

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 30th September

HASSAN HAJJAJ WINS AFRICA'S LARGEST ART PRIZE

The Sovereign Art Foundation is pleased to announce that Hassan Hajjaj from Morocco has been awarded the first prize in the inaugural 2011 Sovereign African Art Prize.

Hajjaj will receive US\$25,000 prize money and the opportunity to take up a 3 month residency at the Nirox Foundation. The winning work "Rubbish Odalisque" will travel to various cities around the world and will be displayed alongside the 30 finalists of the Sovereign European and Asian Art Prizes in Europe and Asia respectively.

The judges chose the winner during the exhibition of 20 finalists displayed at the FNB Joburg Art fair. The judges for this year's prize included Robert Devereux, Simon Njami, Julian Ozanne, Jean Pigozzi, Riason Naidoo, Antoinette Murdoch and Thembinkosi Goniwe.

Hajjaj said upon hearing the news "I'm so happy to be part of this amazing group of artists and very honoured to be part of the Sovereign African Art Prize and have to also thank all the judges that voted for my art work for the prize"

The Sovereign African Art Prize is the first pan-African prize with 150 entrants nominated by experts from around the continent. Foundation Chairman Howard Bilton said, 'This has been a great start for us in Africa, after running seven successful prizes in Asia and four in Europe. As we develop the prize here and fine-tune the process this will be an extremely important prize for African art. We have learnt a lot in this first year and will return next year with 30 finalists'.

The Sovereign Art Prizes are aimed at mid-career artists who are known and collected in their own countries but who will benefit from additional international exposure. All finalists apart from the winning piece (which becomes property of the Foundation) are available for sale with the proceeds being split 50/50 between the participating artists and the Foundation. This year all the funds raised by The Sovereign Art Foundation have been pledged to The African Arts Trust.

Mr Robert Devereux, judge and founder of The African Arts Trust said 'The African Arts Trust is absolutely delighted to be a supporter and a beneficiary of the first Sovereign African Art prize. The donation to the trust will enable it to further its work in supporting young African artists by increasing their access to essential resources, enhancing awareness of their creative work and providing educational and travel opportunities.

The prize is a very important development in the history of African art as it will focus attention on the wonderful achievements of African artists which are too little known and encourage a much higher level of engagement between artists, collectors, museums, curators and the general public. Prizes are a proven means of increasing awareness and credibility and this inaugural event has already demonstrated that.'

The Foundation offers three compelling benefits. The artists are given an international platform. The collectors get the opportunity to buy works from a selection of rising stars of contemporary art that have been selected by two independent panels of experts through the nomination and the judging process. The local community benefits from the application of the funds raised through the sales.

After being exhibited at the FNB Joburg Art Fair the exhibition will move to Nirox Projects at Arts on Main in Johannesburg for the month of October. In November the exhibition will move to the Tokara Wine Estate in Stellenbosch where the first prize will be presented to Hajjaj.



In addition to the judges prize there is also a public vote prize which will continue through all three exhibitions and online through the Foundation's website. Votes will close on the 22nd of November and the winner will be announced at the Tokara Wine Estate.

End.

Notes to Editors:

1./ For details on how to purchase the works please contact Anli Lategan at alategan@SovereignGroup.com

2./ The Sovereign Art Foundation was registered as a charity in Hong Kong in 2003. The Foundation was set up by Howard Bilton, a tax lawyer who turned his art-collecting hobby into what is now Asia's largest art prize. Howard is also the chairman of The Sovereign Group.

The first Sovereign office opened in Gibraltar in 1987 and now has offices or agents in all the major offshore and onshore financial centres. This global reach enables them to provide international access from a local point of delivery.

Sovereign's core business is setting up and managing tax-efficient structures to assist wealth management, foreign property ownership and cross-border business. In addition to high net worth individuals and their families, our clients include expatriates, entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes. Sovereign also offers a wide range of services which are a natural adjunct to their main activity, including asset management, financing, specialist tax advice and credit cards.

For more information please contact:

Tiffany Pinkstone
The Sovereign Art Foundation
Tel: + 852 2542 1177
Mob: +852 6102 8107
Email: Tiffany@SovereignArtFoundation.com

Anli Lategan
The Sovereign Art Foundation
Tel: +27 21 418 2170
Mob: +27 828 591 980
Email: ALategan@SovereignGroup.com

