



- **What attracted you to this challenging new role in Abu Dhabi?**

Books and everything around them have always been a passion for me. The possibility to work on a 'young' project related to books and the publishing industry at large which can be moulded and shaped by me was the most interesting side of this new role. The various projects within KITAB's agenda are all extremely interesting for me, and organising the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair is only one of the important projects. Assisting in developing the publishing industry, working on a distribution system for books in the Arab world and building up a Literary House in Abu Dhabi are all topics that fascinate me. Not to mention working on reading promotion and organising various book events in the region.

Here in Abu Dhabi, I can realise my ideas, and develop them. New impulses and ideas are welcome and nothing is gridlocked!

- **How did your previous role at Prestel Verlag in Munich equip you for this new post?**

Working extremely closely with the Publisher at Prestel gave me the possibility to learn how a very professional publishing house is managed. Knowing how books are made and how tough the business side of the industry is helped me understand the needs of publishers which is extremely crucial when it comes to satisfying their needs and meeting their expectations at the book fair.

Working as a lawyer for Prestel also assisted me in honing in on the business side of the publishing industry.

I had a lot of interaction with international authors and artists which prepared me for the very international side of my work right now.

- **What are your main goals for the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair?**

To help it become a truly international and professional book fair that is respected and taken very seriously in the publishing world.

- **How would you like the Fair to develop over the next 5 years?**

I would like to see it grow continuously with increasing international participation. However, without losing sight of the fact that it is and remains an Arab book fair. There will be much more offers for the professionals while the cultural side of it will be further developed.

I would like the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair to become a fair that complements the biggest book fairs like Frankfurt, London and Bologna.



I would like the Business and Rights Centres as well as the e-zone and the service provider areas to grow and develop significantly.

Interesting business opportunities and networking will be very important reasons to attend the fair.

We aim for the ADIBF to become a truly professional trade fair and will look at increasing the trade fair days. On a long term we will be exploring alternative attractions for the general public as well

- **What do you think the main challenges are for the Arab publishing world at the moment?**

The main challenge is to move side by side the western level of the publishing world.

The lack of a coherent distribution and ISBN systems is a huge setback. Very often, the public and even the publishers themselves have no information about, or access to books published in countries other than their own.

Lack of education coupled with the lack of reading also poses a major challenge.

- **Looking ahead to the Fair hosting the 7th International Publishers Association Copyright Symposium - how important is this issue for publishing in the Arab world currently?**

The hazards of copyright infringement in the whole Arab world are a problem of which the broader public is generally unaware.

The poor distribution system often leaves no other choice but to obtain books through illegal channels such as photocopying or file sharing of pirated books.

Hence hosting the IPA Copyright Symposium is extremely important to demonstrate to the international publishing industry how seriously copyright issues are taken. It will substantially raise our credibility and send a strong message about our professionalism and seriousness in addressing this issue. We are working at all aspects concerning copyright, as well as all the legal issues.

It is the first Symposium of its kind in the Arab world and as a pre-requisite an Emirati Publishers Association had to be established. An active association was one of the conditions for being selected to host the event.

This was one first big step towards international standards of an efficient publishing industry in the UAE.

At the 2010 Symposium here in Abu Dhabi, latest trends in copyright policy and practice will be discussed by key players at industries, lobbyists and policy-makers in international organizations.

Publishers from all over the world, and in particular the Arab publishers will be updated and extremely well informed after having attended the Symposium.



- **KITAB's focus is on professionalization for the Arab market - what steps are being taken towards this?**

Kitab was established in 2007 and has given the publishing industry in the region a professional and international book fair on a level not seen before in the Middle East.

From a book bazaar that happened once a year- designed for publishers from the region to sell books and for readers to find books not available anywhere else during the year.

It has now grown into a truly international book fair that not only aims to satisfy the needs of the local population but also takes into consideration all of the other nationalities embraced within this highly multinational society.

It is a professional book fair – where publishers can meet with each other, book sellers, authors and with service providers, sharing ideas about the future of the industry while collaborating to improve business results.

Meanwhile the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair is well known internationally, and in doing so, has turned the worldwide spotlight on publishing in the Arab World that in turn has helped to make foreigners aware of the market size and the opportunities the industry here offers.

We are creating sustainable infrastructures, while offering training opportunities for key players from the region and a platform for industry professionals to do business.

For the first time in 2009, KITAB is organizing a comprehensive training programme for publishers from the Arab World.

The programme consists of a series of lectures and workshops designed for publishing professionals at the CEO and mid-management levels. Each group has two sessions of five days each.

We have started working on projects that will help establish a distribution system for books in the Arab world.