

## **11<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL ISTANBUL BIENNIAL HAS STARTED UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF KOÇ HOLDING**

**MUSTAFA V. KOÇ: “WITH THE BIENNIAL, ISTANBUL WILL BECOME THE CENTER OF ATTRACTION OF GLOBAL ART CIRCLES.”**

**Sponsored by Koç Holding and organized by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, the 11<sup>th</sup> International Istanbul Biennial opened its doors to art-lovers on September 12, 2009 Saturday. With Koç Holding undertaking the sponsoring until 2016, the theme of this year’s Biennial is “What Keeps Mankind Alive?” Making a speech at the opening of the Biennial, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Koç Holding, Mustafa V. Koç mentioned the fact that Istanbul’s being the 2010 European Capital of Culture assigns a more special meaning to the 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial and added: “Istanbul will by far become the center of attraction in the global art circles.”**

Sponsored by Koç Holding for a period of 10 years as part of its sense of social responsibility and with the aims of arousing interest in contemporary art, enriching the current art environment and helping young people approach contemporary art, ‘International Istanbul Biennial’ has begun. The 11<sup>th</sup> International Istanbul Biennial meets with art-lovers between the dates September 12 – November 8, 2009 in Antrepo No.3 and Tobacco Warehouse in Tophane and - as the third venue – in Feriköy Greek School in Şişli.

70 artists and groups of artists from 40 countries including Turkey will participate in the 11<sup>th</sup> International Istanbul Biennial - sponsored by Koç Holding - with more than 120 projects. Within the context of the Biennial, where the art projects chosen by the Croatian curatorial collective, What, How and for Whom / WHW, Istanbul turns into an art platform followed with interest by global art circles.

### **“Biennial assigns a special meaning to Istanbul”**

Speaking on behalf of Koç Holding, the Biennial sponsor, at the press meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> International Istanbul Biennial, where a large number of both local and international press members were present, Koç Holding’s Chairman of the Board of Directors Mustafa V. Koç said: “The hosting made by Istanbul as being one of the popular cities of the world and the 2010 European Capital of Culture assigns a more special meaning to the Biennial. By hosting such an invaluable art event, Istanbul will by far become a center of attraction in the global art circles and contribute to the development of our country with projects enhancing urban life.”

### **“We are as excited just as we were on the very first day”**

In his speech Mustafa V. Koç stated that as Koç Group they are pleased to support endeavors which would serve to create awareness on contemporary art especially in young people and rising generations. Mustafa V. Koç said that art is one of the basic indicators of social development and in this context they, as Koç Holding, consider it as a responsibility to keep supporting culture and art among their priorities. Mustafa V. Koç emphasized that they are extremely pleased with sponsoring the Biennial and that they are as excited as they were on the very first day they made their decision on this cooperation.

### **University students visit the Biennial**

While planning its corporate social responsibility activities, Koç Holding acts with the awareness that art is extremely important in the development of a society and in the shaping of its future. Supporting the Istanbul Biennial, one of the most followed biennials of the world and being the art event of Turkey that creates the most tremendous impression abroad, Koç Holding carries out a project for the university students to let them follow the Biennial free of charge. As part of this project, university students are able to visit the Biennial exhibitions with free admission as Koç Holding's guests by showing their university id cards.

### **Children meet with the Biennial**

Implementing a special project for the university students as part of the Biennial, Koç Holding has not forgotten about children. During the Biennial, training programs are organized for children aged 6-14 to improve their museum and exhibition culture, to introduce basic art concepts to them and to increase the interest in art and particularly in contemporary art.

### **Group companies, too give their support**

Koç Group companies support the Biennial, too. Arçelik contributes with its audio and video systems and Ford provides transportation services among venues while Yapı Kredi Publications contributes to the Biennial catalogue, Bilkom gives product support and Koç Energy Group (Aygaz, Opet, Tüpraş), Yapı Kredi Bank and Koçtaş get involved in this invaluable art event by adopting special projects. Koç Group will continue to contribute with various projects in order to ensure that the Biennial carries on by getting enriched.

### **Art teachers meet with contemporary art**

Another new project becomes real in this year's Biennial by means of Koç Holding and Vehbi Koç Foundation. Vehbi Koç Foundation also adopts and undertakes a training program devised for Art Teachers. In this way, together with juveniles and children, 100 art teachers will have the opportunity to meet with contemporary art thanks to the Biennial. In the project which may also be called as "train the trainer", art teachers from vocational schools, after their training programs, will visit the venues of the Biennial together with their students and share their knowledge on contemporary art.

### **Main theme of the Biennial: What Keeps Mankind Alive?**

Curated by the Croatian Curatorial Collective, **What, How & for Whom / WHW**, the main theme of the 11<sup>th</sup> International Istanbul Biennial is "**What Keeps Mankind Alive?**". The Biennial takes this title from the closing song (What Keeps Mankind Alive?) of the second act of the *Three Penny Opera* that Bertolt Brecht wrote in 1928 in collaboration with Elisabeth Hauptmann and Kurt Weill. Determined by **WHW** as '**What Keeps Mankind Alive?**' the conceptual frame of the Istanbul Biennial suggests not to consider Brecht as a classic that needs to be re-discovered and shown to new generations, but to start thinking today about the hidden parts of the past and search for what kind of possibilities that art incorporates in terms of reviewing old relations which existed in between intervention to the social one and the aesthetic gesture and in terms of establishing new relations.