



Dancers perform during the Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Patrons of the Arts awards ceremony yesterday. Randi Sokoloff / The National

## Patrons recognised for supporting arts

### Firms and individuals receive awards for sponsorship

Ed Lake

**DUBAI //** The emirate yesterday gave a big "thank you" to those who sponsor its arts scene.

Those honoured at the first Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Patrons of the Arts awards were described as "the very foundation of cultural projects".

They included Abraaj Capital, the company behind the world's most generous art prize; the Dubai International Financial Centre, home of several galleries; and Dr Farhad Farjam, the owner of the Farjam Collection.

The ceremony at Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre was attended by Sheikh Mohammed, Vice President of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and his sons Sheikh Hamdan, Crown Prince of Dubai, and Sheikh Majid, the chairman of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority.

They were joined by representatives of the 59 bodies honoured for their financial contributions to the arts from 2007 to 2009.

"Arts and culture have always been an integral part of Dubai's growth," said Mohammed al Murr, the authority's vice chairman.

"Patrons are not merely sponsors of art events. They do not seek the limelight but stand as pillars of continued support for the arts community. Indeed, they are the very

foundation of cultural projects."

Dubai-based artists provided entertainment with a multimedia performance inspired by the country's flamingos.

Along with dancers there was a film by Ali Mostafa, the Emirati director of *City of Life*, music by the Kuwaiti oud player Kamal Musallam and art created by Meera Huraiz.

There were four award categories: friends, supporters, patrons and distinguished patrons of the arts.

The highest honour was also bestowed on Dubai Media Incorporated, Dubai Pearl, Emirates Airline and the Majed al Futaim Group. Ernst & Young, Arabtec and Credit Suisse were among the international companies that received awards.

Sheikh Majid handed out trophies and Sheikh Mohammed joined the recipients onstage for photographs.

After the ceremony, Mishaal al Gergawi, the head of projects and events for the authority, said: "The dynamic of Dubai is very unique in the sense that public-private partnership has always been very important.

"It's important in a city like Dubai, where you have a large private sector, to remind them that what they do for the arts, although it is something that is completely personal, we still recognise it as the Government, and we encourage it and support it."

He said patronage was "crucial" and he expected it to become more important in the future.

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