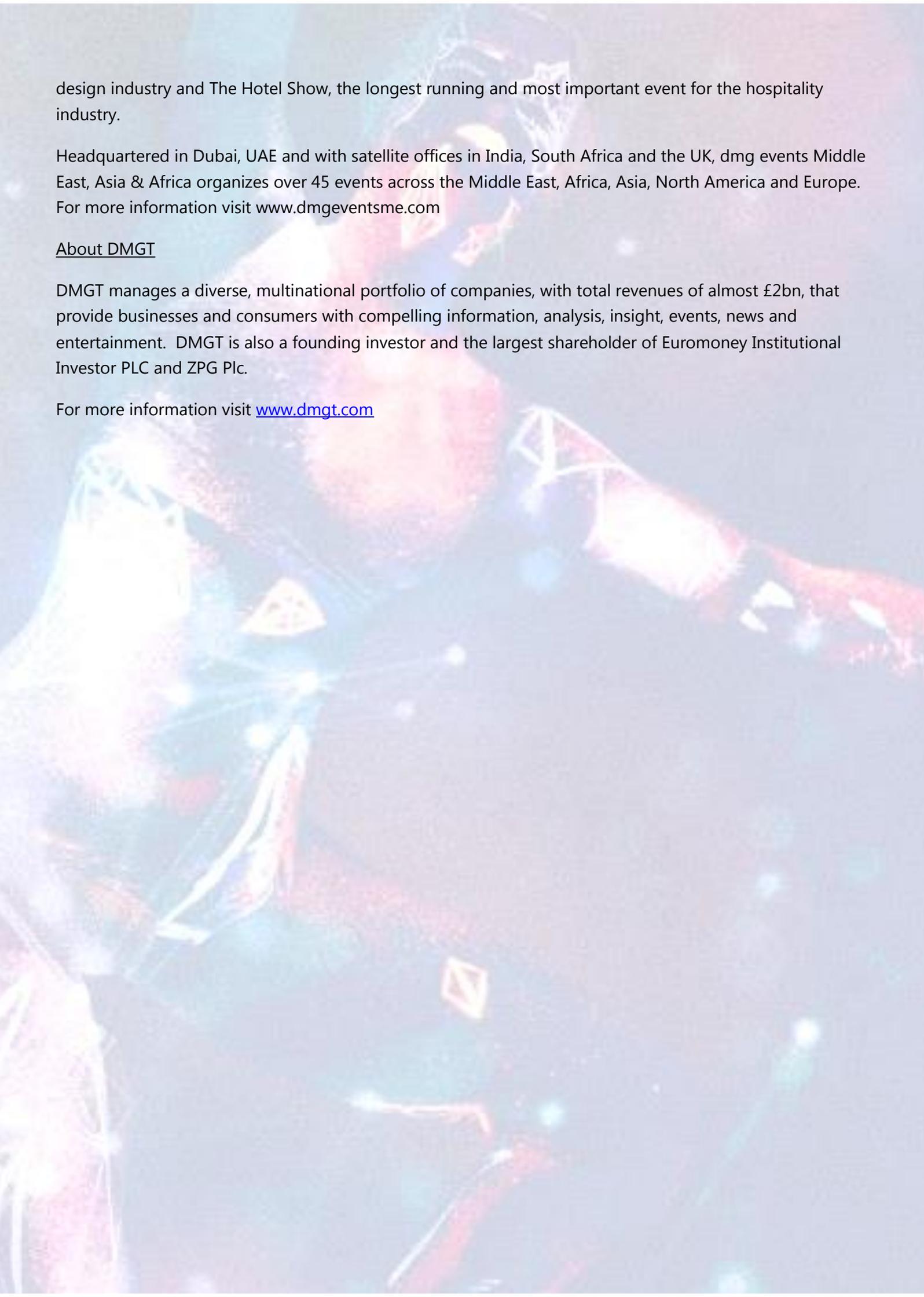
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