

Ai Weiwei in Mardin

Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum hosts the “Ai Weiwei in Mardin” exhibition

In Mardin, the Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum which was restored and made into a museum and art gallery by the Sabancı Foundation in accordance with Sakıp Sabancı’s will, enables the art lovers of the city to view the personal exhibition of Ai Weiwei, one of the most prominent figures of contemporary art. The “Ai Weiwei in Mardin” exhibition which opened at The Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery within the Museum on 4 May, embodies impressions from the artist’s life as well as his perspective on handicrafts tradition and art history.

The exhibition includes a special selection from the “Ai Weiwei on Porcelain” exhibition hosted by Sakıp Sabancı Museum affiliated to Sabancı University sponsored by Akbank relates Ai Weiwei’s message on our current era via traditional Chinese handicrafts, thereby providing the visitors a perspective on the paradoxes of time.

Porcelain, which has great cultural and historical significance fulfills the function of opening a door for the basic questions the artist poses regarding authenticity, the evolution of value systems over time and art’s role in influencing social change. Ai Weiwei believes that social change is one of the basic elements of artistic creation and renders the distinction between political activism and contemporary art ambiguous through his actions related to crises in our world today. His selection of porcelain objects provides a medium whereby his work presenting the visitors new ways of looking at and interpreting the world can be discovered.

Sabancı Foundation’s Trustee Dr.h.c. Dilek Sabancı, reminded that the founding of the Museum was the late Sakıp Sabancı’s pledge, and added, “*The Sabancı Foundation restored this historic building true to the original. We opened the Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum and Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery all together in October 2009. We are very happy to see that since then more than 700 thousand people have visited our museum, and tens of thousands of children and youngsters have attended our education programs and acquired a basic art and culture background. Today I wish to share with you the good news that the Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum has been allocated to the Sabancı Foundation for a period of 49 years. We as the Sabancı Foundation will do our duty by our Museum as we did from the beginning. We are happy to be in Mardin again, we are happy*



to continue to be contributing to Mardin. Mardin, is one of the most magnificent cities of Mesopotamia. When we opened this museum, our aim was to be an integral part of the city's cultural life and to promote the city's heritage internationally. Today we are delighted to observe that the Sabancı Mardin City Museum and Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery have led Mardin to become an important centre of art and culture”.

Dr. Nazan Ölçer, Director of the Sakıp Sabancı Museum which organized the largest personal exhibition of Ai Weiwei said, *“Ai Weiwei is one of the most prominent contemporary artists and is regarded with awe all over the world. It was a great honor for us to host the largest ever exhibition of such an artist. As you know, the Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum was opened in 2009 with the assistance of Sabancı Foundation and hosted important exhibitions. However, it became impossible to open new exhibitions due to the ambiguities regarding the building's ownership. After three years of this ambiguity, the Museum building was allocated to the Sabancı Foundation for a period of 49 years. We wanted to present to the people of Mardin this Ai Weiwei exhibition which has been visited with great enthusiasm since it opened in Istanbul. I hope that our guests will get the opportunity to get to know this prominent artist as they observe the works exhibited in this magical atmosphere of Mardin.”*

The “Ai Weiwei in Mardin” exhibition which will be part of the artistic activities that will take place in tandem with the Fourth International Mardin Biennial can be visited at the Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery until 29 July.

Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday: 08.30-17.30.

Phone: 0482 212 93 96 Fax: 0482 212 93 96

<http://www.sakipsabancimardinkentmuzesi.org>

