# DEBANJAN ROY – REVIEWS AND REACTIONS from ROMA Art Fair and Art Dubai



















## La Republica, February, 2008 ROMA Art Fair, February 28 - March 2, 2008



## ilvenerdì

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# Roma due volte Fiera dell'arte. In nome del mercato e della cultura

A fine mese duplice appuntamento con la produzione **contemporanea** internazionale. Per la capitale, rimasta per anni fuori dei circuiti, è un'inversione di tendenza, con un doppio obiettivo. Molto ambizioso

#### ELENA MARTELLI

OMA. Non è vero, come scriveya il New York Times, che siarno un Paese infelice. Almeno così non sembra se, invece che al Pil, ai politici intercettati e indagati, alle leggi non fatte, al governo in crisi, si guarda al mondo parallelo dell'arte contemporanea, dove le fiere, come pel resto del mondo, sembrano vivere una maova Golden Age, con tutto quel che comporta: artisti che riempono le pagine di gossip come le star del cinema, gallaristi venerati come rockstar e un calendario saturo di mostre, biennali od eventi. Basiloa in testa, le fiere funzionano oggi come i kolossal di Hollywood, gli spazi sono il loro teatro e

Il pubblico, che gira con Jürkis al braccio e assegni in mano, è il club privé della società dello spettaccio. Perché, in fondo, questo gran film è anche artie o, al ponto del pop corn, c'è la coppa di champagna.

Così il Grand Tour in Italia oggi è andar per fiere. E, dopo Torino e Bologna, partono a fine febbraio due movi eventi, entrambi a Roma, chtà fino a poco tempo fa considerata scarsamente etrategica, un moscerino dal punto di vista commerciale. Che i tempi fossero cambiati

s'era gia cupito vedendo Larry Gugosian, big fra i big dell'arte contemporanea, inaugurare a dicembre uns galleria nel centro storico della capitale. Ora arrivano queste due nuove manifestazioni: una,

## il venerdì a Roddica

cultura . NON DI SOLO PASSATO ...

Roma. The Road to Contemporary Art, è diretta da Roberto Casiraghi. ex deus es machina di Artissima di Torino; l'altra, ARTEcontemporoneamodernaROMA, si tiene al Palazzo del congressi dell'Eur ed è curata da Daniela Salvioni, nata a New York da genitori italiani, in passato direttrice di SteinGaldstone Gallery di New York e curatrice di mostre per il P.S.1 e per il Moma di New York. La prima debutterà (dopo un balletto di date) il 28 febbraio, la seconda il giorno dopo. Entrambe chiuderanno II 2 marzo.

«Un tempo nessuno avrebbe scommesso su Roma» racconta Daniela Salvioni, «ora tutti vogliono venirci. C'è una ragione dettata dalla moda, che è fatta anche di ritorni, ma ce n'è anche una più profonda, che ha origine nella vocazione internazionale di questa città: negli anni Sessanta era uno dei centri nevralgici dell'arte, ora, anche dal punto di vista geografico, si trova a giocare un ruolo centrale tra Medio Oriente e Stati Uniti. E sembra essere attraversata da una nuova energia. Vogliamo dire una nuova Dolce Vita?».

Imporsi sul mercato fierístico contemporaneo non è però un oblettivo facile. Anche per Roberto Casiraghi che, in dieci anni, ha lanciato nel mondo la fiera di Torino. Artissing ha sempre avuto una connotazione giovane» dice Casiraghi. «Quel che le mancava era la partecipazione continuativa del grande mercato dell'arte. L'ambizione di Roma è proprio quella di attrarre l grandi nomi della scena internazionale. Un'ambizione alta, però il primo passo è stato fatto. Questa fiera è diversa da qualunque altra al mondo per come viene allestita: entriamo in alcuni palazzi storici, come il Complesso monumentale di Santo Spirito in Sassia, i salori di Palazzo Ferrajoli, Palazzo Wedekind e Palazzo Rospigliosi e negli spazi delle Terme di Diocleziano per creare un dialogo con il cuore



storico della città. Per questo la fiera non avrà la classica struttura a stand, con il convenzionale corridolo verso cui si aprono le gallerie, ma sarà composta da una serie di ambienti che si succederanno l'uno dentro l'altro. Premesso che la fiera ha una valenza commerciale forte, un carattere economico, mi piacerebbe recuperare il valore puramente culturale e sociale dell'arte. In tante altre fiere ormai si va soprattutto per vedere a quanto viene venduta l'opera di Damien Hirst. Niente di scandaloso, ma questo non deve offuscare il reale significato dell'arte. Vorrei che la gente potesse entrare nei palazzi e apprezzare il significato di un'opera in sé e il contesto in cui è presentata. Se l'arte oggi mobilita più persone del salone dell'auto, vorrà dire qualcosa. Per questo, accanto alla flera, ho voluto dare spazio a due mostre. Una, curata da Achille Bonito Oliva, Cose mai viste, comprende opere provenienti dalle collezioBanche arante scentate

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ri private delle gallerie che partecipano alla manifestazione. L'altra, curata da Ludovico Pratesi, s'intitola Incipit e sarà allestita con opere di collezionisti privati romanis.

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Recuperare il valore culturale dell'arte sembra l'elemento comune alle due manifestazioni romane. «Le fiere oggi hanno una valenza culturale fortes sostiene Daniela Salvioni «e penso sia sbagliato pensare in termini negativi alla parola mercato. C'è sempre stato, ed è sempre stato il necessario flusso nel quale l'arte si è mossa producendo grandi opere. Quello che, semmai, manca alle fiere è la capacità di scovare le nuove tendenze. Nella nostra fiera, anche grazie alle gallerie plù giovani (che affiancano le plù note, come GreenGrassi di Londra o Kim Light/Light Box di New York), ho cercato di portare tutti i fenomeni più interessanti dell'arte di oggi. Non volevo proporre il solito elenco delle gallerie e degli artisti "top of the pop"s. E, anche nel caso di ARTEcontemporoneamodernaROMA, non mancano mostre parallele. «Al plano superiore del Palazzo dei congressi ci sarà Open Space Under 35, dedicata appunto agli artisti emergenti sotto i 85 anni. Hotel Poooop radunerà invece i più significativi artisti hyperpop degli ultimi anni. E presenteremo il nuovo libro, in edizione limitata, di Maurizio Cattelana.

Sono cinquanta le gallerie che hanno aderito alla fiera diretta da Salvioni. Stesso numero, tra italiane e internazionali, per il progetto di Casiraghi (tra gli artisti ci sararno Francesco Vezzoli, Luigi Ontani, Nan Goldin, Julian Schnabel e Glulio Paolini), «Mi dispiace che Gagosian non ci sia» dice Casiraghi. «Penso sia una mancanza di sonsibilità nei confronti di un'iniziativa che si tiene nella città in cui ha deciso di aprire il suo negozio... Del resto è molto vicino alla fiera, i suoi collezionisti non mancheranno». ELENA MARTELLI



LA NUOVA FIERA Tra gli artisti ospiti di questa prima edizione Richard Long e Luigi Paolini nge Koma da quell'indolen-sa nenscinale delle ecente sul plano econoresi octale, dandole consipevo te contemporanea suelo torpore, za che è la cau Art ed ex proone di / uale. à di Pier Paolo Pancotto i starno. Finalmente Th

L'Unita, February, 2008 ROMA Art Fair, February 28 - March 2, 2008

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## Left Magazine, February, 2008 ROMA Art Fair, February 28 - March 2, 2008

## Incontri

Fino al 27 aprile prosegue ParelErranfi, un ciclo di incontri con la scrittura e la musica delle migrazioni organizzato dall'associazione Città meticcia. Il 2 marzo al Mama's club si esibiscono Milsai Mircea Butchvan e Francisca Aleca, artisti provenimti dalla Romania.

#### ROMA

Il palazzo delle Esposizioni inaugura un modo nuovo di accostarsi alla letteratura e alla migliore musica d'autore italiana; alcuni musicisti tra i più interessanti del panorama musicale sono stati invitati a malizzare una serie di reading letterari e musical. Mercoledi 5 marzo Boosta dei Subsonica e Gian Carlo Caselli leggono Roberto Saviano

#### DELOGILA

Appuntamento nella provincia per scoprire il misterioso mondo del miele. La proposta è delle condotte di Emola, Faenza e Brisighella di Slow Food e dell'Accademia del Miele mieluza, che propongono per il 4.11 e 15 marzo un suggestivo percorso frai segreti del prezioso nettare delle api.

#### ROMA

Nell'ambito delle celebrazioni per il centervario della nascita di Lalla Romano (1906-2001), la Capitale le rende ornaggio con una grande mostra antologica di manoscritti, documenta dipinti, disegni e fotografie che documentano la sua vita e la sua produzione artistica di scrittrice. poetessa e piltrice. Fino al 31 marzo.

## Arte

Il Palazzo della Marra di Barletta sede della Pinacoteca Giuseppe De Nittis ospita la mostra Plaris 1900. La collezione del Petit Palais di Parigi che rimane aperta fino al 20 luglio, Curata da Gilles Chazal, l'esposizione amplifica Tiedogine sull'arte d'Oltralpe con opere di artisti contemporanei.

#### ROMY

Alla Scuderie del Quirinale, fino al 10 giungo, c'è la mostra Ottocento, da Casanova al Quarto Stato.

#### MILANO

L'associazione Connecting cultures organizza Fusirii aogosul rapporto tra arte e territorio. Il primo appuntamento è dedicato al progetto Parcodell'artista Marina Ballo Charmet. Il 6 marzo in via Giorgio Merula.

#### LATERA

Prosegue Mad-Joyce, progetto artistico ed espositivo presentato da Mad rassegna d'arte contemporanea. Il 29 febbraio è la volta dell'artista Alessandro Reale. Partecipa lo storico dell'arte Vincenzo Scozzarella.

#### **PERMAN**

In occasione dell'uscita dei due primi titoli, firmati entrambi da Guia Risari, della nuova collana PescoSpada lanciata da Beisler editore, alla Feltrineli international vengono esposte le 24 tavole illustrate dal disegnatore Altan por Il pesce spada e la serratura e le 11 tavole illustrate da Chiana Carrer per L'affabeto dimezzato.

## Musica

L'Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio propone uno studio sul primo atto del Flauto mudico Una reinterpretazione in chiave moderna ed etnica da parte dei 15 musicistidel gruppo: un racconto che passa di bocca in bocca, secondo. la tradizione orale dei cantastorie. L'aria di Papageno è cantata in wolof, la lingua dei senegalesi, e tutta la partitura di Mozart, impregnata e filtrata attraverso le diverse tradizioni dei musicisti della compagine, appare radicalmente trasformata. Fino al 2 marzo al Palladium università Roma Tre.

#### TOUR

Dal 6 al 16 marzo prossimi Roberto Bonuti è protoponista di una serie di concerti con l'ensemble Musica Reservata: Istanbul, Izmir e Ankara saranno le tappe di un tour che prevede esibizioni e workshop.

#### PRATO

Protsima stazone Polteama Protese venerdi 7 marzo, per una speciale edizione di Stazioni Lurari dove il canto popolare si unisce alla musica d'autore al feniminile Protagoniste sono infatti Teresa De Sio, Cristina Donale Ginevra Di Marco.

#### MILANO

Venerdi 29 febbraio e sabato primo marzo II Blue Note ospita il conoerto dei Big Onie, cover band che propone un tributo ai Pink Floyd ripercorrendo la discografia del gruppo dagli esordi di The piper at the gates of daiwi fino all'ultimo The Division Bell

## Teatro

La stagione del teatro Lauro Rossi prosegue sabato L e domenica 2 marzo con lo spettacolo *Le Cirque invisible* di e con Victoria Chaplin e Jean-Baptiste Thiervie. Per quasi due ore si susseguono sul palco senza intervizione trucchi, battute, gag e acrobazie.

#### CASESTA

Sangue Vivo, lo spettacolo di Michele Pagano ospitato in prima nazionale presso fOfficina teatrodi San Leucio II primo marzo, con replica il 2, è una tappa di avvicinamento prevista dal cartellone "I cento passi versoil 15 marzo, XIII Gornata nazionale della memoria e dell'impegno per tutte le vittime delle mafie" organizzata dall'associatione Libera, associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie.

#### CENOVA

A forma di Rinocerontele in sciena sahato primo narzo, al teatro della Tosse. L'evento è nato dall'unione, per la prima volta, di tre realtà genovesi tra le più attive sul territorio: il teatro della Tosse, teatro attento alle novità e al'mondo giovanile, il Milicclubed effetto notte all'ermato circuito cinefio d'essai

#### DOMA

Un ornaggio all'epoca dei music hall, che agli inizi del secolo ebbe la sua stagione d'oro. Questo l'intento dello spettacolo che Riccardo Cavallo porta in scena dal 5 marzo nella Sala Gassman dei teatro dell'Orologio, i retroscena del music hall



#### Freaky Friday 2008

Non una fiera, ma una manifestazione culturale in luoghi non convenzionali. Cosl Roberto Casiraghi, direttore dell'iniziativa, ha definito The road to contemporary art. Dal 28 febbraio al 2 marzo, nella Capitale, a palazzo Venezia, all'ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sastia, a palazzo Rospigliosi e in 80 gallerie italiane e straniere, l'arte moderna e contemporanea è l'assoluta protagorista. Ogni spazio racconta un capitolo di storia romana, e ospita un aspetto diverso dell'evento. Echiostri del Complesso monumentale del Santo Spinito in Sassia fanno da teatro alle opere delle nuove leve nel panorama internazionale dell'arte contemporaries, mentreli grandi nomi del Novecento trovano spazio nelle sale di palazzo Venezia. Palazzo Rospigliosi è dedicato alle video installazioni e. infine, le tenne di Diocleziano accelgorio pezzi provenienti dalle collegioni private delle gallerie che partecipano alla kermesse. All'interno della fiera, la notte del 29 febbraio è stato organizzato il Freaky Friday, un'intera notte dedicata al-Farts. Oltre 80 galleriele spazi diversi sono aperti per l'occasione, dalle 21,30 alle 2400. tra vernissage, cocktail e incontri congli artisti DL



## Domenica II Sole 24 Ore, February, 2008 ROMA Art Fair, February 28 - March 2, 2008

#### Fiere in arrivo

# Contemporanei on the Road

#### di Laura Torretta

rtefiera a Bologna, Artissima a Torino, MIArt a Milano: a questo affermato terzetto fieristico si aggiunge ora Roma. The Road to Contemporary Art. Catapultare la città eterna nell'effervescente realtà del mercato, mettendo a profitto il buon momento che l'arte contemporanea sta attraversando, è lo scopo dichiarato degli ideatori della rassegna: Roma, in effetti, non è mai rjuscita a rivestire un ruolo di primo piano nè in questo settore në in quello dell'antiquariato, nonostante l'attiva presenza di operatori di gran nome.

Ma se, per quanto riguarda l'arte antica, nel passito più o meno recente non sono mancatii test, dalla mostramercato Arte e Collezionismo, tra il 1908 e il 2004 organizzata con cadenza biennale a Palazzo Venezia ad Antiquari nella Roma Rinascimentale, allestita nel 2006 e 2007, per la contemporanea si tratta di un battesimo.

Nella capitale solo di recente hanno iniziato la loro attività due musei dedicati a questo segmento e non si è ancora radica-



Icona moderna. Debanjan Roy, Gondhi and the Inptop. 2007

to un tessuto di collezionismo privato e istituzionale in grado dirichiamare l'interesse di operatori nazionali e internazionali. Molte potenzialiti sono atcora da sviluppare, ma il terreno è fertile, come dimostra la risonanza internazionale ottenuta nel dicembre scorso dall'inaugurazione, con una mostra di Cy Twombly, della sede romana della celebre galleria americana Larry Gagosian.

In programma dal 28 febbraio al 2 marzo, la nuova rassegna non vuole essere la "solita" fiera ma una manifestazione "dentro Roma", entrare fisicamente nella città, vivere e far vivere più sodi collegate da un legame ideale e fisico.

Intende distinguersi prima

di tutto per la coreografia dal nomento che, unica nell'affollato panorama mondiale di eventi mercantili, avrà come cornice edifici di grande tradizione. L'affascinante viaggio alla scoperta dell'arte contempo-

A Roma la nuova mostra mercato ospitata in sedi storiche come le Terme di Diocleziano o Palazzo Rospigiosi

ranea avverrà attraverso preziose testimionianze della città "classica": dalle sale e i chiostri del Complesso Monumentale di Santo Spirito in Sassia ai saloni di Palazzo Ferrajoli e del Palazzo Wedekind, sino al suggestivo Tempio di Adriano,

Ancora, nei saloni affrescati di Palazzo Rospigliosi, di fronte al Quirinale, troveràspazio Incipit, smagliante vetrina di tele, composizioni e scultare prestate da collezionisti privati romani, armonicamente predisposta da Ludovico Pratesi e promossadall'Associazione Roma Conteoporary e dall'Associazione Giovani Collezionisti. E le Terme di Diocleziano saranno l'ideale collocazione per Cose mai viste, un'esposizione di opere provenienti dalle raccolte private delle gallerie, otdinate secondo un riporoso percorso di Achille Bonito Oliva.

La scelta di sedi storiche non vuole però essere fine a se stessa, un semplice motivo di attrarione turistico-culturale, bensi l'occasione per un dialogo e un confronto tra l'arte del passato e quella del tempo in cui viviamo.

Saranno plù di cinquanta le gallerie espositrici, italiane e in-ternazionali, che parteciperanno alla manifestazione romana. Alcune già note, altre nuove ed emergenti, e tutte selezionate da un Consiglio direttivo composto da mercanti di grande esperienza. Alla vigilia del debutto trapela qualche indiscrezione: Robilant Voena Contemporary espone un'opera di grande formato di Julian Schnabel; Studio la Città invita al dialogo con un'operaparadigmatica per la ricerca di Ettore Spalletti: Il Polittico propone una tela di Dino Val-Is che vuole essere una metafora tra elementi naturali (costituiti dai fiori) e parti anatomiche del corpo umano. E nello stand della Galleria dell'Oca risalta l'installazione Castelli di Carte, che Giulio Paolini ha scelto di sistemare «in un salotto privato della famiglia Ferrajoli lasciato intatto con gli arredi originali».



Dubai fair reaps reward of focus on Indian contemporary art

British collectors Charles Saatchi and Frank Cohen were among those who bought

By Georgina Adam and James Knox | From Web exclusive | Posted: 19.3.08

DUBAI. Arabian Delight, a stuffed camel squashed into a large blue suitcase, on show at the Art Dubai fair, has been acquired by Charles Saatchi. The 2008 piece by the Pakistani artist Huma Mulji, was the talking point of the fair, which opened to VIPs yesterday (Tuesday).

The sale, for \$8,000 (£4,000), was brokered in advance by an art advisor; Mr Saatchi did not attend the fair, however he also acquired a large pop-style group portrait (Untitled Eclipse 3, 2007) by Jitish Kallat from Chemould Prescott Road Gallery (Mumbai), for about \$200,000 (£100,000). Manchester collector Frank Cohen snapped up Jagannath Panda's figurative study of trees, Absence in Cite, 2007, for about €60,000 (£47,000) at the same gallery.

The second edition of the fair, which continues until Sunday (23 March), brings together 70 dealers, compared to 40 last year, ranging from dealers from Dubai, Iran, Lebanon and Bahrein, to Australian, Korean, American and European exhibitors.

The fair has grown not only in size but in complexity, with a programme of talks and events and this year boasts an "art park" for video along with a special section devoted to Pakistan.

The event is supported by Dubai's ruler, HH Sheikh Mohammed Al-Maktoum, who swept into the exhibition hall on the first day surrounded by a phalanx of photographers, courtiers and press. This highly visible patronage was reinforced by a visit from his son HH Sheikh Majid Al Maktoum, who is culture minister in the statelet.

At last year's fair, sales were driven by the market for contemporary Indian art, with many showing Western art reporting disappointing results. As a result, this year there was more Indian and Middle Eastern art on display.

Sales in this category proved the strongest element on the opening day of the fair. In addition to the sales at Chemould Prescott, Aicon Gallery sold India Shining 2007 by Debanjin Roy for \$20,000 (£10,000), a cast (3/5) showing a red-painted Ghandi sitting in front of a laptop.

While the mood was upbeat among the Indian gallerists, Western dealers noted that sales were slower. However Rossi and Rossi, with a solo show of Tibetan artist Gonkar Gyatso, had virtually sold out the God series of calligraphies, collages of glittery stickers (£16,500) per image, while Buddha in our Time, 2008, a large image of the deity, sold to the Australian White Rabbit Foundation for £45,000.



Elsewhere, there was a range of Western art on offer, from a large, \$850,000 Sam Francis at Max Lang to Jawlenski's House with Palmtree, 1914, priced at \$1.78m at Galerie Thomas. Albion had parked Wim Delvoye's lacy metallic sculpture Cement Truck, 2008, outside the fair (€600,000, £473,000).

"There is a tremendous feeling of optimism about the Dubai fair," said Mona Hauser, founder of the satellite Creek art fair. This consisted of dealer shows and artist installations scattered around 22 traditional houses and outdoor spaces in the historic Bastakiya district.

This event has also gathered momentum, compared to last year when there were only eight houses available. This year there are also films, talks and concerts. The opening night (which took place Saturday, before the fair itself opened) attracted over 1,000 visitors and saw the start of very strong buying, particularly of Iranian art, much to UAE nationals.

Malekeh Nayiny sold examples from her Demon series of coloured photographic prints for €9,000 (£7,000) at XVA gallery. This series has also been on display at the Vuitton centre in Paris. Watercolours of childlike fantasy landscapes by Farah Abolghasemi were selling strongly at 14,000 Dirhams (£200) at Total Arts.

Ms Hauser confirmed that it is important for dealers not to overprice in this still nascent market. The Creek art fair runs to 31 March.

Like Dubai itself, the fair is still being built, and can be expected to evolve as dealers and clients alike deepen their knowledge of the field. "We had better questions this year and more serious people, and I feel the fair has greater momentum," said gallerist Max Lang of New York.



## Indian art rules at International Dubai Art Fair

Sahar Zaman



ART ATTACK: Works of contemporary Indian artists were widely appreciated at the International Dubai Art Fair.

**Dubai:** The second International Art Fair was held at Dubai recently, and as the event concluded what emerged was the growing popularity of Indian art.

Last week all roads led to the International Dubai Art Fair, and Dubai being the hub of international entrepreneurs, is buzzing with the flavour of the season— Indian art. The International Dubai Art Fair is growing to be one of the biggest art fairs in the world, and it's relevant to Indians as the focus this year is on Indian contemporary art. Director Dubai Art Fair, John Martin says, "It's an opportunity for collectors in Middle East, Europe, Far East and America to come here showing interest in the art from the region."

The two most popular artists with gallery owners from various parts of the world at the event were Subodh Gupta and Jitesh Kallat. Gallery owner from Italy Mario Cristiani comments on the works of Subodh Gupta, "Works of Subodh are very important for us, because his work has the sensibility of the tradition of India, but in a modern context."

"We've had tremendous response for Indian art, particularly for the work of Jitesh Kallat," says Jena Balton a gallery owner from Chicago.

The fair marked the paradigm shift of interest in art from the Western world to the Eastern zone. It also looked beyond our masters like Husain or Raza, to give due recognition to the potential in the contemporary genre that's breaking records in the international market.



## Artconcerns.com, March, 2008 Art Dubai, March 19 - 22, 2008



*India Shining 1,* 2007, painted cast aluminium, 27 x 46 x 30 in.

## Art Dubai: Optimism Unbound

The recently concluded Art Dubai (formerly called The Dubai Art Fair) celebrated art from the South East Asian region. India now being the hot destination, Indian contemporary art got an extra focus in this fair. Delhi based art writer and curator Anubhav Nath files a comprehensive story on the fair from Dubai.

## Introduction

The major international art fairs are held annually in Basel, New York, Miami, London and Paris. These exhibitions are a meeting-point for artists, curators, dealers, buyers, consultants, critics, museums and art foundations.

Last year was the inaugural year and this year there were many noticeable changes. Firstly, the name; from a not-so-cool "The Dubai Art Fair" to a more savvy Art Dubai. The Swiss Art Basel is the mother of all art events and seems to be the reference point for the evolving Art Dubai.

The fair was held from March 18th to 22nd, mainly at the posh Medinath Jumeira Hotel in Dubai. Compared to last year, the fair has more talks, discussions and programs. This year, the physical space had more than doubled, with seventy galleries from all over the world showing the best of their art.

The event is patronized by HH Sheikh Mohammed Al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai. He inaugurated the fair guaranteeing the attendance of high-profile visitors including prominent members of the royal families. Savita Apte and John Martin are among the main organizers.

## Incredible India

With last year's tremendous success, Indian galleries had a strong presence and reported even stronger sales. They were surely envied by other international participants. Last year the galleries focused on modern masters, but this time the flavor was definitely very contemporary.

Gallery Chemould showed exceptional works by Rashid Rana, Jagnanath Panda and Reena Saini Kallat's works made with rubber stamps. Sakshi Gallery exhibited an installation by Zarina Hashmi and sculptures by Sumedh Rajendran and Chintan Upadhyay. Gallery Espace showed works by Manjunath Kamath, Birendra Pani and Amitava Das and put up a solo exhibit of photographer Atul Bhalla's works, the only Indian artist with an individual booth. Grosvenor-Vadehra were the only ones



exhibiting MF Husain and FN Souza.

New York-based Sundaram Tagore Gallery showed minimalist works by Tantric artist Sohan Qadri. Also, Aicon Gallery showed GR Iranna and Debanjin Roy's sculpture of a bright-red Gandhi sitting with a laptop, which attracted much attention.

Interestingly, Italian participant Galleria Continua showed Subodh Gupta's recent work and have an upcoming solo of his in May; London-based Albion showed a few Indian artists including Jitish Kallat and Chicago-based Walsh Gallery showed many Indian works, the most noteworthy was Ravinder Reddy's, Radha a single edition, oversized fiberglass sculpture (200 x 162.5 x 200 cms) with a price tag of \$600,000.

Nature Morte and Bodhi Art, who participated last year were not seen at the fair this year.

To take advantage of the timing most galleries in the city were hosting really good shows. The 1x1 Art Space gallery which extensively promotes Indian art, held two shows simultaneously, curated by Bose Krishnamchari. Prasad Raghavan, Parvathi Nayar, Aji V.N, Jyothi Basu, Minal Dhamani Nandy, Vivek Vilasini, Bharat Sikka, C.K.Rajan, Hema Upadhyay, Sudarshan Shetty, Shilpa Gupta, Riyas Komu, T.V.Santhosh and Anant Joshi were the participating artists in this twin show titled AFFAIR.

Art & Entrepreneurship

Credit Suisse, an investment banking giant has been pursuing art as an investment for a long time. They rolled out their Art & Entrepreneurship program at Art Dubai. This touring exhibition features works of 19 young artists from 16 countries. From Dubai the exhibition will proceed to New York, Berlin, Moscow, Geneva, Milan, Madrid and finally London, with an auction at Philips de Pury on November 24th.

At the exhibitions, visitors are requested to submit "silent bids" for their favourite works. Half of the proceeds will be donated to Room to Read, a non-profit organization and the remaining half will go to the artist.

The participating artists are from all over the world, including the inseparable duo Thukral & Tagra, who were seen walking around Art Dubai wearing colour coordinated outfits at all times!

To know more about the exhibition schedule, artists and bidding process one can visit the website at www.credit-suisse. com/artandentrepreneurship

## A Pakistani Presence

Pakistani art was much in focus considering the international attention that they have been getting. Considering the general interest in Islamic art and general bonhomie towards Pakistan, Art Dubai was a good choice for an international Art Fair debut.

The Pakistan Pavilion showed the exhibition "Desperately Seeking Paradise", curated by Salima Hashmi, a noted professor at the Lahore College of Art. Though a decent curatorial effort, the Pavilion definitely did not live up to the hype. The pavilion comprised of two open party-tents, approximately ten feet by ten feet, minus proper lighting or air-conditioning, set up next to an artificial lake, in the hotel compound. Some installations and sculptures were used to punctuate the space, around. At the exhibition, noteworthy works were Farida Batool's photograph titled, 'There's no place like Lahore'; Durriya Kazi's installation titled, 'Witness', Rashid Rana's works which were at galleries also and Huma Mulji's controversial work Arabian Delight (more about this later).

On the whole the Pakistani Pavilion is a noteworthy first attempt, but did leave visitors a bit disappointed and asking for more.



Besides his installation work at the pavilion, Pakistani art's poster-boy, Rashid Rana was represented by Mumbai-based Chemould Gallery and London-based art gallery, Green Cardamom, the only gallery specializing in Pakistani art participating at the fair. Green Cardamom was showing a number of Pakisatni artists (many overlapping with the pavilion) and had a steady beeline of visitors, buyers and consultants. Their was a distinct high-beat of energy and wide smiles, which ensured that they did well and made some good placements of their works.

### The work that got removed

An art fair is not complete without a controversy. And a controversy over a shocking work increases the star-status of a fair. Keeping in mind strict Islamic codes to be followed at Art Dubai, the screening committees are overtly strict with their censorship, often rejecting works (for no obvious reason) to not disturb Islamic or cultural sensibilities.

An oversized suitcase with a taxidermy camel squashed inside, some cotton and fabric was what made Huma Mulij's work Arabian Delight, too much to handle for the Arabs. On display at the Pakistan Pavilion, the work was under the radar from day one and visiting Arab dignitaries were not-too-happy with their national animal and symbol of pride, the camel being shown in a way, which according to them was derogatory. "No clarifications please, we are Arab," seemed to be their adopted policy as no clarifications were given.

On the second day of the fair, the coordinators were asked to remove the installation from the premises. Through her work, Mulji wished to attract attention to the import-export of contraband items through personal luggage with probably a reference point to the young boys imported by Arabs to serve as camel-jockeys.

The work had been pre-bought by Charles Saatchi, through an art advisor for about US\$8,000 and by now would be on its way to London, to be shown later in the year at the much awaited Saatchi exhibition, "The Empire Strikes Back."

### Videos parked at Art Park

Art videos were literally parked in Art Park, a make-shift video gallery, which normally serves as the underground parking area of the hotel. Considering the importance of videos in Western art, a section dedicated to videos shows the foresight of the organizers.

There were site-specific experimental works with a special emphasis on videos. Among the Indian artists Jitish Kallat's video was on display. Young and emerging Pakistani artist Mohammad Zeeshan's video and interactive installation, commenting on America's said and unsaid position on Islam, captured attention and acclaim from varied audiences.

## International Galleries

There was substantial representation from all over the world – Europe, USA, Africa and Asia. The two main participating Arab galleries The Third Line and B21 did phenomenally well with their Arab clientele. Among the exhibits, something that surfaced was that western galleries paid special attention to Islamic artists and some of the exhibited works had a strong Islamic reference point. Paris and New York based gallery Yvon Lambert showed photography based works of Idris Khan, a UK based artist of hyphenated ethnicity. His works explore the different aspects of Islam and he incorporates Islamic ritualism in his works, for example his photograph may be exposed three times to signify the turning- of- the- head after prayer. Besides, the Indian galleries, Korean galleries CAIS, Kukje and Sun Gallery attracted a lot of attention and attracted some serious buyers. Most noteworthy was Sun Gallery's installation artist Seon-Ghi Bahk. He works extensively with charcoal and a member of the extended royal family bought the installation on display.

Unlike last year, this year the galleries didn't flood the fair with Andy Warhols and Damien Hirsts.



Discussions, Talks, Education and Publications

There were many discussions, talks and interviews held throughout the length of the fair. Some were attended by worldfamous movers and shakers on the international art scene. Hans Ulrich Obrsit of London-based Serpentine Gallery spoke about his ongoing project of video-documenting interviews with artists. He discussed and showed his interview with Anish Kapoor. He is in the process of interviewing a lot many Indian artists and frequently visits India for the same. He was seen taking a keen interest in Arabic art and visited some galleries in old Dubai, leading to speculation that Serpentine will be looking at Arabic art, next.

The Sotheby's Institute held special educative and panel discussions on various topics, familiarizing enrolled participants with the fair and art markets. They held a three day intensive course for a fee of 1,000 British Pounds.

In a special tie-up with The Art Newspaper, London launched a special edition on the art markets in India and the Middle East, focusing on the two most prominent markets represented at Art Dubai.

Art Tactic, an arts research initiative based in London launched their first comprehensive report on Indian Modern and Contemporary Art Market, along with a talk by its founder Anders Petterson. The report is a good introduction point to the Indian art markets with information on key artists, gallerists, curators and important faces in the Indian art scene.

To promote and familiarize the incoming guests with the Dubai art scene, the Art Bus ferried visitors around town, stopping at the major galleries. There was a corresponding Art Map, which enlists all the galleries and will be regularly updated for shows and art events in the city, around the year.

On the whole the fair was well conceptualized, executed and managed, with significant changes from last year. The third edition of Art Dubai is scheduled in the second week of March next year and is a must visit for anyone seriously interested in Indian art. Not only is it a one-stop-shop for the best in Indian and other art, but is also a venue to spot new trends, make contacts with international players, hob-knob with the art glitterati and identify emerging markets on the global art scene.



## Dubai fair faces first real test

Catering to local buyers, many galleries focus on Middle Eastern and Indian artists

LONDON. The second edition of the Art Dubai fair (19-22 March) is bigger and broader in scope than the inaugural event last year. It has a new name (Gulf Art Fair, last year's title, has been dropped) and has almost doubled in size, while the exhibitors this year come from as far afield as São Paulo, Mexico City, Sydney and Tokyo. There will also be a stronger emphasis on Indian and Middle-Eastern art, which sold well last year.

When 41 art dealers decided to test the Gulf market at the first fair in Dubai last March, they knew they were taking a gamble. The tiny city-state, riding high on waves of petrodollars and in the grip of a frenetic building boom, has seen phenomenal economic growth over the past five years.

But were local Emiratis and but were local Entitiats and the wealthy expartiale communi-ty ready to buy art? And if so, what would they buy? Commercially, the results of the first edition of the fair were

mixed. In an attempt to discover what was likely to be most suc-cessful, exhibitors brought a range of material, with an emphasis on non-figurative work or Western "brand names" such as Warhol and Damien Hirst. Galleries showing Indian and Middle-Eastern artists did best, (some sold out) but other exhibitors sold nothing.

White Cube from London is thought to have sold very little and is not returning this year; 11 other galleries have also dropped out. Nevertheless, the fair showed that there was a potential market for art in Dubai with 400 galleries applying for the 70 slots this year. "The fair shows every sign of

#### Gagosian goes for Gupta

LONDON. Art dealer Larry Gagosian is hoping to sign the Indian artist Subodh Gupta; the two met for talks late last year. The artist is cur-rently represented by Peter Nagy of Nature Morte Gallery in New Defin and Jack Shainman Gallery in New York. Mr Shainman declined to comment. Mr Nagy says: "We have a show planned with Gupta for the season of 2009-10, which will travel from New Defhi to Bombay to Calcutta. We will also have work by Subodh at Art Basel in June and hope to include him in other fairs in the future. But that will be the bope to include him in other fairs in the future. But that will be the extent of my working with Subodh on the international level, regard-less of who he is represented by in New York or Europe." Gupta, the most successful contemporary artist from the subcontinent, has work in the collections of Charles Saatchi in London, and Marty Margulies in Miami, among several others. The artist's Very Hungry God, 2006, a skull composed of metal pots, is on display in front of French bil-lionaire François Pinault's museum in Venice, the Palazzo Grassi (until July). According to one Indian dealer who asked to remain anony-mous, Mr Gagosian is currently "chasing Gupta with a blank cheque-book". Gupta declined to comment while a spokeswoman for Mr Gagosian olid thut she "did ner believe this to be correct". Gagosian said that she "did not believe this to be correct"



Visitors to last year's fair admire an abstract work by US artist Sam Francis

emerging as a major art fair for contemporary Indian art," says Prajit Dutta (see p44), director of Aicon, one of a number of galleries showing in this field. Others include Gallery Espace of Delhi and Sakshi Gallery and Chemould Prescott Road, both based in Mumbai.

Galleries showing Middle Eastern artists include Green Cardamom (London), Atassi (Syria), El Marsa (Tunisia) and Grosvenor Vadehra (London). Other dealers are bringing Western works or even Tibetan art (Rossi and Rossi).

There is no doubt that the Dubai authorities are determined to establish an art market ex nihilo in the state. The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), which controls Dubai's burgeoning financial markets, threw its considerable clout behind the fair, buying a 50% stake in the event before it opened last year (it declined to reveal how much it owns today).

"There is a strong desire to establish a cultural infrastructure in Dubai. The authorities believe that culture is a critical missing piece of the puzzle," says Mr Dutta. That "puzzle" includes vast shopping malls, the world's richest horse race, golf courses in the desert and off-shore housing complexes, which are selling even before they are built to wealthy Indians, Russians and Iranians. These often part-time residents appreciate Dubai's position as a hub between East and West, seven hours from London and China by plane.

Two other fairs have also been launched in the Gulf to cater for the emerging market there. British fair organisers Brian and Anna Haughton launched Art and Antiques Dubai last month in the Madinat Jumeirah arena while the second edition of Art Paris, the French modern and conternporary art fair, will be held in Abu Dhabi this November.

As with any new market, there have been teething problems. Many of the visitors to last year's Art Dubai were clearly unfamiliar with art, artists and the art market. Some buyers 'bought" works but never paid for them; others took six months to complete the purchase. "We had people bargaining as if they were in the bazaar-they were asking for 40% discounts!" says Salma Feriani, director of the Tunisian and London gallery Le Violon Bleu.

There were also problems with the fair shippers (a new company has been appointed this year) and vexatious administration for the tax payable on anything sold at the fair and destined to stay in the country. This year, the fair itself has been granted a tax-free status

although a 5% duty is still payable on works remaining in Dubai. Pieces brought in temporarily and then re-exported out of the emirate by potential buyers will not be taxed in Dubai.

And the market in the Gulf is still evolving. The highest price paid at auction, at Christie's Dubai in 2006, was \$912,000 for Rameshwar Broota's Numbers, 1979 (est. \$80,000-\$120,000) that went to a private Indian collector. But, says Will Lawrie, specialist in Arab and Iranian Art at Christie's, "new collectors are quickly becoming familiar with the important names and the amount they will pay is rising."

Auction prices may be rising, but prices at the fair may be lower than last year, according to some dealers. "Someone who wants a Picasso is more likely to buy in New York or London, why should they buy it in Dubai?" asks Ms Feriani, while Conor Macklin, director of Grosvenor Vadehra, believes that "the market in Dubai will be for Indian and Middle-Eastern art, reflecting the local population." But Ben Brown, director of

the eponymous London gallery, disagrees: "If a Saudi billionaire goes to the fair and sees a Picasso at the right price, he'll buy it."

Georgina Adam

An open-air pavilion showing contemporary art from Pakistan, the only non-commercial display at the fair, will include work by Rashid Rana, Imran Qureshi and Naiza Khan. A satellite fair, the Creek Art Fair, takes place from 15-31 March in the Bastakiya district. L.H.

