



▲ Director Hatem Ali has been at the forefront of Syrian filmmaking for the last sixteen years.

down. He is set to direct the epic 'Muhammad Ali' later this year, starring famous Egyptian actor Yehya Al Fakharani. Although preparations for the movie began in 2005, filming had been postponed because of complications with the budget. The project was put on hold for four years and it was Ali who resurrected the idea in January 2009.

The film, which is due to be completed for the 2010 Ramadan season, is written by Al Fakharani's wife, Dr Lamis Jaber, and will also star the Egyptian actresses Mirvat Ameen and Ghada Abed Al Razaq. During the course of 2009, Ali also completed 'The Long Night', a film about three political prisoners being released from a Syrian jail. The film won a special mention at the Cairo International Film Festival last year.

87 [New entry] Helal Al Marri
Head, Dubai World Trade Centre
UAE

As head of Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), Al Marri has managed to achieve continued growth at a time when Dubai was facing harsh criticism from the global media and its position as a regional hub for business was being questioned.

Despite the global downturn and the Dubai World debt crisis, the DWTC's venues, including Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre and Airport Expo Dubai, managed to attract 1.24 million visitors last year.



▲ Under Al Marri's leadership, DWTC's venues have managed to attract 1.24m visitors in 2009.

While the company has not been immune to the downturn and was forced to lay off 108 staff, or six percent, it did manage to achieve growth of twelve percent in 2009.

Al Marri is bullish that it can attract even more visitors and exhibitors this year and is confident that it can achieve twelve percent, or more, in 2010.

Al Marri previously worked as a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Co, one of the world's leading consulting firms. He also worked with KPMG in London, holds an MBA degree from the London Business School and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Founded in 1979, the DWTC has been instrumental in establishing Dubai as a global financial and commercial hub and Al Marri was appointed its head in 2004.

88 [83] Emad Hajjaj
Political cartoonist
Jordan

Down five places this year, Emad Hajjaj nonetheless remains one of the Arab world's best-loved political cartoonists, known for his tongue-in-cheek sketches on Middle East conflicts. Born in Ramallah in 1967, Hajjaj graduated from Al Yarmouk University in Jordan in 1991 with a BA in fine arts, majoring in graphic design and journalism.

In 1992, he began to work for the London-based *Al Quds Al Arabi* newspaper, after which he moved to work for *Al Dustour*. The

following year, Hajjaj left to work for the leading Jordanian daily *Al Rai*, but a controversial cartoon led to his dismissal in 2000.

Hajjaj lauds cartoons as a way of tackling thorny issues, but will admit that pushing the boundaries can lead to trouble in conservative Arab societies.

"We use symbolism to say many things that we cannot say directly: like criticising our political regimes, like criticising religious issues," he has said. "I did draw my king once... it was the first time that our king had been portrayed in a cartoon. But there were then many, many problems afterwards."

Hajjaj has hosted exhibitions of his work in Amman, Beirut and Dubai and has published a number of caricature books that have sold relatively well.

He is a member of the Jordan Press Union, and of the cartoonists and writers syndicate CWS in the US. He won 'Best Published Cartoon in the Arabic Media' in 2005 for his cartoon 'The Crying Arabic Camel'.

89 [New entry] Patrick Chalhoub
CEO, Chalhoub Group
Syria

In the Middle East, Patrick Chalhoub's name is synonymous with luxury. He joined the Chalhoub Group in 1979. Charged with distributing perfumes in Kuwait, he made the division a commercial success within three years. He then became joint CEO of the regional businesses, overseeing operations in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain.

For 30 years, Chalhoub has been involved on a daily basis in the company's strategic development to ensure its long-term success. Mindful of perpetuating the values of the Chalhoub family that inspired the formation of the company, he is committed to motivating and training his staff of 3,700 people. He is continuing the legacy started by his parents and is promoting and developing French culture and language in the Middle East by forging special ties with the region's schools and universities.

He has set up a fund for the development of learning French at the international Lycée in Lebanon. For four years he also chaired the French Business Council in Dubai and helped to reorganise it.

At the age of 42, he was decorated with the prestigious French medal of Knight of the Order of Merit. After studying in Lebanon and France, Chalhoub graduated from a renowned French business school. Currently living in Dubai, he is 50 years old and married with two children.