



Tunisiens Botschafter Moncef Ben Abdallah bei der Eröffnung der Ausstellung

Tunisia's Ambassador, Moncef Ben Abdallah, at the opening of the exhibit

50 Years of German-Tunisian Relations


The 50th anniversary of the commencement of diplomatic relations between Germany and Tunisia was celebrated by the Tunisian Embassy in Berlin with a series of cultural events. On December 3, 2007, Ambassador Moncef Ben Abdallah officially opened the art, cultural and archaeological exhibit "Ecole de Tunis et de Simitthus à Berlin" in the Art Center Berlin in the Friedrichstrasse. The patron is Mohamed El Aziz Ben Achour, Minister of Culture and Heritage Preservation of the Republic of Tunisia. "I hope you will discover and appreciate some new aspects of Tunisian art and culture," the Ambassador commented in his speech.

The exhibit presents three aspects of Tunisia's culture; the "École de

Tunis" provides the Berliner public with an insight into contemporary painting in the Maghreb state through the works of various artists. The scope of the exhibited works spans still life to the completely abstract, though they all share a reference point in Tunisia's everyday life and tradition. A selection of archaeological finds from the ancient city of Simitthus, founded by the Numidians and later a Roman city, represents Tunisia's long history. At the same time, it stands as an example of German-Tunisian relations, as German and Tunisian archaeologist investigated the ruins of Simitthus together for more than 40 years.

The third aspect of the exhibit is about a piece of Tunisian intellectual history, the 14th century polymath,

Ibn Khaldun, who is considered to be the first writer to use sociological methods in analysing historical processes. In his major work, the "Muqaddimah," he takes as his theme the rise and fall of ruling dynasties. Even though his work was later hardly picked up by other Arab writers, his observations and explanations of social phenomena are still valid today.

In their opening statements, Thomas Tyllack, the Director of the Berlin Art Center, Undersecretary Werner Wnendt, representative for Regional Culture and Media Relations in the Foreign Office and the Ambassador praised the excellent German-Tunisian relations. "We are looking forward to the next 50 years," said Wnendt.  Ute Fabricius