saloon

the takeaway technology

A little application in Dubai

livering innovation first - in a sector that favours considered the best in market? How can a corporation that outsells its closest rival by more than six to one be written off as a fading force? Both these questions hang wearily over Nokia, the mobile phone giant, which once laid claim to 40 per cent of the worldwide market for mobile handsets.

In truth, the company's predicament is far better than the gloom and doom-mongers would have you believe. Nokia outperformed analysts' profit forecasts earlier this year and its market share remains at 29 per cent. The company sold a creditable 108 million handsets in the first three months of 2011, a long, long way ahead of

But these figures mask some unsettling realities: Nokia's best-selling products are both low margin and lost-cost, while in the key smartphone segment the company has been overrun by BlackBerry and Apple. And no wonder. BlackBerry's proposition values an admirable functionality above all else, while Apple delivers both form and function. And Nokia? It is hard to say. Their products have lacked a "killerapp" for some time – business has

suffered accordingly. All of which should make the forthcoming Gitex Shopper exhibition a decent spectacle

row, will play host to an intriguing event in its Nokia Lounge on Tuesday. It is there that today's visionaries will be attempting to create the products of the future in a "pitch your app" com-

The rules of the contest are

to sell your idea for a new Nokia smartphone application, which must have relevance to the GCC market, to a panel of experts. And you must do so with enthusiasm, rather than attempting to blind anyone with science: presenters are forbidden from using any electronic aids during their pitch (oh, the irony of such oldschool rules in a high-tech competition). In return, Nokia will provide three winners with a package of cash and technical assistance to help coax their dreams

Apps, of course, are almost wholly the preserve of Apple, so it's nice to see Nokia playing the opposition at their own game.

Apple has built its business and. indeed, its handsome profits, on consistently being the best, rather than first, in market. The introduction of the iPhone in 2007 marked the moment when sales of Nokia smartphones began to slip into sharp decline.

tion of Apple, although they were popularised and monetised by the brand. Ditto the tablet sector,

The consumer electronics show, foretold by the Palm Pilot, coma long track record of de- which opens in Dubai tomor- mercialised by the iPad. But is this last product about to be overrun by a better and significantly cheaper alternative?

Last week, Amazon unveiled the Kindle Fire, its next-generation, colour-screen offering. Like Apple, Amazon is perceived as an innovator. The company reinvented simple: you have two minutes the books business, is credited with creating a viable online retail model for the entire internet and later, via its first tablet, helped millions carry vast quantities of books in the palm of their hands.

The new Kindle Fire will give its owners access to an unrivalled resource of digital content - not just books, but movies, TV shows and music, too. Only in its apps store does its commercial proposition significantly trail its rival. But will this be enough to top-

ple Apple? Will we be talking about the Cupertino giant as the "California patient" in a decade's time, just as we wonder about the future of Nokia today? That seems farfetched, although the post-Steve Jobs world of Apple appears open to challenge, a fact derlined by Tuesday's fumbled launch of the latest iPhone.

What is certain is the Fire will take the fight to the iPad and that is a good thing. Competition breeds innovation - you'll see that at Gitex this week - and commer-Apps too, were not the inven- cial challenges help foster creativity in the marketplace.



Illustration by Sarah Lazarovic for The National

Contact us

Nick March, The Review editor: thereview@thenational.ae To advertise contact: Alison Towle, 050 456 8185, atowle@thenational.ae

this week's essential reading

The National thereview

'2011 Nobel Prizes' by Brian Handwerk, National Geographic

Wasabi as a wake-up call, beetles that mistook bottles for mates, and failed doomsday prophets were among this year's research beneficiaries, writes Handwerk

Art lovers rise to the challenge

Auction of contemporary Pakistani pieces raises thousands for grassroots charity

hams' sale room in London's Mayfair. Snippets of Punjabi and reaching from this exclusive enclave in England's capital to the poorest pockets of rural Pakistan.

This is philanthropy fuelled by canapés, by the generosity of the next generation of Pakistani artists and by Pakistan Rising, a grassroots charity.

Matthew Girling, Bonhams' managing director and tonight's auctioneer, quietens the crowd using his trusty gavel, before coaxing bids from the audience using a blend of wit and persua-

The list of 10 artists who've donated their work for tonight's sale reads like a "Who's Who" of Pakistani art. The highlight is undoubtedly Rashid Rana's abstract piece Dead Bird Flying Series II. It's the runaway success of the night, sparking a bidding frenzy, before eventually selling for £16,000 (Dh90,320).

There's also a simple screenprint from Shezad Dawood, a of Dragons' Den, a UK television former Abraaj Capital Art Prize series. winner at Art Dubai.

Faiza Butt's The Mouth of Your Eyes is a digital print mounted on a light box but looks like a hairdryer encrusted with tiny shells and precious stones. It sells for

The chatter is deafening at Bon- enough to fit into a carry-on suit-New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

But all is not what it seems, beporary culture.

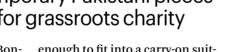
Nurjan, a 23-year-old artist with British, Turkish Cypriot and Pakistani heritage, blends the principles of ancient Islamic art with the modern world in her piece Declaration. The silhouette of a kneeling figure is created using Arabic script crafted from thousands of tiny Swarovski crystals

which Girling holds court.

Its new owner is Aisha Caan. James Caan, a multimillionaire businessman and one of the stars

"I bought Nurjan and Shezad Dawood's pieces because I like their work and I know the artists personally. It's also for such a

The sale room is filled with a mix of serious bidders and those The triptych, *Altarpiece: Em*- who are simply keen to show tombment of the Imam, is small their support for Pakistan Rising.



case and draws curious looks. Its medium of oil and gold leaf on Urdu pepper the conversations of wood has all the hallmarks of an the well-heeled at an art auction exhibit in the Medieval Italy wing that will see the hand of charity of London's National Gallery or

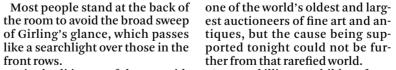
> cause Komail's trademark is to use the vocabulary of western religious art to discuss Islamic history, mythology and contem-

mounted on jet-black slate.

The result is a simple but beautiful showstopper that takes pride of place on the podium on

an artist who is also the wife of

good cause," says Aisha.



Zainab Ali is one of those avoid-Poor and illiterate children from ing his stare. She has a more persome of the most remote and imsonal reason than most to be at the poverished parts of Pakistan will eel the benefit of the goodwill and Nahid Raza, her mother, has do-

cash generated from this sale. Some of the money raised will go towards building classrooms at the six primary schools that the charity supports in Pakistan's remote areas - five in the Swat Valley and one in southern Punjab. Further proceeds will go towards the construction of an art room at each of these schools

Guests view contemporary Pakistani art on display at a charity auction held in London this week. Matt Crossick for The National

they can see their granny's work on sale. My mother was an artist [and] a single parent. She taught in the "We are talking about educating day and painted through the night underprivileged children from throughout my childhood. She has very poor and rural areas. These worked hard all her life and now are three to 12-year-olds who walk her work is on sale here. I couldn't to school without lunch or books be more proud," says Zainab. and have limited, if any, literacy," Bonhams, founded in 1793, is says Nuria Rafigue-Iqbal, one of

nated Symbol of Strength to the sale

and Zainab has brought her two

children Salmaan, 14, and Aniyah,

8, to watch their grandmother's

"It's past the children's bedtime,

but I've let them stay up late so

work go under the hammer.

Persuading 10 of Pakistan's foremost artists to donate artwork and an auction house to give up a sale room (and its managing director) for the evening, was not as difficult as Nuria first thought it would be.

the co-founders of Pakistan Rising.

"Pakistanis are incredibly generous people and we found a lot of people who wanted to do something to help their country. It was hard work setting the auction up, but I was amazed at the generosity

shown by the artists," says Nuria. "It's a wonderful way to promote Pakistan and to make the point that [this nation] is not like the Pakistan you hear about in the media. It's a chance to showcase the talent in Pakistan.

"There are some brilliant Pakistani artists and the thing about art is that there's no language barrier. Each work shows you a little bit about the people and the culture,"

Not unsurprisingly, Nour Aslam, art I was interested in, so I was al-Bonhams' Pakistani art specialist, is in agreement

"It's pretty fantastic to get all these artists together. It's like hanging out with the Andy Warhols of Pakistani art. The Pakistani art scene is rising and the artists have been winning awards and international

"In my opinion, Faiza Butt is the one to watch. The track she's on right now takes in gender and political issues. And although she lives in the United Kingdom, her heart is firmly in Pakistan," says

The businessman Faisal Mani is responsible for more than his fair share of the £32,200 (Dh181,750) total raised at the auction, having snapped up Rashid Rana's Dead Bird Flying Series II and Iqbal Hussain's The Brothel for £1,800

ways in the running. I've bought a few things at auctions before, but I wouldn't say I've got an art collection quite yet.

"I am interested in supporting emerging artists. I buy a piece because I like it, but it's also an investment too."

Sale over, no one seems too eager to depart into the muggy London night. In fact, the volume goes up a decibel or two as the successful bidders congratulate one another and charity supporters hug one another in celebration.

"It's been a great night," beams

"Everyone has pulled together to get behind Pakistan Rising. I'm so proud of what we've achieved and 1 am looking forward to going back to Pakistan and putting this money

"There were one or two pieces of ** Mary Murtagh