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how to spend it

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Beauty and the Bosphorus

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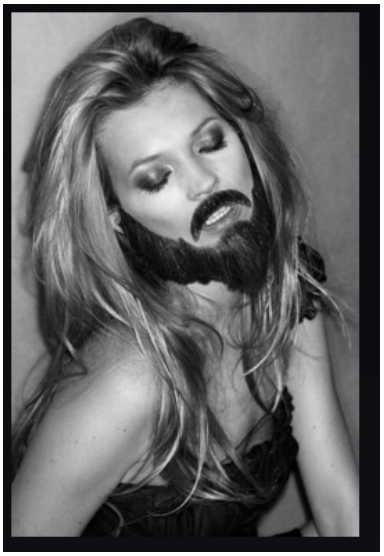

The programme of events for the Istanbul International Arts and Culture Festival taking place from June 6 to 9 is action packed, featuring lectures, screenings, performances and exhibitions by leading lights from the worlds of art, literature, film and music, such as Tilda Swinton, Zaha Hadid and Gareth Pugh. But an especially exciting element will be a selling exhibition of works by photographers Inez Van Lambsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, curated in conjunction with Gagosian Gallery (prices from $10,000 to $30,000). The beautiful, often bizarre and nearly all unseen images – many selected from the photographers' archives – include pop-culture portraits (think Hollywood starlets and fashion icons such as Gwyneth Paltrow, first picture, and Michelle Williams) juxtaposed with stark floral works of dahlias, roses and white berries on haunting white backgrounds that recall the artistic heritage of their native Netherlands.

Presented at Istanbul '74 gallery, a multidimensional art space founded by festival directors Alphan and Demet Müftüoğlu-Eşeli, the work in the Inez & Vinoodh exhibition provokes and enchants in the manner of photographers such as Robert Mapplethorpe or Irving Penn. Kate with a Beard, 2005 (third picture), contrasts with 3 Yellow Roses, 2013 (second picture), while a prone Lady Gaga is positioned beside a sparse anemone and calla lily study. From edgy nudes to curious tableaux, the exhibition creates dynamic, playful links between oddly paired people, objects and eras. The disjunction is dramatic, intense, unsettling – and ultimately captivating.