Dubai Next: Face of 21st Century Culture

Everyone knows the architectural landmarks of Dubai, but this new global city's true achievement and future promise soars well beyond it's dynamic growth and spectacular buildings. Dubai is first and foremost about its people – a vibrant, multicultural and cosmopolitan community made up of over 200 different nationalities. These people are the driving forces behind the widely published new forms of design, culture, communication and lifestyle that shape Dubai today.

Nowhere else in the world is the radical transformation of what people think of nationalities, heritage and culture more evident than in Dubai. A few weeks ago, the Dubai Culture & Arts Authority was created with the goal of developing Dubai into a centre of international and regional culture over the next eight years. To articulate the openness of this approach right from the start, the new cultural authority has commissioned artists from different countries, including Dubai, to sketch out an image of the city reflecting the current age. Taking overall charge of the project are Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and Palestinian curator Jack Persekian. "Dubai Next: Face of 21st Century Culture" is the first project being developed under the auspices of the Dubai Culture & Arts Authority. This exhibition tells the story of Dubai from a cultural angle. It shows the making of 21st century culture, built upon the vision and heritage of the Emirati people and their fellow global citizens everywhere, as well as how these ideas take shape on architectural, urbanistic and cultural projects for the next decades. Being

shown parallel to the exhibition "Living under the Crescent Moon" the exhibition "Dubai Next" will complement the museum's focus on Arab domestic and contemporary culture in 2008.

A further reason for the Vitra Design Museum to present this exhibition are the parallels between the Vitra Campus and Dubai in their collaboration with international architects. Twenty years ago, the Vitra Design Museum and the surrounding buildings by Zaha Hadid, Tadao Ando, Alvaro Siza and others constituted one of the first examples of the powerful way ambitious architecture can define a place and put it "on the map". On a whole different scale, similar strategies are now being employed in Dubai – and allowing highly interesting conclusions to be drawn about the possibilities of current architectural and cultural policy. These possibilities and their significance for the diverse society of Dubai will be staged by Rem Koolhaas and Jack Persekian in the exhibition with an installation featuring both artistic and sociological aspects.

Curators: Rem Koolhaas & Jack Persekian