***Zorlu Center Brings Light and Art Together***

***Istanbul, the city of seven hills and the crossroads of the west and east, will have its first Light Festival between 13 and 29 November. Zorlu Center, Turkey's first five-function mixed-use project, will host the festival, which has already attracted millions of visitors in numerous cities around the world.***

More than 20 world-renown light artists and their magnificent works will transform Zorlu Center, regarded as Istanbul’s new premiere destination, into an enormous, shining work of art during the ***Istanbul Light Festival Zorlu Center***. The curator is **Rebecca Mendez,** Head of the Media Art Department at UCLA University in Los Angeles.

Art will meet light at the festival, which will consist of light installations, interactive light shows, performances and workshops.

Finnish light artist **Kari Kola**, who also performed at the opening ceremony of the UN Year of Light, will perform at the opening ceremony. **Groupe-Laps**, a group of French artists and designers, will exhibit 170 illuminated human figures at the festival, and Dutch couple **Vollaers Zwart** will decorate the metro tunnel with a piece called ‘Love Tunnel’. In addition to the famous American sculptor **Jen Lewin**, world-famous installation artist, painter and sculptor **Lita Albuquerque,** and such artists and groups of artists as **PITAYA, Miroslav Struzik, TILT, Alaa Minawi, FLYNN TALBOT, STORY BOX**,Turkey’s world-famous light artist **Refik Anadol** will send art lovers on a journey full of light and famous Australian artist **Amanda Pare’**s huge shining rabbit sculptures will be displayed.

**Rebecca Mendez,** curator of the ***Istanbul Light Festival Zorlu Center,*** stated that the festival will be among Turkey’s most important art festivals thanks to its innovative vision and growing visibility throughout the world. Mendez said, “I’m really excited about organizing the ***Istanbul Light Festival Zorlu Center,*** for which we took inspiration from the world’s most important festivals with its creative and inspiring international nature, symbolic aspect, as well as its artistic, social and interactive contents.”

**The world is talking about these festivals**

The most important examples of light festivals, which go back to the 17th century, include the festivals in Lyon, Prague, New York, Berlin, Amsterdam, Portugal and Sydney. The light festival in Prague hosts 450 thousand people while the one in Berlin hosts 2 million people; the one in Lyon attracts almost 4 million guests.

The redesign with lights of iconic streets and historic buildings transforms cities into rich cultural areas. Through the festival, the hundreds of works of art, including pictures drawn with light and illusions, significantly increase the tourism potential of the host cities.

**A modern masterpiece: Zorlu Center**

At the juncture of Europe and Asia, a new lifestyle destination has been created in the heart of Istanbul by Zorlu Property Group. Turkey's first five-function mixed-use project, Zorlu Center, features a performing arts center, shopping mall, hotel (Raffles Istanbul Zorlu Center), office space and residences. As the new crossroads for performance, visual and contemporary arts, Zorlu Performing Arts Center presents world famous performance troupes and the cream-of-the-crop of live performing artists. Zorlu Shopping Mall is considered one of the most attractive malls not only in Istanbul but also across Europe. It is surrounded by the rich Bosphorus flora of Istanbul, with its 10.000 m2 main square and approximately 180 stores in a total area of 70.000 m2. Istanbul’s most exciting new hotel, Raffles Istanbul Zorlu Center, is an exhilarating fusion of virtuoso architecture, dazzling interiors, inspired food and deep luxury. Raffles Istanbul offers its guests 136 guestrooms and 49 suites – all spacious and filled with light, with individual terraces, blending Turkish and contemporary design. Overlooking historic Istanbul, the Princes' Islands and the Bosphorus Bridge, select families have the opportunity to enjoy the exclusive privileges of residences starting from 117 square meters to as large as 735 square meters. The offices at Zorlu Center were designed to give professionals a productivity-enhancing working environment surrounded by 72,000 square meters of soothing greenery.

**NOTE TO THE EDITOR**

***The United Nations has declared 2015 as the ‘International Year of Light’.***

The United Nations declared 2015 ‘The International Year of Light’ to emphasize the importance of light, which plays a crucial role in cultural and economic activities on a global scale, in terms of the development of cultures and cultural exchange.

Light is used in all cultures in pictures and mural paintings to reflect the spirit of artists and to create an atmosphere. The light itself has been used as a unique component of shadows and colors for thousands of years. In this respect, the aim of the 2015 International Year of Light, announced to emphasize the significance of light, is to contribute to its role in the development of people and the arts, focusing on the importance of technology in human life. Thanks to the International Year of Light, it is possible to increase scientific synergies, improve education in basic sciences and to bring young talents together, with the aim of enabling better lives for everyone, especially those in developing countries.

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