

Dubai's maturing property market shifts the advantage to buyers who finish, not just buy, says design studio Kat Black

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, June 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As Dubai's residential market enters a maturing phase where value growth is outpacing transaction volume, interior design and fit-out studio [Kat Black](#) is advising buyers that the real return now sits in what you do with a property after purchase, not simply in acquiring one.

The latest market data sets the context. Q1 2026 recorded AED 176.7 billion in residential sales across nearly 48,000 transactions, with transaction values up 23.4% year on year against volume growth of just 5.5%. Value rising roughly four times faster than volume is the signature of a market driven by quality demand rather than speculation. Buyers are paying more for better product, not rushing into anything available.

Two figures sharpen the point for anyone buying to live in or hold. Around 72% of units scheduled for completion are currently overdue, making ready, well-finished homes structurally scarcer than the official pipeline suggests. And prime communities are no longer where the fastest gains sit: Emirates Hills posted an 11.33% quarterly price increase and Jumeirah 10.31%, while Downtown Dubai softened by 0.50% as it consolidated after a strong run. However, Khalil recommends that [Dubai Hills](#) is still the best area for investment in Dubai with it being so central, and family friendly.

"The market has moved past the phase where you made your money on the day you bought," said Khalil, Director at Kat Black Design Studio. "When value is being driven by quality rather than volume, the property that wins is the one that's been configured and finished to a standard the buyer at the top of the market actually wants. That is a design and build decision, not a purchase decision."

The blank canvas case:

Kat Black's argument is that a shell or dated property bought below the finished-stock premium, then taken through a single design-and-build process, captures the gap that the market is now pricing in. A buyer competing for one of the scarce ready, high-specification homes pays for someone else's taste and someone else's margin. A buyer who starts from a blank canvas controls both.

The studio points to three reasons the approach fits this market specifically:

Scarcity of finished stock. With most of the completion pipeline running late, polished, move-in-ready homes command a premium. A blank canvas property bought at a lower base and finished to specification closes that gap on the buyer's terms.

Specification is what the top of the market is paying for. In communities like Dubai Hills Estate, Palm Jumeirah and Emirates Hills, the buyers setting the price are paying for joinery, material quality, spatial planning and smart home integration. These are the things a design studio controls and a developer's standard handover does not.

Single contract, single accountability. Kat Black runs concept design, 3D visualisation, material procurement, structural fit-out, landscaping, pool and smart home under one project manager and one contract. The buyer does not coordinate a design firm against a separate contractor, which is where most renovation budgets and timelines come apart.

The studio works across Dubai's prime villa communities including Dubai Hills Estate, Palm Jumeirah, Emirates Hills, Arabian Ranches, Jumeirah and Meydan, adapting specification to each community's constraints, from salt air and privacy on the Palm fronds to landscape integration in Emirates Hills.

"A villa in Majestic at Dubai Hills and a frond villa on the Palm are not the same brief, even at the same budget," added Khalil. "Salt exposure, privacy, how the architecture wants to be complemented rather than fought. Getting that right is the difference between a property that holds its value and one that just looks expensive on handover day.

For media Enquiries, please contact Ben Austin at [Absolute Digital Media](#).

mr b austin

Absolute Digital Media

+971 4 251 8056

[email us here](#)

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