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2010 Abraaj Capital Art Prize Works Revealed in Dubai

- Artists have been working on their projects in secret for six months
- The works celebrate the artistic heritage of the MENASA (Middle East, North Africa and South Asia region)
- Public have the opportunity to choose their favourite

Dubai, March 16 – The 2010 works of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize were revealed to the public in Dubai today at Art Dubai, six months after the winners from the MENASA region were announced, and started working on their projects in secret.

Celebrated Algerian artist [Kader Attia](#), working with curator Laurie Ann Farrell from the United States, presented *History of a Myth: The Small Dome of the Rock*. A video installation, this project's focus is on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, a structure of enormous historical and contemporary significance. A subtle combination of image and sound evokes the feelings the artist experienced when he visited the monument, creating a deep impression on the viewer.

[Hala Elkoussy](#) is an Egyptian artist for whom the archival history of modern Cairo is of utmost importance. She presented *The Myths and Legends Room: The Mural*, an epic 9 m by 3 m mural that references commemorative propaganda art. The mural is a dazzling, action-packed display, with many narratives vying for attention. Working with Dutch curator Jelle Bouwhuis, this is a new and exciting development in Elkoussy's career.

[Marwan Sahmarani](#) from Beirut is best known for his vibrant, highly-charged paintings. Working with curator Mahita El Bacha Urieta (Spain/Lebanon), Sahmarani presented *The Feast of the Damned*, an entirely new body of work incorporating oil-on-canvas, watercolour and ink-on-paper, ceramics and a video projection, all displayed in an atmospheric interior. The work is inspired by *Hell: Fall of the Condemned Ones* by Rubens, and deals with age-old themes of



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martyrdom and expiation in its narratives, themes that still resonate today in the Arab world.

Frederic Sicre, Executive Director at Abraaj Capital and a member of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize Selection Committee said: *“Each year we look forward with anticipation to the time when the winners of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize unveil their vision to us. That time has come and it is truly exciting. The prize is part of our commitment to being a patron of the arts in the MENASA region. Through this prize, we seek to empower potential, and give talented artists in this region the opportunity to break new ground, and showcase the rich artistic and cultural heritage of this extraordinarily diverse part of the world.”*

The three works-of-art represent a new stage of evolution for the artists and the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) region, from which they come. In each of their projects, the artists examine a theme that is specific to their experience living in the MENASA region but that also has universal application.

The Abraaj Capital Art Prize, which is globally unique in that its awards are given on the basis of proposals rather than completed works, is now in its second year. It has quickly gained widespread recognition due to the high quality of the winning works.

Through a People’s Choice, the public this year has the opportunity to pick their favourite of the three works. Votes can be made via SMS, online, email and physically at Art Dubai. Photos of the unveiling will be seen first on the Abraaj Capital Art Prize fan page on Facebook.

-Ends-



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Notes to Editors:

About the Abraaj Capital Art Prize

Announced in 2008, at US\$ 1 million in disbursements, it is the world's most generous art prize. Annually it rewards chosen artists from the MENASA region on the basis of a proposal rather than completed works-of-art. The winning artists then go on to create the works. It is aimed at curators and artists working together as opposed to a single artist. To date there have been six winners (3 in 2009 and 3 in 2010). The 2009 winning artists were Nazgol Ansarinia, Zoulikha Bouabdellah, and Kutluğ Ataman. The 2009 works are currently on display at Maraya Art Centre, Al Qasba, Sharjah until April 25th.

For more on the history and future of the prize visit www.abraaj.com/acap

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/AbraajCapitalArtPrize>

Twitter <http://twitter.com/AbraajArtPrize>

Votes for the People's Choice can be made via:

SMS 'K', 'H' or 'M' to 4644 (Etisalat UAE mobiles only);

Online at <http://artdubai.ae/abraaj/home.php>

Email abraajprize@artdubai.ae

Voting is open from 16 March - 16 April. 5 entrants will receive copies of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize Catalogue signed by all three artists.

Contacts:

Nicolas Smirnoff

Brunswick Arts

Tel: +44 207 936 1291

Email: nsmirnoff@brunswickgroup.com

Laura Trelford

Manager of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize, Art Dubai

Tel: +971 4 323 3434

Email: laura@artdubai.ae; abraajprize@artdubai.ae

James Cordahi

Abraaj Capital

Tel: +971 4506 4644

Email: james.cordahi@abraaj.com, artprize@abraaj.com