

# ART MEETS FASHION

SEVIL DOLMACI

BY L'Officiel Arabia



Outfit: CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS ON NET-A-PORTER  
Rings: PERSEE PARIS  
Earrings & Cuff: BEGUM KHAN

Dress: VICTORIA BECKHAM  
ON NET-A-PORTER  
Jewelry: AZZA FAHMY



**L'Officiel Arabia: When and how did you decide to be a part of the Art Industry?**

**Sevil Dolmaci:** I did my bachelor's in 'art history' and my master's and doctoral studies in 'contemporary art'. Upon the completion of my studies, I started working as an academic at Başkent University in Ankara, which is one of the most well-established private universities in Turkey. As much as I enjoyed teaching at the university, I realised that I would need to do more to satisfy my passion for art. In relation to that, I wanted to travel more, engage in different art scenes, get to know diverse artists and have an exchange of experience and knowledge with them. I was also wondering how this sector works commercially. For this reason, I made a sudden decision to resign from the university and move to Istanbul. When I moved to Istanbul, I started working with Turkey's internationally renowned family, Sabancı Family, as an art consultant. While the Sabancı Family was working on establishing a contemporary museum with Zaha Hadid, an Iraqi and British architect, artist and designer, who is recognised as a major figure in the architecture of the late-20th and early-21st centuries. I joined the team and worked together with Thomas Krens, consultant of the Guggenheim Museums, and Zaha Hadid for two years. I made international purchases. Thus, I entered the art market from a higher point, attended the workshops of world-renowned artists and made high-budget deals with American and European galleries. In other words, I became the apple of eye thanks to one of the biggest players in the art market as well as all the hard-work and self-devotion. I felt happier and stronger in this area. In addition to the family's museum project, DEMSA Collection, I carried out the art project of St. Regis Hotel.

After having worked for the Sabancı Family for about 9 years, I established my own art consultancy company in 2015, as a result of which, my journey in the art world continued and my venture started to grow rapidly. I added a gallery to my organisation in 2018 and launched the Artist Residency Program in 2021. As a part of my belief in the importance and enriching power of intercultural exchange between different countries and regions, I opened my gallery space in Dubai in 2023. Today, I have many collectors from Turkey and from across the world as well as a list of intriguing and successful local and international artists. I have worked with the artists who have shaped world art history, such as Peter Halley, Tony Cragg and David Salle. I am happy to say that I am the most powerful art consultancy company in Istanbul and I take part in the international platform as the most assertive gallery of the country.

**L'O A: You are an Art historian, Art collector and founder of Sevil Dolmaci Art Gallery in Istanbul and Dubai. Can you tell us about your journey so far?**

**SD:** I was introduced to antique items in my family, but my interest in contemporary art started while I was studying at university. I started to study contemporary art and became the most successful student of the department with an excitement that can be described as love at first sight. As soon as I finished school, I started my master's degree and went to London to learn and experience contemporary art. I volunteered in museums, such as the Saatchi Gallery and Tate Modern in London. I took art lessons from the Royal Academy of Art. Then I returned to Turkey and started working as an academician at Başkent University in Ankara. Five

years later, following the decision I made in one day, I moved to Istanbul and started to take an active role in the art market. I worked as an art consultant for the Sabancı Family Demsa Collection and founded my own companies in 2015. Currently, I have an art consultancy company, artist residency programme and galleries in Istanbul and Dubai. Today, we are a structured institution that is providing services on a world scale with a team of 35 dedicated people.

Having studied art history and coming from an academic background satisfies my gallerist side because it gives me the chance to play an important role in an artist's career and contribute to the art history, however, what constantly renews my energy and keeps me stimulated as a person and a professional is definitely the consultancy aspect of my job. It is a kind of a challenge for me. It is like climbing higher and higher in a fierce competition in the international arena, feeling the power of art...

**L'O A: You started Sevil Dolmacı Art Consultancy in 2015. What was your thought process behind starting an Art consultancy and how has it progressed over the years?**

**SD:** The most important factor in me establishing the consultancy company was Sotheby's, one of the world's leading auction houses of fine and decorative arts,



Outfit: VALENTINO ON  
NET-A-PORTER  
Necklace: BEGÜM KHAN

*Saudi Prince SALMAN  
BIN ABDULAZIZ  
AL-SAUD HAS been  
PURSUING a VERY  
generous STRATEGY in  
ART projects, CLAIMING  
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THE new EUROPE.*

purchase of AAP, a 22-month-old consultancy company founded by Christie's successful expert Amy Cappellazzo and her friends, art consultant Allan Scharzman and a banker with law background, Adam Chinn, by paying 85 million dollars. The recent updating of the world-wide art sales strategies, the increasing importance of private sales and the increase in consultancy companies led me to launch a corporate and professional consultancy company, which unfortunately had not existed in Turkey in the field of art. A good network of communication is undoubtedly required for this. My biggest chance was to work in the Demsa Collection, owned by Demet Sabancı, which is a remarkable collection of Turkey on an international scale. Over the years, everything happened exactly as I thought, for example, one of the most important consultancies we provided in partnership with Sotheby's was for Jordanian artist Fahrelnissa Zeid to buy a museum in Abu Dhabi for 2.5 million Euros from Turkey. Today, we are the only company making international deals in Turkey with an assertive and strong team. Moving forward with this idea helped us grow in a short time.

**L'O A: You have an Art Gallery in Dubai, UAE. How has been your experience and how has UAE helped you grow your business?**

**SD:** We actually started our international expansion by moving our umbrella company to the Netherlands. After the Istanbul branch, the Dubai branch of our Netherlands-based gallery opened in October. Once the relations between the Dubai branch and Riyadh are established, the London and New York branches will be launched.

Following the orientation of the world art market towards the East, Dubai has become an important art centre. Likewise, Riyadh is very assertive about art these days. Saudi Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud has been pursuing a very generous strategy in art projects,

Outfit: KRISTINA  
FIDELSKAYA  
Earrings: CULT GAIA ON  
NET-A-PORTER  
Rings: REPOSSI  
Boots: VERSACE





Dress: DV  
Necklace & Watch: BULGARI  
Earrings & Ring: PERSEE PARIS  
Heels: ALAÏA

claiming that the East will be the new Europe. Therefore, at a time when Europe and America are turning their attention to the East, we have developed our action plan aligned with this tendency around the world. Along with Dubai, Riyadh is on our agenda. We postponed our growth in America and Europe after our expansion to the East, at least for the moment.

Our Dubai Gallery is centrally located in the Design District, the heart of Dubai, where art, design and fashion meet. Our space was designed to allow the exhibition of large-scale works of art. Sevil Dolmacı Dubai, which has a ceiling height of 7 meters and a large gallery area of 300 square meters, will host very important artists from America and Europe and collaborate with and support local and regional artists. The art season, within which our Dubai gallery is planning to organise a total of five exhibitions throughout the year, including four solo

exhibitions and a group exhibition, will last from October to May. Our gallery will continue to serve viewers with the exhibition of its collection during the summer months.

**L'O A: What would be your message to young people who want to pursue their careers in the field of Art?**

**SD:** Art is a sophisticated field. You need to travel a lot, follow fashion and technology, read regularly and be worldling. In order to manage communication with artists and collectors correctly, it is necessary to know how to be psychologically balanced and strong. You have to work hard and remember that the road is long.

**L'O A: What's next for Sevil Dolmacı?**

**SD:** After the full settlement of our gallery in Dubai, I would like to open a branch in Riyadh. ■

Outfit: VERSACE  
Heels: VERSACE  
Earrings: COMMON  
PROJECTS ON NET-  
A-PORTER

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