



A visitor looks at an artwork by Egyptian artist Moataz Nasr displayed at a Christie's exhibition in Dubai. — AFP photos



Visitors look at Beyond the Fountain, a grouping of 19 artworks by the Iranian Saqqakhaneh movement, displayed at a Christie's exhibition in Dubai.

# Christie's seeks more 'realistic' auction prices

The global economic slowdown combined with "selective demand" are pushing Christie's to seek more realistic prices on their collections, directors of the auction house said Sunday. "This year the market is not at the same level as it was one year or two years ago. We are facing a more challenging market," Guillaume Cerruti, Christie's president for Europe, the Middle East, Russia and India, told journalists in Dubai. "To face this situation, the key word for us is selectivity," he said, announcing two auctions this week in the glitzy Gulf emirate, one on Modern and Contemporary Art and another showcasing "Important Watches". "We want to have sales that are well curated, sales with maybe less objects but of high quality at... realistic estimates," he said. While he did not provide specific figures on the fall in overall sales, he said that

online-only sales "have been a real success". "For the first six months of the year, we have sold through our online-only sales of 20 million pounds (\$24.4 million) around the world," a 100-percent over the same period of 2015, he added. "We're making sure that we find good quality of works that are well priced to ride through this more challenging period," said Christie's Middle East managing director, Michael Jeha. In an auction today of 113 artworks, the highest estimated price has been set at \$180,000, far lower than the \$400,000 price tag on paintings sold in March this year. Around 150 watches go up for auction on Wednesday, with estimated prices reaching \$250,000. Among them are two Patek Philippe 18K white gold auto-

matic wristwatches with the Iraqi coat of arms and the name "Saddam", after executed Iraqi president Saddam Hussein who ordered the watches in 1974 and 1980 as gifts. Their prices are estimated at \$10,000 and \$18,000 each. London-based Christie's, which celebrates its 250th anniversary on December 5, says its sales at Dubai auctions have exceeded \$300 million since it opened a branch in the emirate 10 years ago. — AFP



A Patek Philippe rare 18K white gold automatic wristwatch with Iraqi coat of arms is displayed.



A visitor walks past art work by Iraqi painter Ismail Fatah Al-Turk.



A visitor takes a photo of artwork by Syrian artist Safwan Dahoul.



Visitors look at art work by Saudi artist Manal Al-Dowayan.



Visitors walk past artwork by Egyptian artist Khaled Hafez.

# TV channels fight for 'brilliant' new cartoon 'Grizzly & the Lemmings'

Some of the world's top television channels were battling yesterday to acquire a "brilliant" new cartoon series "Grizzly & the Lemmings", which has already been proclaimed a classic that will "renew the whole slapstick genre". The show about a lazy brown bear and a band of lemmings who battle for the goodies inside a forest ranger's lodge in the Canadian Rockies got a rapturous reception at its premiere at the MIPJUNIOR market in the French Riviera resort of Cannes.

The US Cartoon Network giant Turner has already snapped it up for its Boomerang channel. Most of the series' rapid-fire gags turn on the titanic struggles between the grizzly and a horde of kamikaze lemmings for the ranger's pot of Nutella, games console and smartphone. The slapstick jokes and spectacular pratfalls from the cliff-top lodge into the ravine below has led to it being compared to a very smart mix of "The Road Runner", "Raving Rabbids" and "Mr. Bean". "What can you say, it is just fantastic. They really nailed it," Janine Weigold, who bought the show for Germany's Super RTL channel, told AFP.

"It's brilliant. Once you start you can't stop watching them... We

are glad that German kids are going to be able to enjoy it on free TV." And its non-verbal humor-with the bear and lemmings bombing each other in one episode with goods dropped from delivery drones ordered on the smartphone-had industry insiders predicting it would be "mega everywhere".

### Classic family viewing

"It is a new classic that will gather families together again in front of the television," said Tiphaine de Ragueneil of France Televisions, which backed the French-based Hari studio to make the first 78 action-packed, seven-minute episodes. "It renews the whole slapstick genre," she added, speaking at MIPJUNIOR, an annual gathering for the world entertainment industry. The two men behind the cartoon, Josselin Charier and Antoine Rodelet, said they had been scratching their heads for years to come up with a duo to match "Tom and Jerry", "Road Runner" and the Looney Tunes greats.

They finally hit upon Grizzly and the lemmings after watching a 1958 Walt Disney documentary "White Wilderness", in which lem-

ings were shot jumping off a cliff. "We watched them jumping one after the other and thought, "Wow, what totally stupid animals. How cool!" "We learned afterwards it was actually the producers who were pushing them off. Yeah, damn producers," he joked. Rodelet said the show was character driven with the jokes spinning off the weaknesses of the bear and the lemmings, who "have only one collective brain between them".

"We tried to create really dense episodes for today's short attention spans with the rhythm mounting to a climax. In 'The Road Runner' it was often just a string of gags," he told AFP. He said he and Charier—who began working together in their garage a decade ago—had spent three years on the show, with 100 people between Paris and at Hari's studio in the French animation capital of Angouleme pitching in. Hari's head of sales Adeline Tormo said there was a real clamour for the show. "People want to see more and more episodes. Channels are fighting to have it." — AFP



This file photo shows German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld at the end of the Chanel 2017 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP

# Lagerfeld checks into the hotel business

Fashion icon Karl Lagerfeld announced yesterday he planned to launch his own branded hotel chain, with the first property set to open in the Chinese gambling hub of Macau in 2018. The 83-year-old German-born designer has already collaborated with luxury Parisian address Le Crillon and the Metropole in Monaco, but the new business will see him and his company design entire hotels. Leading fashion houses from Dior to Diane von Furstenberg have developed a lucrative side-business away from the catwalk by designing suites and other interiors for hotel owners.

Lagerfeld intends to follow the example of rivals such as Armani, Bulgari and Versace which have gone one step further and opened properties under their own names. His first hotel is being built with a local partner in the luxury Lisboa Palace Complex in Macau, but the Lagerfeld group is "in the process of studying other opportunities to open other properties around the world," it said in a statement.

The current artistic director at Chanel will also lend his talents and trademark to luxury residences, restaurants and private clubs, the group said, as part of a push into the interior design business. The Lisboa Palace Complex in Macau—an enclave that is the only place in China where gambling is legal—will include casinos, restaurants and various hotels, notably the Versace Palace. — AFP