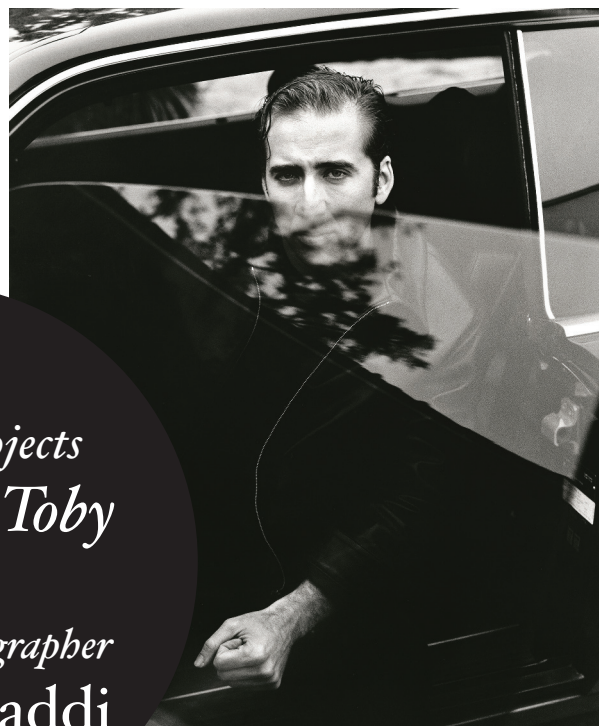




HH Sheikhha Lulu Al Sabah ©

This year's Dubai March arts calendar is more interesting than ever. The usual annual plethora of art fairs, starting with Art Dubai and ending with Sikka Art Fair, is being joined, amongst others, by Design Days Dubai and the Nuqat Design Conference. The city is also abuzz this March with all the galleries around town stepping it up too, as they should with the news of a new art space being inaugurated.

JAMM, the independent art advisory led by visionary HH Sheikhha Lulu Al Sabah, will host its inaugural exhibition in Dubai featuring the works of French/Algerian photographer Michel Haddi on March the 18th at Toby Art Projects, a new art gallery space located in Al-Quoz, Dubai.



Nicholas Cage- 1990 shot at Topanga Canyon LA for Detour magazine ©

Toby Art Projects
JAMM & Toby
PRESENT
Celebrity Photographer
Michel Haddi

“When you think of top fashion and celebrity photographers both past and present, you think of names such as Cecil Beaton, Herb Ritts and Mario Testino. We wanted to showcase the work of a top fashion and celebrity photographer from our own region and draw attention to fashion photography in general.”



Uma Thurman -1990 shot in London for British Vogue © Michel Haddi



Jean Paul Gautier. British Vogue London 1991 © Michel Haddi



Johnny Depp shot in Los Angeles Santa Monica Boulevard for Premiere magazine 1992 © Michel Haddi

Michel Haddi, one of the world's leading fashion photographers, is the perfect debut for Toby Art Projects. Oasis Magazine talks to HH Sheikha Lulu Al Sabah about Toby Art Projects, a collaboration between Sheikha Lulu's JAMM and Toby, the brand by Saudi fashion designer Hatem Alakeel.

Why did you choose Michel Haddi's exhibition to be the inaugural exhibition of Toby Art Projects?

We chose Michel Haddi for a number of reasons. As JAMM's inaugural exhibition in Dubai will also mark the launch of Toby Art Projects, we sought a medium that combines both fashion and art. Being part French and part Algerian, Michel Haddi also embodies the mix between East and West, which is an integral characteristic of our own brands.

Moreover, when you think of top fashion and celebrity photographers both past and present, you think of names such as Cecil Beaton, Herb Ritts and Mario Testino. We wanted to showcase the work of a top fashion and celebrity photographer from our own region and draw attention to fashion photography in general.

How would you describe Michel Haddi's photographs?

Michel Haddi's Celebrity Series are quite intense and intimate, indicating a level of trust between the subject and photographer. In the photographs of Angelina Jolie, Isabella Rossellini, Kate Moss, Keanu Reeves, Denzel Washington and Nicholas Cage, the subject looks directly into the camera and into the eyes of the viewer. The result is so direct

that it appears the subject is looking at you rather than the other way around. Those usually being gawked at return the stare. In each of his photographs there is a sense of fun and defiance. The photographs of Jean-Paul Gautier, Marion Cotillard and Martin Scorsese stand out for their expression of high drama and their ability to capture the subjects in ways never seen before. Haddi's Youth of Morocco series are equally bold and poetic. Some of the images, such as the boys on the beach, capture the innocence of youth while others portray their aspirations to emulate the West in fashion and style.

How will Toby Art Projects be different from other art spaces in Dubai?

Toby Art Projects will be multi-disciplinary, a platform for contemporary art, fashion and design. As we do not represent any artists, our space will not function like a typical art gallery. JAMM will host a number of art and design exhibitions per year; in some cases, exhibiting work by artists that are represented by top art galleries outside of the Middle East. The space will also be used for educational purposes, such as lectures and panel discussions, and can be rented out for fashion shoots. Ultimately, it is a space where creative minds can meet and ideas can be shared.

Michel Haddi

March, 18 - March, 31, 2012
Toby Art Projects
Al-Quoz, Dubai