

United Arab Emirates

Oil squeeze is good news for Dubai's galleries

Oil price reductions have led to the creation of cultural hubs in place of shops



The Ayyam Gallery at the Dubai International Financial Centre

after the crisis, outlets that were not profit-making left," said Maitha Al Falasi, DIFC director. "It was then that the [DIFC] shifted its strategy to lower

rents and invite more galleries."

"With rents down, we are now able to have both spaces for less than what we originally paid in Al Quoz," said Hisham

Samawi, director of Ayyam Gallery. The gallerist also hopes the additional location will broaden his collector base, particularly as the DIFC is a "free

zone"—a location that enables international organisations to open in Dubai without taking a local partner, as is customary for the rest of the city—and attracts visitors from around the world.

Although nearly all art endeavors in the city are commercial, the January announcement of a new public art destination—The Pavilion, Downtown Dubai—aims to change that. The space, which will occupy a former real estate office of Emaar Properties, is perched near the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower. Although the opening dates and programming are still being formulated, local galleries are expected to contribute art as well as curatorial expertise.

Meanwhile, the momentum of the DIFC has not detracted from the allure of Al Quoz. "In Al Quoz you get a much bigger space at much lower prices," said Yasmin Atassi, director of the Green Art Gallery, who relocated to the area in January. ■

Marisa Mazria Katz

From catwalk to penthouse space

Major curators, including Neville Wakefield, commit to Ford Models' gallery

NEW YORK. FordProject, a new contemporary art initiative linked to the Ford Models Agency, is a hybrid of a commercial gallery and museum. The venture is the brainchild of Guerman Aliev, chief executive officer of Ford Models' parent company, the private equity firm Altpoint Capital Partners, who says that the connection between FordProject and the famous modelling house begins and ends with the name.

"The original idea was to capitalise on the cache that the 'Ford Models' brand carries," said Aliev, adding: "However, FordProject is a separate division of Ford and there are no plans to overlap the two."

FordProject's space, a duplex penthouse in a building de-



Gretchen Ryan's *Girls in Peril*, 2009, at FordProject

signed by Warren & Wetmore architects on West 57th Street, will house exhibitions of contemporary art organised by guest curators. Managing director Rachel Vancelette, formerly director of the commercial galleries Yvon Lambert and Barbara Gladstone, said: "At

present we have two shows scheduled and are planning six or more exhibitions a year." Creative director Tim Goossens, most recently a curator with MoMA PS1, selects the curators and will himself curate some FordProject shows. Goossens made clear the priority is artistic freedom: "Other than an operational budget, the curator is given no parameters on exhibition themes and choice of artists. Of course we hope to someday be profitable but FordProject is all about respecting the art and the artist."

The inaugural exhibition, "When the Fairytale Never Ends" (until 19 February), is curated by Lara Pan, and showcases work by artists including Kenny Scharf, Paul McCarthy

and Henry Darger alongside emerging artists including Gretchen Ryan, Kent Henrickson and Michael Aerts. Just over half the works are consigned by the artists or their galleries for sale. According to Vancelette: "Arrangements vary depending on the artist, [but] in general, sales commissions will be shared between the consignor and FordProject." The remainder of the pieces in the show are on loan from private collections, including a Gretchen Ryan painting loaned by Courtney Love.

The second exhibition, "Involuntary" is curated by Neville Wakefield and opens on 1 March to coincide with the Armory Art Fair and will be part of the fair's VIP programme. ■

Maura Cahill Pettengill