



PRESS RELEASE

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French Art Festival Premieres in the UAE

Under the Patronage of HH Sheikha Manal Bint Mohammed

30 French Artists and 700 Artworks: Two Exhibitions, Two Cities

UAE: The prestigious French Art Festival (FAF) will debut at the Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi, from 12-15th February 2008, under the patronage of HH Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, wife of HH Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister for Presidential Affairs, President of Dubai Women Establishment. Following the inauguration in the capital, FAF will exhibit from 2-5th March 2008 at Mina A'Salam, Dubai. A ladies' evening will take place on the second day of both exhibitions. This newly launched initiative will become an annual event and is designed to promote highly sought after French contemporary art within the UAE.

FAF was formed to create links and partnerships with fast developing countries, as well as to further enhance global cultural blooming. FAF supports the conception of contemporary art pieces and encourages international distribution because in France, art is more than a heritage; it is a national identity. FAF wishes to pursue the discovery of more talented artists, as well as nurture the talents of those already involved in the project while enhancing the ever growing cultural variety of art that is spreading worldwide.

Thirty renowned French artists were specially hand picked to best reflect the diversity of contemporary French art. Work displayed will range from paintings and sculptures, to design artwork, tapestries and photographs. The same artists will exhibit 350 pieces in Abu Dhabi and a different set of 350 works in Dubai. In Abu Dhabi, Christine Barres, the famed French painter, will be holding a workshop for those who are interested in widening their artistic horizons, and local

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guest artists Mohamed Kanoo, Wasel Safwan and Mohammed Mandi will participate in the exhibition. In Dubai, guest artists that will be involved are Manal Bin Amro and Nuha Hassan Asad.

“This initiative testifies to the United Arab Emirates’ ongoing commitment to investing in the arts, nourishing local talent and partnering with great cultural centres around the world with the hopes of creating another great centre, here in the UAE,” said HH Sheikha Manal Bint Mohammed. “Promoting art and culture, as expressed by the country’s leadership in the UAE Government Strategy, will go a long way in preserving and building on our own heritage and cultural offering. And art, as a communicative tool, is universal and far reaching, allowing us to reach farther out globally and to build bridges with a diversity of nations, cultures and people.”

Francoise Malafosse, Artistic Director of FAF, is thrilled to be adding to the already booming cultural scene in the UAE. She stated, “All involved in the French Art Festival share a passion for art and all things cultural. It is really an honour to be able to share this passion with those eager to expand the horizons of the fast developing United Arab Emirates. Cultural awareness and multinational acceptance is key in budding cosmopolitan hubs, and I am so thrilled that we are able to exhibit in such a world class country.”

At the Abu Dhabi opening ceremony, an artwork painted on the spot by the famed artist Robert DiCredico will be auctioned off with all proceeds going to the Emirates Foundation. The Dubai Autism Centre is the chosen benefactor for the auction that will take place at the Dubai opening ceremony.

The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) is fully supporting this festival that will be taking place at their premises. ADACH aims not only to preserve and promote the national identity and values of the UAE, but also to develop cultural tourism and make Abu Dhabi the cultural destination of the Middle East.

“We are proud to support the French Art Festival in its feat to spread knowledge about contemporary art and its beauty. Cultural development is what we strive for and every such initiative brings us closer to our goal of becoming the region’s epicenter for education and cultural evolution,” said H.E. Mohammed Khalaf Al Mazrouei, Director General of ADACH.

The celebrated exhibiting artists will include such painters as Christine Barres, Robert DiCredico, Pascal Magis, Brigitte Martinet and the sculptor Jean Louis Toutain.

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FAF in Abu Dhabi has partnered with the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, the UAE French Embassy, Alliance Francaise and Dubai Women Establishment. It is also being supported by Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation and Shawati' magazine is the media partner. Sponsors include Van Cleef & Arpels and Chalhoub Group. In Dubai, the festival is supported by Dubai Cultural Council, the French Consulate, Dubai Women Establishment, Dubai Ladies Club, Alliance Francaise and French Business Council. Sponsors are Van Cleef & Arpels and Chalhoub Group.

Opening timings for the public in Abu Dhabi will be 13th February, 10:00am-6:00pm and 14-15th February, 10:00am-9:00pm. In Dubai, the exhibition timings will be 3rd March from 10:00am-6:00pm and 4-5th March from 10:00am-9:00pm.

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For further information, please contact:

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