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Innovator of the Week: Joobin Bekhrad

By [Microsoft Devices Team](#)



This week we're taking in the world art scene at Nokia Connects to profile Joobin Bekhrad, co-founder of [art clvb](#), a pioneering new project promoting the [contemporary art of the Middle East](#). I caught up with Joobin to find out more about art clvb and his vision for the future.



via [notable.ca](#)

Why did you found art clvb?

My father and I had been talking about getting into the art industry for quite some time, although all we had initially were a handful of concepts and ideas. One day, we decided to finally put pen to paper and established [art clvb](#) out of our love for [Middle Eastern art & culture](#), and a desire to shine a light on the region's many talented artists.

As well, coming from a [business background](#) and having a love for the arts, I could think of no finer way to blend my passion and expertise together, which is another reason why I decided to establish art clvb.



via [art clvb](#)

What made you choose the name art clvb, with a 'v'?

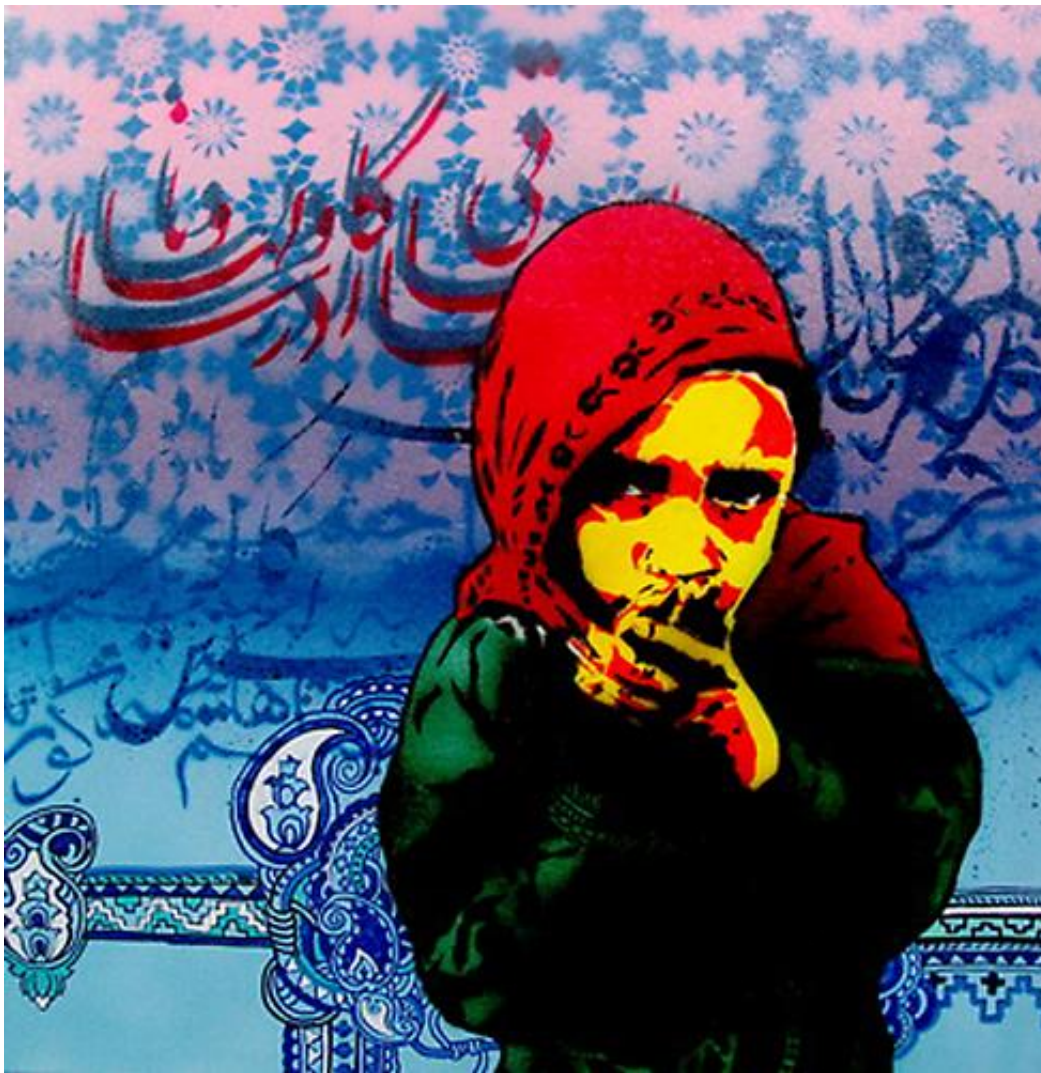
At first I tried to come up with a name that had an ethnic flavor, yet which well represented our

business, but I couldn't find one that appealed to me. Later, I decided that we should opt for a name that wasn't particular to any region or ethnicity, as after all, we were trying to promote Middle Eastern artists to audiences around the world. The last thing I wanted was for my business to be pigeonholed as an ethnocentric novelty.

The story behind the 'v' is quite simple, really. For one, the letter v was, and still is used to represent the letter 'u' in certain cases (e.g. [Bulgari](#)), as the Latin alphabet does not contain the letter 'u'. As well we were looking for a way to make our logo stand out, yet still retain its simplicity, and a good way of doing this was to play around with the 'u'. Lastly, I've seen the word 'club' used in many instances, although I've never really seen it written with a 'v' before. It's all about doing things differently, really.

Why do you think it's important to encourage contemporary artists in the Middle East?

With all the bad press associated with the region, we want to show the world that there's far more to this vast and diverse region than just conflict and turmoil. Art has always been an effective catalyst for change, whether it has been through literature, music, film, or visual arts, and we hope that through showcasing the works of our artists, we can change the way people view the Middle East and Middle Easterners.



via art clvb

How do you see the future of Middle Eastern art?

Despite the difficulties faced by artists in the region, I'm very optimistic about the future of art in the Middle East. With all the recent upheavals and changes that countries in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) are going through, I see art as a driving force for change and the provocation of public thought. We are seeing this already in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria, and I expect this trend to grow stronger and stronger.

In the case of Iran, I think we will begin to witness, as we have been already, [artists embracing a wider variety of themes and concepts](#), which will make for some incredibly interesting art. Although there are many socio-political restrictions when it comes to art produced in Iran, I think this will only make artists more creative and determined, as in the case of Iranian cinema.

Altogether, the future of art in the region looks highly promising, and we are seeing new developments and improvements being brought about almost on a daily basis. Needless to say, it's incredibly exciting to be involved with the art of the Middle East, and I'm [nothing short of optimistic](#) as to what the future holds in store for art clvb!

That's it for this week's Social Innovator (check out our latest profiles of [King Sidharth](#), [Leila Kashanipour](#) and [Moayed Qabbari](#). If you know a bright young spark (or, indeed, if you are one!) you think we should be showcasing here, then let us know in the comments below or [on Twitter](#).

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