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INTERIOR INNOVATORS EMBRACE A BIT OF CLUTTER

Petra Kaltenbach, curator of World Art Dubai, is among those shunning minimalism for colour and chaos



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UAE's space odyssey inspires Indian expat

DUBAI GIRL PURSUING PHD IN ASTRONOMY DREAMS BIG

REACHING FOR STARS

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

The UAE's space odyssey is inspirational for many, including a young Indian expat woman, who is now reaching for the stars.

From a child who was keen to know about planets and the solar system, Maria Vincent, a former distinguished Dubai student, has become a PhD student in astronomy in the US. She wants to return to the UAE, which has granted her a long-term Golden Visa, to serve the country's space sector.

"The UAE has played a big part in inspiring me to dream big and work towards my doctorate in astronomy," said the former winner of Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Distinguished Academic Performance from Dubai and the Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education.

"The vision of the leaders to transform this country from a barren land to a sprawling metropolis, now a hub of innovation and important scientific research, has been the main reason why I wanted to pursue research and studies in astronomy — a field that is growing at a fast pace in this country," she told *Gulf News*.

It all started when a young Maria, as a student of The Indian High School in Dubai, got a chance to go for a space camp at the US Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. "We spent a week there and I was able to narrow down my interests after that," the 23-year-old recollected.

"We were assigned as 'mission specialists'. We had underwater astronaut training. We were taught what goes on in a space mission and we could participate in many activities related to designing and developing some space equipment. We also learned various aspects of what goes on in the ground station and with the astronomers."

Pursuing space dreams

After getting the hang of an astronaut's life with the hands-on experience in the space centre, Maria could not think of any other subject to pursue for her higher educa-



■ Top: Maria Vincent receives her Golden Visa. Above left: Maria with her family at her book launch during SIBF. Above right: Maria during a simulated mission at a mockup ground station during the space camp.

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Maria Vincent
| Former Dubai student

tion in the US. "I did a Bachelor's degree in Geophysics and Astrophysics from the University of California, Los Angeles, with Magna cum Laude and Highest Departmental Honors for both majors."

She said her writing experience in the UAE has also stood in good stead in pursuing her dream of becoming a scientist. "I had written many articles, essays and poems while being a student here. I published my first book at the Sharjah International Book Fair when I was in grade 12. As a scientist, writing is super important and with my experience here, I was

able to build my confidence as a writer," she pointed out.

Apart from several academic and research honours and awards, Maria has many scientific publications and presentations to her credit. Even as she is pursuing her PhD, Maria is also a teaching assistant at the Institute for Astronomy, University of Hawaii, Manoa.

Global exposure

Maria, who has done several research projects at different institutions, said during her courses and internship programmes at space institutions in the US, the UAE and India, she got the opportunity to interact with many eminent space scientists from across the world and got even more inspired.

They include Dr J.N Goswami, principal scientist of first Indian lunar probe Chandrayaan-I; Katie Bouman, the American imaging scientist who helped construct the first ever photo of a black hole; and astrophysicist Andrea Ghez, who won the 2020 Nobel Prize in Physics for her discovery of the black hole at the centre of the Milky Way galaxy.

Dewa-SAT 1 nanosatellite lifts off in US

Dewa will launch another U6 nanosatellite later this year, official says

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (Dewa) yesterday launched the Dewa-SAT 1 nanosatellite in collaboration with NanoAvionics, becoming the world's first utility to use nanosatellites to improve the maintenance and planning of electricity and water networks.

The authority also announced its next mission – a U6 nanosatellite to be launched later this year – after the U3 nanosatellite was successfully launched by SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Launch Complex (SLC-40) in Florida, United States.

It was among the 105 spacecraft, including microsats and cube sats that were being launched by the Falcon 9 two-stage rocket.

Improve operations

The U3 nanosatellite was designed and developed at Dewa's R&D Centre in the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park to improve the operations, maintenance and planning of Dewa's networks with the support of nanosatellite technology, internet of Things (IoT) and remote sensing technologies.

Dewa's Space-D Programme, was launched by His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, last January.



- **Top:** Saeed Mohammad Al Tayer and other officials during the launch event of Dewa-SAT 1 yesterday.
- **Above:** A screengrab of the lift-off in Florida yesterday.

"We have successfully landed this Falcon 9 for the tenth time," Kate Tice, a reliability engineering manager at SpaceX, said after the Falcon 9's first stage landed back on Landing Zone 1, during the webcast of the Transporter-3 Rideshare mission.

Dewa said Dewa-SAT 1 aims to enhance the authority's op-

erational efficiency and effectiveness and promote preventive maintenance of electricity and water networks including planning, production, transmission and distribution.

Dewa's space programme will also contribute to enhancing flexibility and agility in monitoring and managing electricity and water networks, as

well as the accurate and rapid assessment of the impact of weather and climate change on energy supplies and energy infrastructure. It will also provide a backup support system for the network through satellite communications.

Unlimited support

Saeed Mohammad Al Tayer, Managing Director and CEO of Dewa, attended the launch along with officials from Dewa, SpaceX and NanoAvionics.

Extending his gratitude to Shaikh Mohammad for his unlimited support to Dewa and its innovative initiatives and projects, including its Space-D programme, Al Tayer said the programme supports the National Space Strategy 2030 that aims to realise the UAE's vision in space sciences, technologies, applications and services.

"The programme also aims to train Emirati professionals to use space technologies to enhance its electricity and water networks and take advantage of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies such as IoT, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and blockchain to exchange information with the help of satellite communications and earth observation technologies," said Al Tayer.

Al Tayer announced that Dewa will launch another U6 nanosatellite later this year to promote its flexibility and agility in monitoring, managing and maintaining its electricity and water networks. This will ensure providing electricity and water services according to the highest standards of availability, reliability and efficiency. It also reduces costs, improves its asset utilisation, enables knowledge and experience transfer, as well as trains Emiratis at Dewa.