

**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**Dubai Underground**

Presented by Like the Spice Gallery  
in conjunction with Mezze  
February 13<sup>th</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009  
Opening February 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:30- 10:00  
Artist Dinner- February 20<sup>th</sup> 2009  
RSVP Required  
Hosted by Like the Spice Gallery

**mezze**

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Like the Spice Gallery and Mezze are proud to present Dubai Underground, an exhibition featuring seven artists from Dubai whose works reveal the hidden complexity of this glitzy Persian Gulf city. The artists featured in Dubai Underground are Hind Mezaina, Sheikha Bin Dhaher, Jalal Abuthina, John Hollingsworth, Mohamed Somji, Khalid Mezaina and Reem Al Ghaith.

Palm tree shaped islands, the world's tallest building, opulent hotels and the extravagant lifestyles that go along with it- these are the first images that come to mind with the mere mention of Dubai. But beyond this superficial image is a city steeped in contradictions and paradoxes. Dubai Underground explores these contrasts as portrayed by this group of artists, some of which are Emirati (nationals of the United Arab Emirates), and others who represent the city's international complexion, coming from Tanzania, Libya and the UK. Their works reflect the myriad realities coexisting in Dubai, from juxtaposition of the wealthy elite's conspicuous consumption against the hidden plight of the laborers, who are quite literally building the city brick by brick, to the challenges young Emiratis face in defining and retaining their cultural identity when they have become a minority, making up just 15 percent of the city's population.

Dubai is the city and Emirate that forms one of the seven members of the union of the United Arab Emirates, formed in 1972 on the tip of the Middle Eastern peninsula. The city has been grabbing headlines in recent years for its ambitious architectural projects, creation of world-class enterprises and also very recently as a new hub for the emergence of the visual arts in the Middle East. The recent arrival of all the major auction houses, art fairs, a growing number of galleries and intent of museums such as the Guggenheim and Louvre to establish themselves in the neighboring Emirate of Abu Dhabi, have signaled a new awareness and interest in the way art and culture influences the shaping of this city.