



Art Dubai 2009 Opens With Unprecedented Line-up of Galleries, Artists, Discussions

Middle East's Largest Contemporary Art Event Unites Regional and International Art Players with Highest Quality, Most Diverse Offerings To Date

DUBAI: Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, Art Dubai 2009 opens today with an unprecedented line-up of 68 participating galleries. The third installment of Art Dubai will feature almost 2000 artworks by 465 artists, more than 20 hours of arts-related discussions in the Global Art Forum, and 20 hours of video art installation showing in the underground Art Park.

The Middle East's largest and most diverse contemporary art event will also host the unveiling of the first three winners of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize 2009, selected from almost 100 applications representing artists from every country in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA).

"In line with the vision of His Royal Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai for the development of art and culture, Art Dubai has created a platform for the global art community to interact and showcase their creations in Dubai," said His Excellency Dr. Omar bin Sulaiman, Governor of the Dubai International Financial Centre and Chairman of Art Dubai. "The event has also been guided by the directives of His Royal Highness Sheikh Majid bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, to develop events that can promote the creation, practice and appreciation of art in Dubai," he added.

"Art Dubai 2009 reflects the tremendous growth in the quality and sustainability of the UAE's cultural community throughout the last few years, and one of the overarching themes for this year's fair is inclusiveness, as Art Dubai collaborates with other emerging art centres such as Doha, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi, and long-term viability. Art Dubai works with both regional and international arts patrons to build a long-term future for contemporary art across the region," said His Excellency Dr. Omar Bin Sulaiman.

Today's private media view of Art Dubai saw the fair's management, including John Martin, Fair Director, and Savita Apte, Chair, Abraaj Capital Art Prize, highlight the range of attractions that will draw attendees from the US, Europe and Asia, as well as the wider Middle East, to Art Dubai in the coming days.

“At the opening of Art Dubai 2009 we’re celebrating a number of real milestones, including the creation of a truly regional and international event that collaborates with Qatar and Abu Dhabi via our Contemporabilia and Global Art Forum initiatives, the unveiling of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize which celebrates the importance of arts patronage, and the welcoming of more than 50 museum groups to what has become a key event on the global arts calendar,” said John Martin, Co-Founder and Director of Art Dubai.

“What we are finding most compelling about this year’s fair is the quality and diversity of the available artworks. In today’s market, both new and established collectors are looking for quality and new opportunities. Art Dubai offers collectors an exceptional programme of curated exhibitions, talks and tours designed to appeal to every level of art buyer.”

"Private Equity is long-term, patient and strategic capital that aims to empower potential of promising companies. It is the same approach that motivates us to play a leading role as a patron of the Arts in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA). Our region is culturally rich and a new generation of artists is also coming to the fore. We are proud of our support which enables Art Dubai to bring artists from our region and the world together, and which empowers our young artists to be recognized through the Abraaj Capital Art Prize. The success of Art Dubai this year is a testimony to the importance of Dubai as a modern, cosmopolitan centre of the Arts and to the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum,” said Frederic Sicre, Executive Director, Abraaj Capital.

Abraaj Capital Art Prize 2009 Winning Projects Unveiled

Alongside the official opening of Art Dubai 2009, the winning projects of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize 2009 were unveiled. Displayed on Fort Island at Madinat Jumeirah, the winning projects are:

- Iranian artist Nazgol Ansarinia’s hand-woven Persian carpet, *Rhyme and Reason*, which transforms traditional floral motifs into scenes of contemporary life in Iran. Curated by Leyla Fakhr, an Assistant Curator at the Tate Britain in London, Ansarinia’s project reflects the complex dynamics between order and chaos within Iran today.
- Video and installation artist Zoulikha Bouabdellah’s piece *Walk on the Sky. Pisces*, evokes the night sky punctuated by an astrological constellation influenced by geometric shapes found in Islamic art. American-born curator and art historian Carol Solomon collaborated with Algeria’s Bouabdellah on this award-winning project.
- Celebrated Turkish artist Kutluğ Ataman’s intense video installation entitled *Strange Space*, is a recorded performance piece, curated by Cristiana Perrella, curator of the Contemporary Arts Programme at the British School at Rome. The piece is part of Ataman’s most recent and challenging project, *Mesopotamian Dramaturgies*.

Art Dubai 2009 in Numbers

- Art Dubai includes 68 galleries from around the world, including 13 from the Middle East, 27 from Europe, 8 from the Americas, 2 from Russia and 9 from Asia.

- Artworks from more than 465 artists will be displayed at Art Dubai 2009, including almost a quarter from Arab and Iranian artists.
- Global Art Forum_3 includes more than 20 hours of discussion on issues critical to the Middle East and international art landscapes, including 59 speakers.
- The Art Park at Art Dubai 2009 will include 16 curated video programmes, and the debut of *Art Park Talks*. Art Dubai's performance programme showcases 13 performances.
- Van Cleef & Arpels' museum-quality exhibition at Art Dubai, *The Art of Magical Jewels*, will showcase more than 150 pieces of jewellery.
- More than 60 interns take part in the DEYAAR education programme at Art Dubai, assisting galleries, the creation of art projects, working with media partners, and supporting collectors.
- Six new books will be launched at Art Dubai 2009 and sold on-site along with 100 other arts titles, many of which were previously unavailable in Dubai.
- Over 50 international museum groups from around the world will attend Art Dubai this year.

For further information about the Art Dubai, participating galleries, art projects, events and the education programme please visit www.artdubai.ae

Art Dubai is a subsidiary of the **Dubai International Financial Centre** and is held in partnership with **Abraaj Capital**. **Madinat Jumeirah** is the exclusive hotel partner for the event.

Art Dubai will also feature '**The Art of Magical Jewels**', a museum quality exhibition, curated by Van Cleef & Arpels.

As the education partner of Art Dubai, **DEYAAR** enables more than 60 interns and university students to play an integral role in the fair.

Contemporabilia is a joint initiative of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH); Art Dubai; the Sharjah Biennial; and the Qatar Museums Authority. www.contemporabilia.com

START is the official CSR programme of Art Dubai. For more information, visit www.startworld.org

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Van Cleef & Arpels

