

Beat: Lifestyle

Khalid Al Qasimi, a fashion icon that epitomises a convergence of civilisations

An inspiring and heartwarming story

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USPA NEWS - An inspiring and heartwarming story reflected in his unique designs

“Qasimi”, a global brand providing a critical reflection on social and political issues faced by humanity.

The fashion world is in mourning following the departure of Sheikh Khalid bin Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, son of the His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah and a talented fashion designer. The announcement sparked a flood of social media posts honouring the forward-thinking designer and his fashion legacy.

Sheikh Khalid’s goal had always been to create ‘fashion with a message’. He once said “‘Coming from the Middle East, I have a duty to discuss politics. Fashion is my kind of material to work with and express it.’

Inspired by his Arab heritage and Emirati values, the late Sheikh Khalid channeled his inspiration into beautiful and innovative designs. In 2008, he launched his menswear label “Qasimi”^[1], said to be centered around the idea of an urban nomad.

Described by many as “‘a poetic and perceptive design mind’, the creative Emirati young man had a significant impact on the fashion world. He used his collections to express his philosophic views and his voice. His designs have been displayed as part of London and Paris Fashion Weeks; they delicately reflect a convergence of cultures and are infused with cultural, social and political undertones to inform and inspire.

His eponymous brand competed with the world’s best and became a well-known and unique name in the fashion industry. With youthful designs infused with colors, his collections featured a comment on current international problems and controversies, some of them featuring - Arabic messages.

Al Qasimi’s T-shirt design from his autumn/winter 2017 collection became a subject of controversy, when it was replicated by the brand Vetements on its spring/summer 2020 catwalk in Paris. The T-shirt, which read “Don’t shoot”^[2] in Arabic, French and English, was a semi-replica of one originally worn by journalists in Lebanon during the Israeli occupation invasion of the country in 1982.

Al Qasimi’s designs spoke to the world’s conscience, conveying a cultural, social and political message. His collections made reference to a lot of issues “‘ from Brexit, to discrimination. “It is a time for people to stand up and voice their –opinions,”^[3] he said.

The fashion industry in the UK and the Middle East mourns with grief the passing of the successful UK-based fashion designer, whose designs will be always remembered as a romantic and hopeful vision of the Middle East’s future.

Thirty-nine-year-old Sheikh Khalid, born in 1980, moved to London at the age of nine. He was educated at Tonbridge School, where he was awarded an art scholarship upon entry and went on to study French and Spanish at the University College London. He also completed an architecture degree at the Association School of Architecture. He spoke seven languages fluently, aside from Arabic, his mother tongue.

As chairman of the Sharjah Urban Planning Council and founder of Aleph Group, the late Sheikh Khalid was committed to creating the ultimate living experience in Sharjah and beyond. He was also the leader of the region’s first international platform for architecture, the Sharjah Architecture Triennial.

Late Sheikh Khalid had a record of significant achievements in developing infrastructure projects in the Emirate of Sharjah and his design legacy lives on.

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