



**EXHIBITION:** The House of Arab Arts in Jeddah is currently holding an exhibition of paintings by Hrair, a Lebanese artist. This is Hrair's 39th exhibition and the tenth in the Kingdom. Picture shows Prince Abdulaziz ibn Majed going round the exhibition. To his left is Hrair and to his right Ghassan Al Suliman, owner of the House of Arab Arts.

## *Hrair seeks to convey feeling of optimism through paintings*

By Khaled Nazer  
Arab News Staff

**JEDDAH** — Hrair is in town. This is what everybody has been saying since last week. Hrair is one of a few internationally recognized and respected Arab artists.

He has been a regular visitor to Saudi Arabia. This time it is in connection with an exhibition of his latest offerings now going on in the House of Arab Arts. In between, Hrair found time to visit the *Arab News* headquarters and talk about his work.

He said Saudis are now showing strong interest in arts and as a result a number of national and international artists have been exhibiting in different parts of the country. Hrair does not want to associate himself with any particular school of painting. "My work," he said, "has been influenced by the culture and tradition which I experienced in my early days of painting."

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Hrair is of Armenian descent. He studied architecture in the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA). His first exhibition was held in 1960 in Lebanon.

Hrair, who spoke in Arabic, emphasized the importance of different colors in his work and said though the impression conveyed by a painting is important, coloring is the essential factor.

Asked about his preference for horses and women as themes, Hrair said "horses are a sign of wealth, generosity and manliness and women a sign of passion." He said there can not be any common explanation for art works because "everybody has his own way of seeing things."

The soft-spoken artist described his work as "a dream" and said people do not have the time to dream these days. He said he is an optimist and likes to convey that feeling to the people. He declined to discuss the prices of his paintings, but said he was once paid \$25,000 for a work. Hrair is planning to have an exhibition in Washington in March 1987. Another is planned in London in May.

Hrair's paintings have found their way into the most famous collectors of the world including Queen Elizabeth of England, King Hussein of Jordan, Prince Rainier of Monaco and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.