

## Emirates' largest art gallery opens

By a staff reporter

SHAIKH Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of Emirates, last night opened the country's largest art gallery at Burhaman Centre in a major boost to artists and connoisseurs of art and also to help promote Arabian heritage through exclusive exhibitions and a museum of artefacts.

With a floor area of 650 square metres, the Orient Art Gallery (OAG), which is located on the ground floor of the centre, is the only art facility in the UAE that contains a complete museum section featuring various art replicas and jewellery of ancient civilisations.

"To open a gallery that serves the need of artists and lovers of art is the culmination of a dream our family has for a long time," Neel Shukla, director of OAG told reporters.

"We are passionate about furthering Arabian heritage through art and delighted that we are able to give the people of Dubai and visitors from overseas a chance to enjoy its splendour," said Neel, son of well-known resident artist and photographer Ramesh Shukla.

The art exhibits in the gallery are the work of the senior Shukla, who has spent the past three decades recording the development of the Emirates with a paintbrush and camera. His photographs adorn government buildings, palaces and private collections worldwide.

"This is a dream come true for me 30 years after I first thought about it. This has been possible due to the great support given by Saif Al Gharair and Majid Al Gharair," said Ramesh Shukla.

Besides displaying Ramesh's art pieces, the gallery will host exhibitions by both local and international artists, starting with French glass sculptor Gilles Chabrier, who is holding a two-week show of his fascinating works for the first time in the Middle East.

Gilles, who has exclusively worked for Monaco's Royal Family, uses sand-blasting techniques and a hammer to carve human forms and a variety of furniture on glass. Neel said that the gallery will also offer special consumer products and services including a fully professional framing facility, a photography studio and an art supply section that would retail and distribute fine art supplies and materials from prestigious companies.

The gallery, which also has an outlet at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel, is open from 10am to 10pm from Saturday to Thursday and from 4pm to 10pm on Fridays.



Shaikh Ahmed with Ramesh and Neel Shukla after the inauguration of the gallery. —