

**Let the festival season begin**

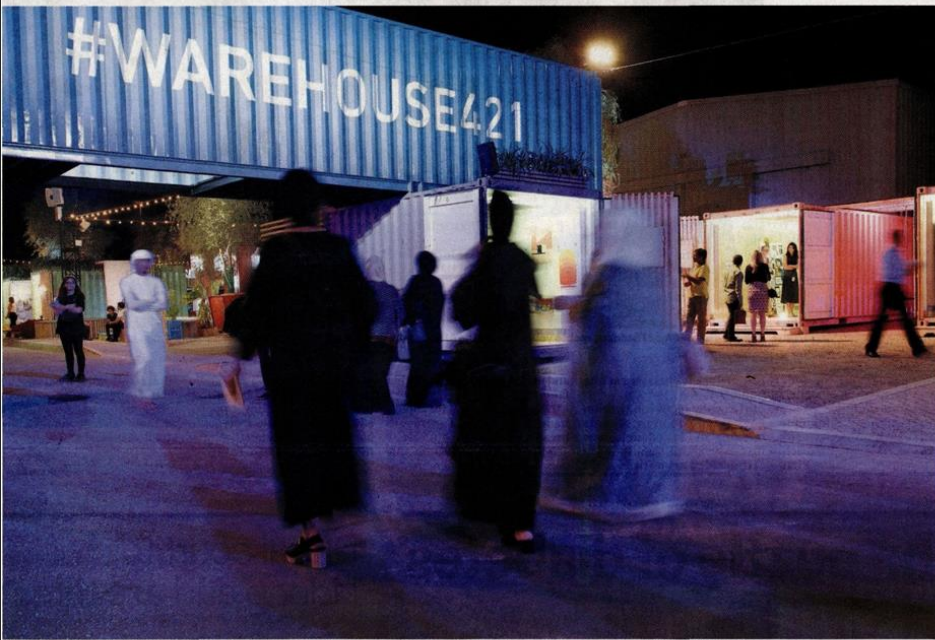


**You know winter has arrived when the festival season starts — and yesterday two arrived at the same time. The Sheikh Zayed Heritage Festival, above, opened at Al Wathba in Abu Dhabi with a performance from the UAE Police Band while crowds also flocked to Mina Zayed in Abu Dhabi to enjoy the opening night of Warehouse421. Full report and more pictures on a6, Ravindranath K / The National**





Visitors admire lighting designer Ghassan Salameh's display at the Creative Market, left, while Tureg band Tinariwen, right, showcase their brand of world music. Vidhyaa for the National; Satish Kumar / The National



Warehouse421 in Abu Dhabi opened last night with visitors enjoying a stroll round a plaza built from shipping containers. Vidhyaa for the National

# Explore your world ... right here in Abu Dhabi

Something remarkable and city-shaping happened last night in Mina Zayed, where Abu Dhabi gave birth to its own qasr of creative cool, Warehouse421.

With a sophisticated sprinkling of inspired fairy dust, the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation (SHF) commissioned the global architect of the minute, Bjørke Ingels, to transform the old warehouse, numbered 421, into a modern hub for arts and culture in the heart of the old port.

For its opening weekend, the surrounding pedestrian plaza includes a creative district of shipping containers repurposed to dramatic effect, showcasing designer boutiques, art galleries, DJ booths, street artists and dancers, with food vans, a temporary mosque constructed from chipboard and a performance space framed by a double avenue of old dhows.

Ingels was on site for the festivities – which included a performance by the Tureg group Tinariwen – as was French photographer Jack Burlot, various art-world luminaries from the nearby Abu Dhabi Art (on this weekend at Manarat Al Saadiyat) and people from all walks of life across the emirates.

Minds were blown. If you weren't there, you missed out, but you have two more days to take in the opening festival, dubbed Explore Your World, from 3 to 11pm today and tomorrow.

★ The National staff



Warehouse421 in the port area of the capital nestles comfortably against the city backdrop. Satish Kumar / The National



Music, dance, DJs, street artists and a stamp workshop, below, are all part of the experience at Warehouse421. Vidhyaa for the National

