

# enigma

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FEATURE

Art Directed & Styled by Maissa Azab

Interviewed by Nancy-Sarah Barakat & Daliah Galal

Written by Nancy-Sarah Barakat & Travis Randall

All clothes available at Beymen, Cairo

All jewellery by Dima Rashid

Photographed by M. Joudi

# DESIGNING WOMEN



They're talented and determined in equal measure. Their inspiring creations fill Egypt's fabulous homes while their creative sensibilities influence the way we live. For the first time, Enigma's Maissa Azab brings together eight of Egypt's successful young Designing Women for our exclusive shoot. While Nancy-Sarah Barakat, Travis Randall and Daliah Galal find out about their ideas, inspirations and designs on the future.







# DINA EL KHACHAB & HEDAYAT ISLAM

## EKLEGO DESIGN

**F**ounded by the ground-breaking duo Hedayat Islam and Dina El Khachab, Eklego Design has a fresh perspective on space. In fact this dream team is changing the way Egyptians think about their homes and work spaces.

Launched in 2000, the firm has designed over 80 projects in Cairo including the spectacular Sodic sales centre. "We're in tune with what people want and what they're increasingly looking for comfortable and functional spaces for their homes and businesses," says Islam. After gaining her a degree in interior design from the New York School of Interior Design, Islam returned to Cairo to experiment with her ideas. She then worked as an interior designer for a couple of years before collaborating with El Khachab to establish Eklego Design. Today she has become renowned for her understated class and sophisticated style. "I'm a lover of neutrals and clean, crisp lines; they're easy on the eye and create warmth in any space."

So how did Islam and El Khachab find each other? "It started with collaboration on one project, then spiraled into several other ventures. The thing that makes it all work so well is that we get each other in terms of creativity," says El Khachab.

And El Khachab knows what she's talking about, as she has the art of architecture down to a T. After graduating from Canada's prestigious McGill University in '98, she connected with Islam when she returned to Cairo and

together they created this vibrant firm. "The best thing about working together is that we push each other to create unparalleled design concepts," says El Khachab. We asked

them to name the project they're proudest of and Islam was quick to mention the Sodic sales centre, saying, "We loved working on it because they allowed us to have complete control over the whole project. We provided the architecture (in collaboration with Basil Kamel), the interior design and the furniture."

In addition to designing interiors, Eklego Design has established its own furniture collection - on display at the Eklego showroom, opened in 2005.

Their collections are chic and functional, using local craftsmanship to create beautifully detailed pieces. "We have great craftsmanship here in Egypt, and the quality of local furniture is steadily

rising. We love that we can create fantastic pieces right here that complement the Eklego aesthetic," explains El Khachab.

So where do these women see their business heading in the future? "Hopefully, we'll still be together in the years ahead. We're looking forward to bigger and better collaborations. We're also looking into mass production of our furniture line and there are a lot of competent people that can help make that happen. What makes all this possible is that we always have our clients' main interests at heart, at all times. And that's why we provide them with exceptional quality and original ideas." ■

**"We push each other to create unparalleled design concepts"**



Dina wears top by Etro available at Beymen; Hedayat wears dress by Dolce & Gabbana available at Beymen