

Stars Pitch In For Aids Charity Auction

13 December 2008

DUBAI — Celebrities from Hollywood, Bollywood and the Arab world came together at a charity auction on Friday to help raise funds for Aids research.

The glamour of the celebrity world was ever present at Cinema Against Aids Dubai 2008, held at Atlantis, The Palm, with the likes of Preity Zinta, Salma Hayek, Goldie Hawn, and Laura Linney involved.

The spotlight switched to the city on Thursday night when the Dubai International Film Festival opened and a select group of ticket holders, seated across 41 tables, had their chance to mingle with the celebrities and do their part for Aids research at the second annual event by amfAR.

To the music of Girls just want to have fun Goldie Hawn was introduced and the evening began. Earlier, on the red carpet, celebrities spoke to Khaleej Times on everything from politics to the challenges of acting.

But it was Salma Hayek, wearing a satin ivory Balenciaga dress, and a diamond studded Bucheron flower pendant and necklace, who stole the show.

"It's my first time in Dubai, and from the little that I've seen it's very different than any place I've ever been — it looks very happy," she said.

The actress said she was dedicated to the cause of funding Aids research after her own experiences working in the field.

"I've worked with amfAR before as well as other Aids organisations such as Youth Aids with them I've done field work — mostly in Latin America. I have seen Aids with my own eyes and have seen how it affects people.

"I've not only done work trying to raise money but I've done work in the field. Once you do that it affects you in a different way because it's one thing to know about a problem, it's another to experience it. Tonight I donated to the auction an appearance on a show that I produce."

The American actress juggles with motherhood, working with amfAR and going on to a new assignment.

"The main thing is trying to find the time to be all of them," she said.

"I will give you a hint, one of my upcoming films will reunite me with Robert Rodriguez."

Laura Linney said she too had been motivated to help with the amfAR she had seen close friends affected by Aids.

"I have a lot of friends that I've lost to Aids, and when you lose someone its something that you will never stop fighting for."

With the controversial film director Oliver Stone present and his movie W screening, Harry Belafontaine spoke about Barack Obama's recent win in the November US presidential elections.

"It's been a long time waiting for America to come to this moment and reach this level of political maturity," he said.

"I have to be optimistic about the region (Middle East) because it can't continue the way it is."

Hawn auctioned off several pieces last night including a Cartier 'Salma Hayek' Love Handcuff, a capelet designed by Dries Van Noten, and a handpainted dress by Balenciaga.

The prototype motorbike used in the film Terminator Salvation: The Future Begins, starring Christian Bale, was also up for auction. Lunch with Kim Cattrall of *Sex and the City* and a one-hour tennis lesson with Monica Seles were also up for auction.

{ Khaleej Times }