

portraits of manufacturing



portraits



'Portraits of Manufacturing' consists of 60 images from Abdullah Al Shuhi and Rami Al Lawati two leading Omani photographers. The images have been specially commissioned for the exhibition by Origin Oman, the government-run think and buy local campaign spearheaded by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (PEIE).

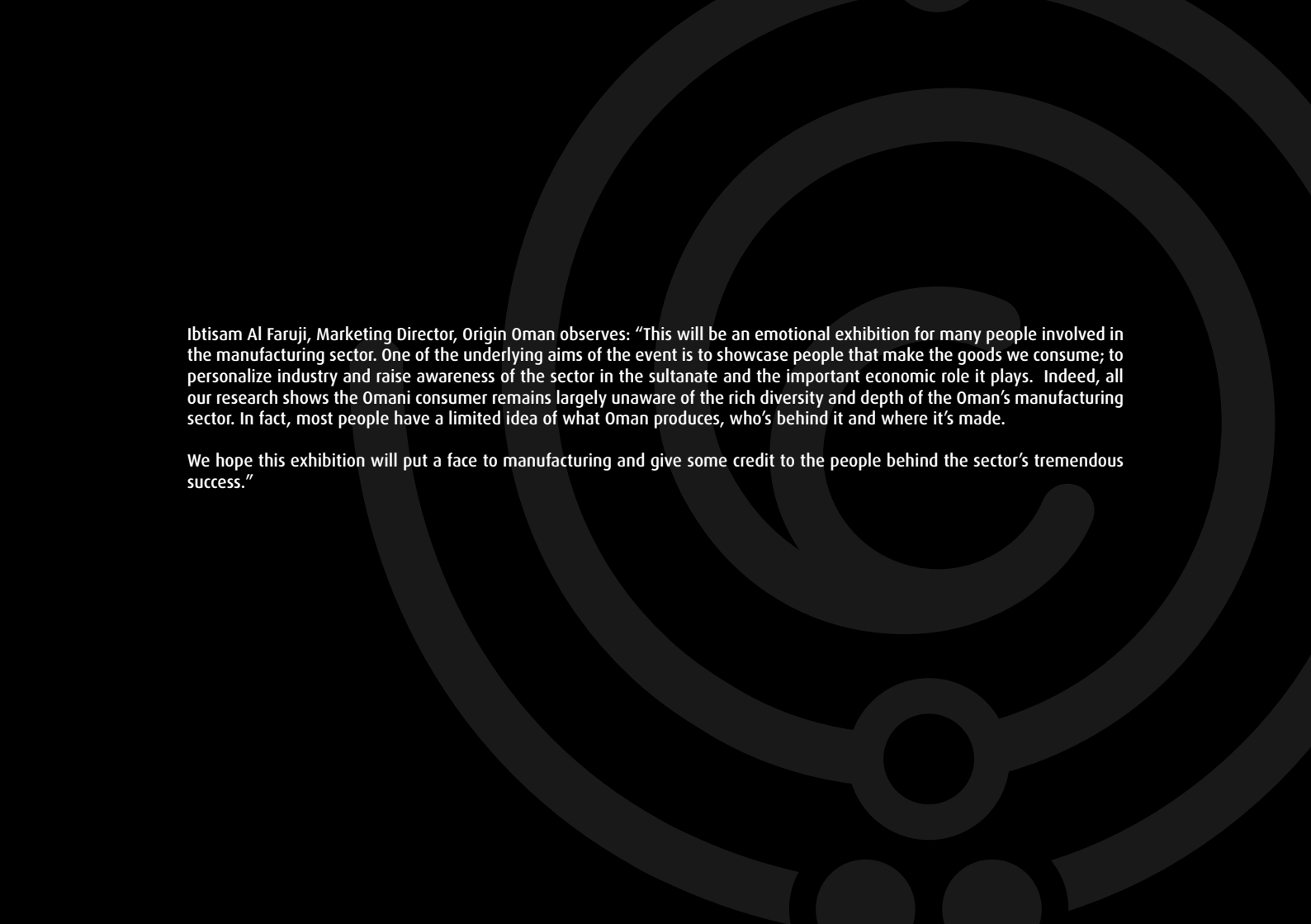
Over 1,500 photographs were researched to find the chosen 60 pieces. The images showcase those working in Oman's growing industrial sector.

Al Shuhi and Al Lawati use digital technology to make large (measurements) colour and monochrome prints of astonishing detail and clarity. The photographic approach used by both photographers is known as "Record Pictures". This was the original 19th century, matter-of-fact photography employed by industry for functional applications - showing what something looks like as accurately as possible - rather than for aesthetic purposes, i.e. art.

"Photography is about looking and responding," says Al Shuhi. "Why should a photograph be dressed up to look more interesting? Surely a faithful photograph allows you to see more within it. This is what I hope we've achieved with this collection."

manufacturing






Ibtisam Al Faruji, Marketing Director, Origin Oman observes: "This will be an emotional exhibition for many people involved in the manufacturing sector. One of the underlying aims of the event is to showcase people that make the goods we consume; to personalize industry and raise awareness of the sector in the sultanate and the important economic role it plays. Indeed, all our research shows the Omani consumer remains largely unaware of the rich diversity and depth of the Oman's manufacturing sector. In fact, most people have a limited idea of what Oman produces, who's behind it and where it's made.

We hope this exhibition will put a face to manufacturing and give some credit to the people behind the sector's tremendous success."

biographies





Abdullah Al Shuhi works as a press photographer for OEPPA and has nearly 20 years of photographic experience. He has a passion for portrait and landscape photography.

Muscat-based Rami Al Lawati is founder and Managing Director of start-up ProShots. He originally trained as an accountant and worked for Omantel. More recently, he completed an MBA at Bradford University in the UK – developing as part of his dissertation a business plan to launch ProShots.

origin oman



Origin Oman: Think, Buy & Eat Local

Our aim is to raise the profile of locally made goods and services” says Ibtisam Al Faruji, Marketing Director at PEIE and the person spearheading the Origin Oman marketing campaign, a domestic initiative designed to promote Oman-made products and services and urge institutional buyers and consumers to buy local first.

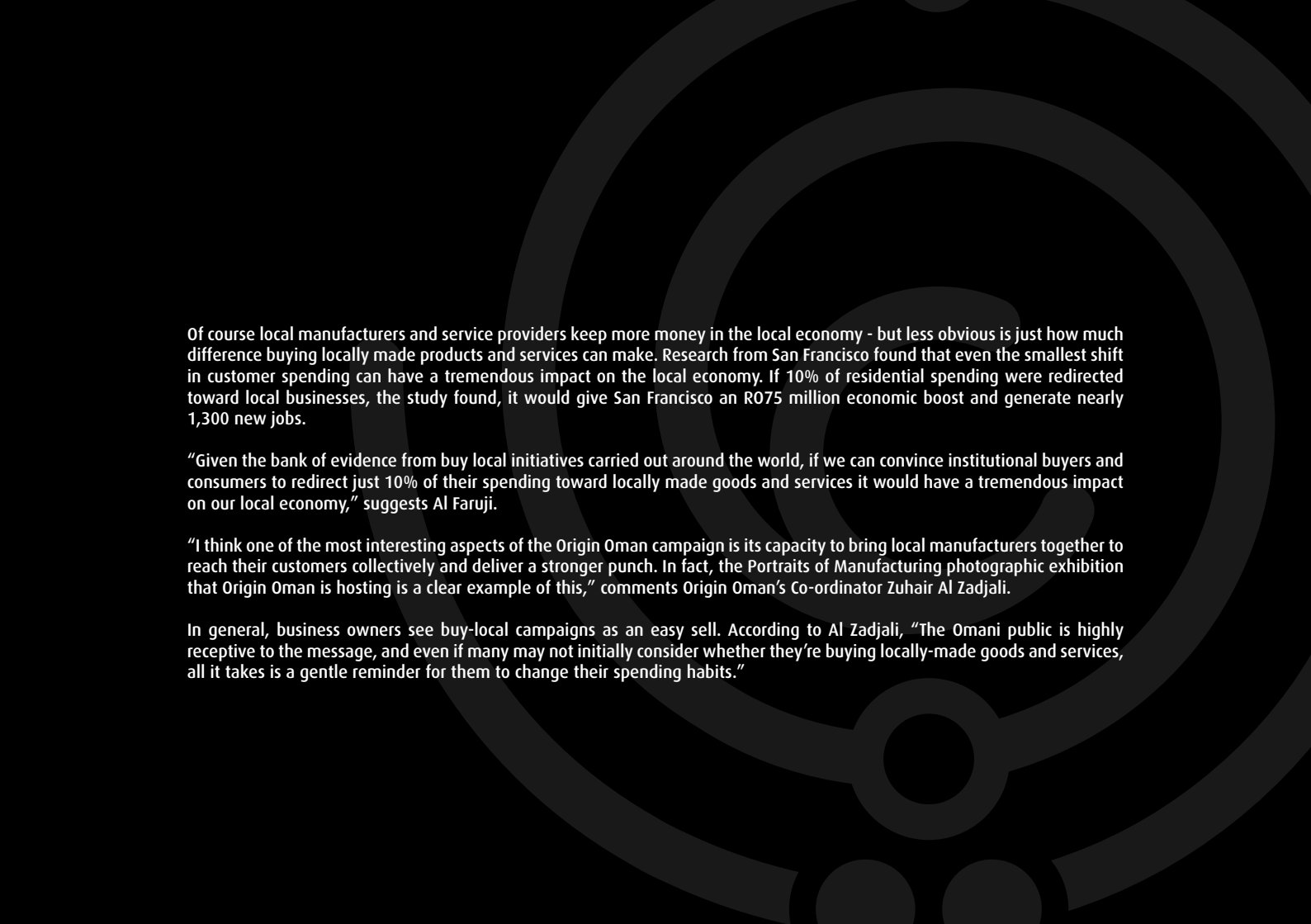
While buy local campaigns have been around for generations, “the idea behind Origin Oman is to get people to think more about where their Rials are being spent and what it means to the sultanate from an economic, community and environmental angle to buy locally-made goods and services,” Al Faruji says.

PEIE’s Marketing Director points to a range of international studies that show the impact local businesses have on the economy. Research indicates that for every R036 local retailers bring in through sales, businesses return R025 to the local economy through salaries and benefits, purchase of goods and services like office supplies, marketing, PR, IT and accounting, profits to local owners and charitable contributions.

In recent years, businesses and government organizations in countries around the world have united to launch campaigns encouraging citizens to buy local, and many of these have proven to be highly successful.

think, buy & eat local





Of course local manufacturers and service providers keep more money in the local economy - but less obvious is just how much difference buying locally made products and services can make. Research from San Francisco found that even the smallest shift in customer spending can have a tremendous impact on the local economy. If 10% of residential spending were redirected toward local businesses, the study found, it would give San Francisco an R075 million economic boost and generate nearly 1,300 new jobs.

“Given the bank of evidence from buy local initiatives carried out around the world, if we can convince institutional buyers and consumers to redirect just 10% of their spending toward locally made goods and services it would have a tremendous impact on our local economy,” suggests Al Faruji.

“I think one of the most interesting aspects of the Origin Oman campaign is its capacity to bring local manufacturers together to reach their customers collectively and deliver a stronger punch. In fact, the Portraits of Manufacturing photographic exhibition that Origin Oman is hosting is a clear example of this,” comments Origin Oman’s Co-ordinator Zuhair Al Zadjali.

In general, business owners see buy-local campaigns as an easy sell. According to Al Zadjali, “The Omani public is highly receptive to the message, and even if many may not initially consider whether they’re buying locally-made goods and services, all it takes is a gentle reminder for them to change their spending habits.”

community spirit



A think, buy and eat local one-on-one with HE Ahmed Al Dheeb, Under Secretary for Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

So, what's the Origin Oman campaign all about?

Origin Oman is all about supporting the local community. Rather than simply promoting "buying local," the campaign suggests our larger role as economic, social and environmental stewards. By thinking local first, we can make choices that have a dramatic impact on the sultanate's economy and the country's environment. While it will rarely be possible to buy everything we need or use from local businesses, the Origin Oman campaign is advocating for people to first think local in order to maximize the impact of daily actions and purchasing decisions.

Broadly speaking, the campaign asks Oman-based residents - people of all nationalities - to be supportive of local manufacturers and service providers. This will help enhance the community, the stability and diversity of our economy and support the retention and expansion of locally owned businesses through increasing awareness about the personal, environmental, community and economic benefits of choosing local first.

Isn't Origin Oman protectionist?

Not at all. The Origin Oman campaign is entirely about the free choices of consumers, businesses and government purchasing agents. No one is being forced to buy local, and no tariffs or other burdens are being placed on non-local goods.



consumer awareness



One way of looking at the Origin Oman campaign is that it gives consumers better information - about the availability of attractive local goods and services, and about the significant economic, social and environmental benefits of buying local.

Shouldn't we leave the market alone?

A healthy market requires, as Origin Oman insists, that consumers fully gather information about available local alternatives before they make purchasing decisions, in full awareness that every Rial spent locally will have two to four times more benefit than a Rial spent non-locally. In fact, Origin Oman-style campaigns often turn out to be the best way to develop prosperous links to the global economy.

Is export-led development important?

Export-led development usually means supporting a small number of globally competitive niches within a global economy. If one of these industries collapses then the entire local economy collapses with it, especially its export sectors. The work of new urbanist Jane Jacobs has shown import-replacing development, which underlies buy-local initiatives, tends to nurture hundreds of existing, locally owned manufacturers, some of which will then become strong exporters. Development led by import-replacement rather than export promotion can certainly help diversify, stabilize and strengthen any domestic economy.

economic sense



Buying locally made goods and services is sound economic sense. However, some critics have attempted to downplay the studies that have been carried out on the economic importance of buying local, but the results are driven by a simple fact: Local businesses spend more locally - on local management, on local advertising, on local services and on local profits. We need this type of nudge, I guess that once the average Oman-based consumer realizes they already buy local to some degree, whether that's washing powder, confectionary, car batteries, cooking oil or building materials, they will perhaps engage in the idea a lot more. Indeed, the overall economic impact of buying local is astounding.

But does the local angle really matter?

Absolutely, but perhaps not in immediate sales. Rather the local approach humanizes the interaction, and helps the consumer see that they may have more in common with a local company or brand than they had imagined - shared values or environmental views, for example. And that common ground can only get stronger over time.

Does buying local create jobs?

Oman's manufacturers and small businesses account for a large share of net new jobs generated each year. Indeed, local businesses provide some of the most stable employment opportunities in Oman. For all their economic power, the number of jobs provided by global corporations relative to the world's workforce is small. It is estimated that the 200 largest corporations in the world employ less than 1 percent of the global workforce although they account for about 30 percent of global economic activity. Most job growth comes from local businesses.

job creation



How does preserving Oman's unique character attract inward investment?

An economy of diverse, unique businesses promoted by locally owned business attracts inward investment and talent. Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, shows that today's creative workers are choosing to settle in places that preserve their distinctive character. It is these one-of-a-kind communities that also attract tourists.

Local businesses are the backbone of Oman's economy. By increasing the number of local-to-local economic transactions, we can support local entrepreneurs; stimulate innovation; sustain family-run farms; create local jobs that stay in our communities; have greater control over environmental impacts; maintain a unique sense of place; and maximize the economic multiplier.

At the end of the day, the Origin Oman campaign is simply asking the community to be supportive of local manufacturers and service providers. As they say, think, buy and eat local.

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