

ART & PATRONAGE THE MIDDLE EAST THE SUMMIT

LONDON
12/13.01.2012

Key figures from the international art world descend on London for a groundbreaking two-day Summit in support of Art & Patronage in the Middle East

Over two days at the British Museum and the RCA, Art & Patronage, the independent cultural think tank, will host curators, patrons, artists, institutional leaders and cultural figureheads from across the MENA region with the aim of defining practical solutions for cultural growth in the region.

'The purpose of any good idea is to challenge perceptions around which the idea is born. The Art & Patronage Summit is an idea whose time and ambitions are well overdue. Simply put, the Summit aims to challenge existing dogma and practice around the visual arts, and to find cause and reason as to why it is that the greater Middle East region is far behind global creative cycles,' explains Hossein Amirsadeghi, founder of Art & Patronage.

'The A&P Summit has the potential to be much more than a conference or think tank; its aspirations give it a power of convocation that could spark off a movement, a mustering of peoples and ideas, to change the climate of opinion,' says Professor Homi K. Bhabha, Director of the Humanities Center at Harvard University and Trustee of the UNESCO World Culture Report.

As Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-director of the Serpentine Gallery, states, **'Art can do what maybe politics can't do ... Art can bring people together.'**

Panel discussions will address key topics such as alternative models for institution-building, how collecting can make a difference, the crucial role of creative education and the dynamics of art funding.

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The Summit will also see the launch of three tangible new initiatives:

1) Project Mart is a marketplace for matching independent Middle Eastern creative projects with sources of diverse funding. Launching on 13 January and supported by seed funding from Plurimi Capital, Project Mart's aim is to give patrons a genuine insight into the region's art scene and allow them to pledge support for projects that can make a positive difference.

The three initial projects being presented on the 13th are: **Home Workspace**, the newest exciting extension of the veteran Lebanese arts institution **Ashkal Alwan** (Beirut). This multipurpose facility dedicated to contemporary artistic practices and production houses a rigorous annual interdisciplinary programme for emerging artists as well as Lebanon's first library for contemporary arts.

Townhouse (Cairo): Independent Study Program is a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at training the next generation of arts leaders in the region. The series of seminars fills a critical gap in arts education and capacity-building in the region, focusing on contemporary art history, theory and cultural policy as they pertain to the arts in the Middle East.

Sada [Echo] (Baghdad) is a newly established organisation with the founding vision to support, advocate, document and act as a catalyst for the development of contemporary Iraqi art. Launching a virtual bilingual Arabic-English multimedia platform, the **Sada Portal** will act as an important hub for archiving, researching, mapping and disseminating the work of Iraqi artists.

2) The Programme for Cultural & Curatorial Practitioners (PCCP). Providing access to and mentoring from some of the most important international arts institutions, the Art & Patronage bursary programme helps in the educational development of a future generation of Middle Eastern curators while supporting the infrastructural development of the region's fledgling arts institutions. An initial fourteen bursaries have been funded by the Maryam and Edward Eisler Foundation, and a group of young curators from the region will be attending the Summit.

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3) The Art & Patronage Report.

This will be an extensive, three-year research project looking at the cultural health of the MENA regions as never before. The first comprehensive cultural-mapping exercise, region by region, sector by sector, the Report's principal aim will be to build the first formal database of artistic production and organisational infrastructures. Another aim will be to inform honest, realistic debate regarding prevailing narratives. The first part of the A&P Report on the MENA region will be published in October 2012.

Key speakers and panelists at the summit include:

Chris Dercon, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Martin Roth, Richard Koshalek, Oya Eczacibasi, Barry Lord, William Wells, Olga Davidson, Stephen Deuchar, Jude Kelly, Tessa Jackson, Yto Barrada, Arif Naqvi, Antonia Carver, Andrea Rose and Christa Meindersma.

Institutional partners include:

The British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate, Whitechapel Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, Royal College of Art, Hayward Gallery, Institute of Contemporary Arts, and Delfina Foundation

Key supporters:



Maryam & Edward Eisler
Foundation



PCCP Programme Administrator:

The
Delfina
Foundation

For details on the full Art & Patronage committee, programme and supporters, please visit www.apsummit.com

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