



DUBAI:
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART
NOW AND TEN

16 March 2016



CHRISTIE'S

عوسبة ١٩٧٤



DUBAI: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART NOW AND TEN

Wednesday 16 March 2016



AUCTIONS

IMPORTANT WATCHES

Tuesday 15 March 2016 at 7.00 pm

DUBAI: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART NOW AND TEN

Wednesday 16 March 2016 at 7.00 pm (lots 1-40)

DUBAI: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Wednesday 16 March 2016

at approximately 8.00 pm (lots 101-186) immediately following NOW AND TEN

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Thursday 17 March 2016 at 7.00 pm

To be held at:

Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Godolphin Ballroom

Please note that refreshments will be served in the foyer from 6pm on the day of each sale

VIEWING

Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Godolphin Ballroom

Sunday	13 March	2.00 pm - 10.00 pm
Monday	14 March	10.00 am - 9.00 pm
Tuesday	15 March	10.00 am - 4.30 pm (Watches)
Tuesday	15 March	10.00 am - 10.00 pm (Paintings & Elements of Style)
Wednesday	16 March	10.00 am - 1.30 pm (Paintings)
Wednesday	16 March	10.00 am - 10.00 pm (Elements of Style)
Thursday	17 March	10.00 am - 4.30 pm (Elements of Style)

AUCTIONEERS

Jussi Pykkänen, Nick Martineau

AUCTION CODE AND NUMBER

In sending absentee bids or making enquiries, this sale should be referred to as **NOW AND TEN-1241**

AUCTION RESULTS
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CONDITIONS OF SALE

This auction is subject to Important Notices, Conditions of Sale and to reserves. This auction will be conducted in US Dollars.
[60]

This auction features

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★

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For further information on buying at Christie's please see page 119.

POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT

CHAIRMAN AND INTERNATIONAL HEAD OF POST- WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART

Brett Gorvy
Tel: +1 212 636 2342

GLOBAL MANAGING DIRECTOR, POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART

Lori Hotz
Tel: +1 212 707 5915

CHAIRMAN AND HEAD OF POSTWAR & CONTEMPORARY ART, EMERI

Francis Outred
Tel: +44 20 7389 2270

BUSINESS DIRECTOR CONTINENTAL EUROPE & GROWTH MARKETS

Virginie Melin
Tel: +33 1 40 76 84 32

BUSINESS MANAGER CONTINENTAL EUROPE & DUBAI

Eloïse Peyre
Tel: +33 1 40 76 85 68

WORLDWIDE

AMSTERDAM

Peter van der Graaf
Tel: +31 20 575 52 74

BRUSSELS

Marianne Hoet
Tel: +32 2 289 13 39

DUBAI

Hala Khayat
Tel: +971 4425 5647

CONSULTANTS

Dr Alireza Sami-Azar, Iran
Dina Nasser-Khadivi, International Consultant
Eda Kehale Argün, Senior Consultant Turkey
Hayat Shobokshi, Saudi Arabia
Lyne Kaddoura, Beirut
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We would like to thank

Michael Bodycomb, Stuart Elwell, Gary Evans, Farah Fazalbhoy,
Heba El Khayal, Ekaterina Klimochkina, Matthew Lazarus,
John Mallinder, Noah David, Hesham Salama, Ganlin Song,
Therese Stark, Anna Touzin and Alice Vincent.

DUSSELDORF

Herrad Schorn
Tel: +49 211 491 59311

GENEVA

Anne Lamunière
Tel: +41 22 319 17 10

LONDON

Dina Amin
Tel: +44 20 7389 2921

MADRID

Guillermo Cid
Tel: +34 91 532 66 27

MILAN

Renato Pennisi
Tel: +39 06 686 3332

MUNICH

Jutta Nixdorf
Tel: +41 44 268 10 10

NEW YORK

Barrett White
Tel: +1 212 636 2151

PARIS

Laetitia Bauduin
Tel: +33 1 40 76 85 95

ROME

Mariolina Bassetti
Tel: +39 06 686 3330

ZURICH

Rene Lahn
Tel: +41 44 268 10 21

SPECIALISTS AND SERVICES FOR THIS AUCTION



Michael Jeha
Managing Director & Deputy
Chairman, Middle East,
Head of Department
+971 56 311 6088



Hala Khayat
Director,
Head of Sale
+971 50 553 7661



Valérie Hess
Director,
Business Development
+971 50 553 8605



Bibi Naz Zavieh
Specialist
+971 56 696 5876



Masa Al-Kutoubi
Specialist
+971 56 696 6327

SALE CONTACTS

Aadya Sharma
Cataloguer/Administrator
Tel: +971 (0)4 375 9012
From 13-17 March
Tel: +971 (0)4 330 0430

PRIVATE CLIENT CONTACTS

Isabelle de La Bruyère
Senior Director, Head of
Client Advisory, EMERI
From 13-17 March
Tel: +44 (0)7717 881 985

Julie Vial
Associate Director,
Client Advisory
Tel: +44 (0)20 7389 2170
From 13-17 March
Tel: +44 (0)7771 798 447

ABSENTEE & TELEPHONE BIDS

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Fax: +971 (0)4 319 8113

PAYMENT FOR CONSIGNORS

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Fax: +44 (0)20 7581 5295

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Shanti Veigas
Associate Director,
Operations Manager
Tel: +971 (0)4 375 9005
Fax: +971 (0)4 425 5639
From 13-17 March
Tel: +971 (0)4 330 0430
Fax: +971 (0)4 319 8114

SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION CHRISTIE'S DUBAI

Michaela Jenisova
Client Service Representative
Tel: +971 (0)4 425 5647
Fax: +971 (0)4 425 5639
From 13-17 March
Tel: +971 (0)4 330 0431
Fax: +971 (0)4 319 8114

OTHER SALE CONTACTS CHRISTIE'S DUBAI

Rakhi Chu
Business Intelligence
Analyst,
Middle East and India
Renee David
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M. SAID
1933



Ten years ago, Christie's embarked on a journey into the unknown with the staging of our first ever auction of modern and contemporary Middle Eastern art in Dubai.

The truth of the story is that it was one of those rare moments where we went into the inaugural auction in 2006 having no real sense of how it would be received and ultimately how it would perform.

I still recall the morning of the auction the nervousness that was creeping into the team as most of the lots in the auction remained uncovered and questions started to be asked if we had not made a miscalculation. Equally I remember the sense of relief that was etched across the faces of the team when the very first lot in the auction flew above its pre-sale estimate, setting the trend for the rest of the sale.

And so the journey began.

Ten years ago Christie's Dubai had a vision that was simple - we believed in the quality of Middle Eastern art such that our primary goal was to internationalise Middle Eastern art and artists and to bring them to a global audience.

Ten years on, much has been achieved and perhaps most important of all, what was once a very localised market has been replaced by awareness, enthusiasm, appetite and interest in the category from across the region and beyond - the Middle Eastern art market has become both regionalised and internationalised.

Everyone involved in the Middle Eastern art market can take great pride at how quickly things have developed and what has been achieved over the last 10 years - art education has increased throughout the region; the number of galleries representing Middle Eastern artists regionally and internationally has significantly increased; there are exhibitions of Middle Eastern art taking place on a weekly basis; art fairs are playing an increasingly important role in the region; museums and foundations are opening across the Middle East and institutions globally are acquiring Middle Eastern art, all important for the long term sustainability of the Middle Eastern art market. It is also particularly pleasing to see that the collecting of Middle Eastern art is far deeper today than it was 10 years ago.

But, it is still a very young market and we must not forget that - there is still progress to be made, challenges ahead, areas to be improved upon and much to be achieved. We must all remain patient.

There have been so many highlights over the last 10 years at Christie's Dubai, so many outstanding works offered, so many important collections that we have been entrusted with. Perhaps more important than any single work or collection offered and more important than all the world records that Christie's Dubai holds for almost every Middle Eastern artist, was that we stuck true to our vision of internationalising Middle Eastern art and our belief in the quality of the art never swayed. It was that belief which saw us ride through more challenging times in 2009 to reach the point we are at today and never did we consider changing course.

So here we are, staring at Christie's ten year anniversary auction in front of us. As we started to think about the auction and what we were looking to achieve, the strategy became immediately apparent - we wanted to put together an auction that would be a celebration of the last 10 years that would showcase the very best of Middle Eastern art and artists to a global audience. We feel we have achieved that with this **Now And Ten** auction and it would not have been possible without all the key relationships that have been built up over the last ten years and without the trust that has been afforded us by so many individuals, advisors, consignors and collectors alike - there are too many people to list names, but they know who they are and Christie's Dubai remains deeply appreciative for all the support we have received over the last 10 years.

And so Christie's looks forward with excitement to this **Now And Ten** auction and to the next 10 years thereafter.

Michael Jeha
Managing Director & Deputy Chairman, Christie's Middle East

PROPERTY FROM
THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF DR. HODA WASFI

*1

ABDUL HADI EL-GAZZAR
(EGYPTIAN, 1925-1965)

World of Love

charcoal on paper
21⁷/₈ x 30¹/₈in. (55.5 x 76.5cm.)
Executed *circa* 1952

US\$ 150,000–200,000
AED 550,000–730,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired by the present owner *circa* 1981–1982.

LITERATURE:

Dr. S. Sharouny, *Abdel Hadi Al-Gazzar*, Cairo 2007 (illustrated, p. 72).

'The elements of the work are depicted realistically and handled so superbly that they are captivating and riveting.'

(Dr. S. Al-Sharouny, *Abdel Hadi El-Gazzar*, Cairo 2007).



Abdul Hadi El-Gazzar, *World of Love*, 1952.
Private collection, Egypt.

The works of Egyptian artist Abdul Hadi El Gazzar continues to challenge historians and collectors alike, long after the artist's death in 1965. His father was a sheikh and religious scholar who moved his family from the Akkabri area of Alexandria when the artist was only fifteen years of age to the bustling lower middle class district of Sayyida Zeinab in Cairo's famed historic Islamic district. Home to Fattimid and Mamluk monuments, the district's famed mosques and shrines were a gathering point for mystics, Sufi groups and various characters that added colour, life and intrigue to the imagination of inhabitants and visitors alike. Gazzar is likely to have been inspired by his new city as the themes of mysticism and magic are at the core of much of his body of work.

Gazzar was one of the original members of the controversial Contemporary Art Group that was founded by Hussein Youssef Amin in 1944 and that included artists Hamed Nada, Ahmed Maher Rafi and Samir Rafi. These artists sought to rid Egyptian art of the aesthetics imposed by Western art adhering to Amin's belief that by sourcing inspiration in local folk heritage, art would lead to social change. Gazzar supported this innovative concept by incorporating symbols derived from Egyptian folk culture and popular mystic philosophy into his pictorial vernacular. He hence created a unique series of motifs, which he regularly used in his works to position the very notion of Egyptian cultural identity and of Egyptian arts and crafts, resulting in enchanting masterpieces that stimulate the viewer's subconscious and imagination. Gazzar's magical realism arguably had its roots in the surrealist movement of the Art and Liberty Group founded by George Henein in the early 1940s, which greatly influenced Gazzar at the beginning of his artistic training.





Abdul Hadi El-Gazzar, *Construction of the Suez Canal*, 1965.
(Christie's Dubai, March 2014; price realised: US\$1,023,750).
Private collection. © Christie's Images Ltd., 2014.

Christie's is delighted to offer at auction a rare preparatory yet very complete charcoal sketch of Gazzar's infamous work *World of Love*. The present owner, Dr. Hoda Wasfi, acquired this meticulous drawing in Cairo in the early 1980s following the recommendation of the famed critic Aimé Azar. He was her professor and co-supervisor on her PhD thesis on French literature and later became her close friend. Dr. Hoda Wasfi played various pivotal roles at the centre of Egypt's cultural scene, having been cultural advisor to UNESCO, professor in the French Department of Cairo University and director of Hanager Theatre and Gallery for more than twenty years, to name a few.

Gazzar's painting *World of Love* refers to the classical and universal subject of love which is personalised to its Egyptian context with Gazzar's inclusion of symbols and additional details that place the scene in a purely local Egyptian narrative. Although the charcoal drawing was rigorously replicated in the painting, there are a few minor additions, such as a gold hoop earring on the male figure and the gold ornamentation that hangs from the woman's head. The present lot is a masterpiece on its own, replete with details and imbued with Gazzar's unique artistry in loading his work with symbols derived from Ancient Egyptian mythology.

The composition of the scene is simple in appearance, with a man and a woman sitting back to back at the centre of a room, yet complex in reality after deciphering the rich symbolism that surround the pair. Forming a pyramidal shape in the foreground, the two figures' posture creates on one hand a sense of stability and strength and on the other hand they bring together the world of love with that of mysticism and of the supernatural, as well as re-uniting the world of consciousness with that of symbolism. The

man tenderly yet timidly stares at the veiled woman, both apparently shy in their love for one another. Yet the wide arrays of symbols that surround them emphasise the intensity of their relationship. The man holds a snake in his right hand that historically symbolised both fertility and carnal desire. Gazzar's snake specifically alludes to Ancient Egypt's hieroglyphic representations of the reptile, known as 'Nehebkau' that metaphorically stood for the notions of rebirth, transformation and immortality. Gazzar emphasised these concepts through his inclusion of the hen and the two eggs placed in the basket next to the woman. They connote life's creation and duality, a core belief of Ancient Egypt but also of the Egyptian way of thinking in general.

The theme of fertility is again suggested by the sheaf of wheat that the woman at the centre clutches in her right hand. She seems to be in a dream-like state, with her eyes closed behind her delicate veil, the texture of which was so beautifully replicated by Gazzar. She herself incarnates fertility and prosperity on a subliminal dimension rather than in an awakened state. The sheaf of wheat is also another reference to Ancient Egyptian mythology, more specifically to Osiris, the Ancient Egyptian god of rebirth, transition and regeneration and to the pillar-like symbol known as 'djed' commonly used in Ancient Egypt, that symbolises stability.

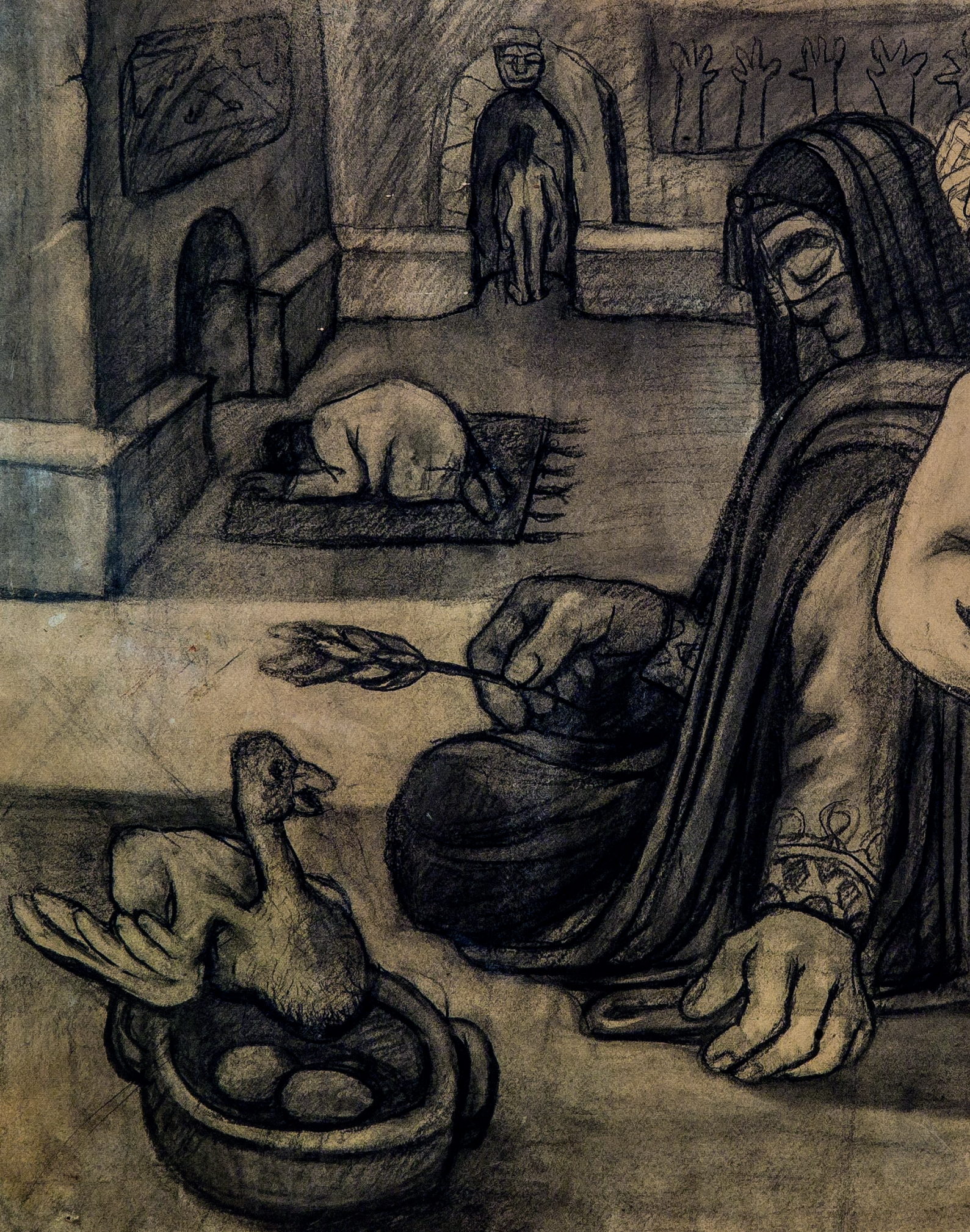
Although the central couple seems detached and unaware of the scene in the background, the latter is just as rich as the foreground in terms of symbolism. A man on the left is seen prostrating in prayer in front of what looks like an altar of an ancient temple. Above it, is the drawing of a triangle, the geometrical shape used to represent the merging of the spiritual and earthly realms, hinting to a mystical gateway. A

nude woman performing special rituals is seen in an arched doorway, opening out towards other worlds. At the other end of the room on the right, a veiled woman stands next to a traditionally Egyptian carved wooden bench, as she looks towards the worshipper. Finally, the drawing hanging on the wall behind the couple that depicts palm trees and handprints is believed to refer to the protection from the evil eye. Referring to Gazzar's *World of Love*, art critic Sobhy El Sharouny described that the artist examined 'the eternal spring of life amidst superstitions, belief in metaphysical powers and the mysterious world of the psyche; aspects uncovered by Freud and his psychoanalyst followers.' (Dr. S. Sharouny, *Abdel Hadi Al-Gazzar*, Cairo 2007, p. 73).

The hidden meanings of Gazzar's rich symbolism permeating through *World of Love* enhance the mystery of both drawing and painting, that remains open to interpretation. Yet hope, promising life prospects and optimism prevails the 'world of love' that Gazzar has imagined as a harmonious, supernatural and magical world in his two works of the same title. Gazzar considered women to be the pinnacle of purity and beauty found in this world. By representing the two figures opposite one another, Gazzar draws our attention to the woman, identified as the source of creation and not to the man and snake, generally considered as being ugly according to the traditional Egyptian reading of snakes.

Sharouny argued that the subject matter *World of Love* is important due to its surrealist spirit being given coherence and order, although a sense of irony and intrigue still prevails. The identity of the three figures in the background cannot be concluded, but the glances exchanged between the couple confirm that their relationship is sincere and that the absurdist nature of surrealism does not supersede the reality of their love. The way they physically support one another in addition to the point of contact of their elbows and the prominence of the triangular shape repelling the evil eye throughout the composition, further underlines the couple's concrete love. One of the artist's most idiosyncratic touches is the oversize hands and feet giving them a rough appearance, hinting to the couple's working class background. Although the source of light is not clear, light emanates from various points in the painting, enhancing the work's unparalleled symbolism and multi-layered meanings, inherent to Gazzar's oeuvre.

Through Gazzar's ambitious and painterly approach to drawing, the charcoal *World of Love* situates itself in its completeness alongside the highly accomplished and meticulous drawing of the *Construction of the Suez Canal* of 1965 that sold at Christie's Dubai for more than \$1 million in March 2014, identifying it as a rare masterpiece by one of the most mysterious and sought-after Modern Egyptian artists.



PROPERTY FROM
THE COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST'S FAMILY

*2

HAMED EWAIS
(EGYPTIAN, 1919-2011)

Al Aabour (The Crossing of the Suez Canal)

signed and dated in Arabic (lower right);
signed, titled, dated and inscribed in Arabic (on the reverse)
oil and wax crayons on canvas
48½ x 38⅞in. (123.4 x 98.8 cm.)
Painted in 1974

US\$300,000-400,000
AED1,100,000-1,500,000

PROVENANCE:

The Artist's Estate.

EXHIBITED:

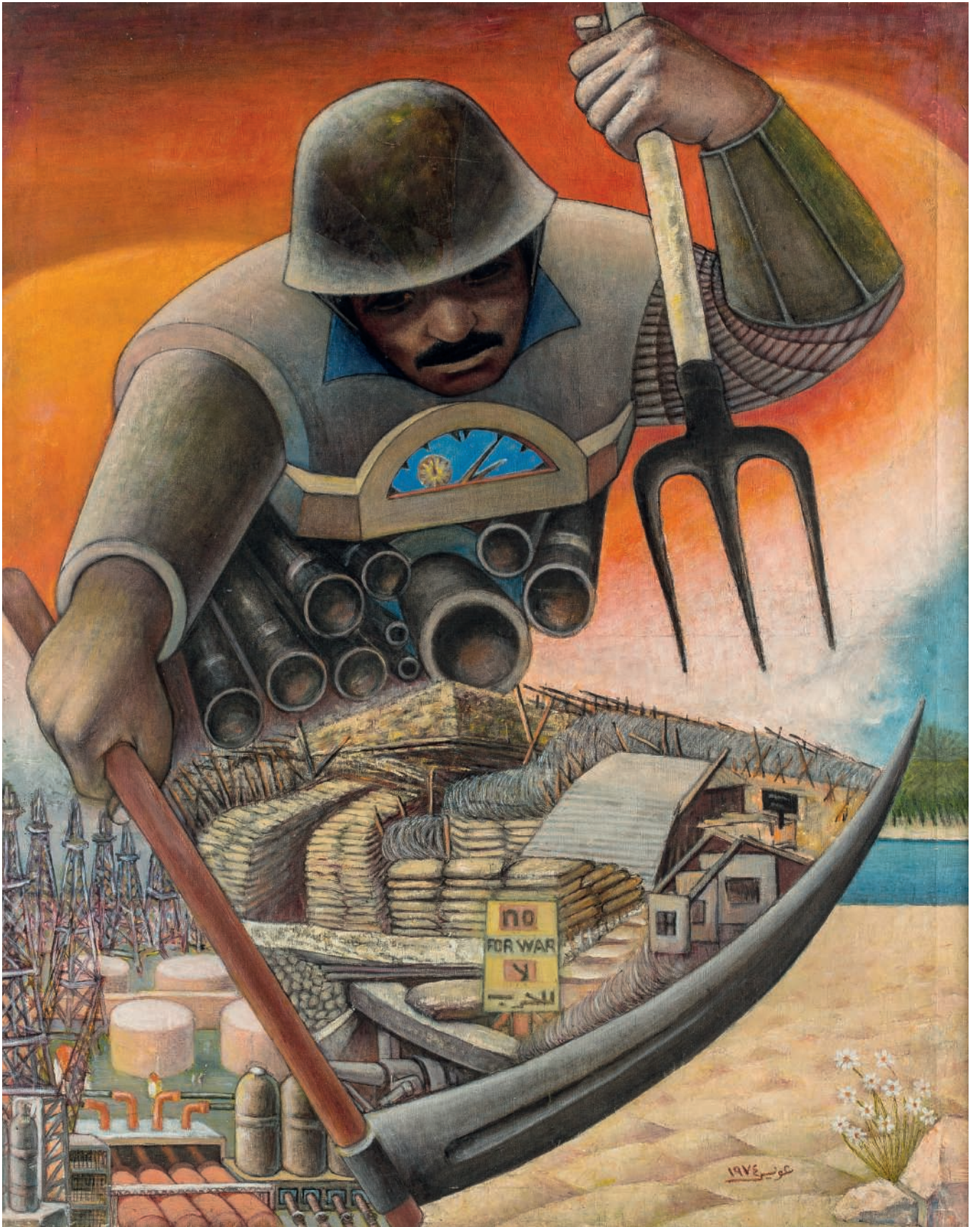
Tashkent, *Exhibition*, date unknown.
Cairo, Zamalek Art Gallery, *Hamed Ewais*, 2002.
Rome, Egyptian Academy, *Hamed Ewais*, 2006.

LITERATURE:

G. Naguib, *Mohammed Ewais; Excellence and the Revolution* (in Arabic),
Cairo 2003 (illustrated in colour, unpagged).



Hamed Ewais, *The Protector of Life*, 1967-1968
(Christie's Dubai, March 2015; price realised: US\$341,000).
Collection of the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.
© Christie's Images Ltd., 2015.





More than any other Egyptian artist, the late Hamed Eweis has come to be identified by art historians as a truly political artist. Having focused all of his works on subjects or narratives related to the cause of the Egyptian labour class and political events that affected Egypt during his lifetime, the work of Hamed Eweis is one of the earliest acts of modern political expression in Egyptian art. *Al Aabour* ('The Crossing of the Suez Canal') is an outstanding and emblematic work of his oeuvre, characterised by its powerful composition and blinding colours and impregnated with bold statements of nationalist fervor and support for the Egyptian working class population.

Born in Kafr Mansour, a small rural town in the Beni Souief district (South of Cairo), Eweis was a humble metalworker in his hometown before he embarked on his artistic career in Cairo, where he enrolled at the School of Fine Arts in the early 1940s. He educated himself on the history and theory of Western art and pursued his studies at the Institute of Pedagogy in Cairo so as to engage in debate about art theory and practice in a less rigid setting than the traditional School of Fine Arts. Eweis hence found himself at the centre of not only the artistic scene but also at the forefront of politics as the revolutionary fervour of a nationalist movement swept through Cairo.

Eweis' ideology was a reaction to the trends and developments of art that were taking place elsewhere in Egypt at the time. The activities of the Art and Liberty Group, a movement that was initially regarded by its founder George Henein (1914-1973) to be a political movement, ultimately triggered the establishment of the Egyptian Surrealist art movement. Yet Henein's antifascist motives were considered by Eweis to be anarchistic and irrelevant to his own personal objectives. Therefore, along with a group of his contemporaries, Eweis sought a cause and a style that would focus on the common Egyptian man and that could be understood by the masses. Alongside the sculptor Gamal El Seguni (1917-1977), the painters Yousef Sida (1922-1994) and Gazbia Sirry (b. 1925), Eweis formed the Group of Modern Art in 1947. They aimed to capture styles and subjects that were inspired by Egyptian folk and that tackled the cultural identity and the everyday life issues of the Egyptian people.

Eweis turned towards Social Realism in 1952 after having been exposed to the works of the Italian Social Realists being exhibited alongside his paintings at the Venice Biennale. Soon after, he painted *Labour*, which depicted a group of workers coming out after the end of their shift at a factory during a chilly winter evening. This painting won the 1956 Guggenheim Prize for work from the Mediterranean region category. Thereafter, Eweis became a pioneer of Social Realism. He depicted the peasants, factory workers, farmers and labourers that constituted a large portion of Egypt's population as a means of highlighting the oppression they endured under the remnants of a feudal system that was implemented by former colonial presence in Egypt by both the Ottomans and the British, respectively. Supporting Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser's Pan-Arab movement, Eweis painted intricately constructed *tableaux vivants* of specific political events that greatly impacted Egypt in the 1960s and 1970s; specifically the two wars fought against Israel in 1967 and 1973.



Original rendering of *Al Aabour* before the artist reworked the yellow panel prior to its display at the Rome exhibition in 2006.
Courtesy Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo.



Detail of the yellow panel on the present work showing the original Hebrew inscription through the reverse of the canvas.



Detail of the yellow panel on the present work with English/Arabic inscription.

To some extent, Ewais' aesthetics form the Egyptian counterpart to that of the murals representing scenes of the Mexican labour class painted by famed Mexican Social Realist painter Diego Rivera (1886-1957). It is very likely that Ewais was ideologically inspired by the latter yet his use of saturated colours, imbuing his works with light was influenced by first generation Egyptian artist Mahmoud Said (1897-1964), Egypt's praised colourist. Ewais encountered Said when he moved to the master's hometown, Alexandria, to teach at Faculty of Fine Arts in the early 1960s.

Executed in 1974, *Al Aabour* depicts the 1973 crossing of the Suez Canal by Egyptian military forces to seize land in Sinai. Marking the beginning of the Yom Kippur War, the events illustrated in Ewais' painting *Al Aabour* is a seminal chapter in Egypt's nationalist efforts against the earlier aggressions of the State of Israel in the 1967 War. Precision in military planning, along with combat engineers and water cannons, were used to attack the sand fortifications built by the Israeli army. The surprise attack ensured the successful occupation by Egyptian forces of the canal in the ensuing days and with it, a victorious reclamation not only of land but of national pride. *Al Aabour* is meant to be a poignant celebration of the engineering power and military might of Egypt.

Central to the painting is a giant male soldier that looms over the Suez Canal, represented here with the tall rigs and assorted industrial structures built in the port town of Suez. This monumental composition with an imposing figure presiding over a smaller scale and intricate scene recalls that of Ewais' 1967-1968 painting entitled *The Protector of Life*, in which the artist paid tribute

to President Nasser following the construction of the High Dam in Aswan. Set against a fiery red and orange sky, the colour of revolution, the protagonist of *Al Aabour* is about to plunge his pitchfork into the scene below him with his left hand and envelops it with a scythe, the symbol of socialism, with his right hand. His shoulders are strong, resonating the barrels of a tank, whilst his torso seems to be also made of military weaponry. The juxtaposition of the agricultural tools with a mechanical body both underscores and glorifies the soldier's origins as a farmer, represented by Ewais as one that protects the land both in combat and in solitude in the countryside.

The symbolism is direct and unabashedly proud, heightened by the vibrant palette. Israel is represented in an indirect manner with the scene of barbed wire and sandbags, that Ewais intentionally placed at the centre of the composition to abruptly interrupt the Suez Canal construction in lower left corner and to cut short the calm blue waters of the Nile River at the centre right of the painting. A sign in the middle of the piles of sandbags reads 'No [to] war' in both English and Arabic, hereby stressing a somewhat pacifist tone, that nevertheless denounces the tragic loss of Egyptian lives. Hope is represented with a small bouquet of white flowers that blossom out of the desert sands in the bottom right corner of the canvas. *Al Aabour* hence epitomises Ewais' Social Realist approach, both artistically and politically and has become an icon of Egyptian Social Realism.

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intentionally placed at the centre of the composition to abruptly interrupt the Suez Canal construction in lower left corner and to cut short the calm blue waters of the Nile River at the centre right of the painting. Yet what makes this painting a truly historical masterpiece, not only through its subject matter but also in the making of the painting itself, is that Ewais altered the signage that is planted in the middle of the piles of sandbags, more than thirty years after executing the work. The sign clearly reads 'No [to] war' in both English and Arabic, hereby stressing a somewhat pacifist tone, that nevertheless denounces the tragic loss of Egyptian lives. However, until at least 2002, when the painting was exhibited at Zamalek Art Gallery in Cairo, a controversial Hebrew inscription was originally painted on this yellow signage. When *Al Aabour* was requested to be loaned for an exhibition dedicated to Hamed Ewais at the Egyptian Academy of Rome in 2006, Ewais partially scratched out the Hebrew inscription and drew over it with the present English and Arabic text, most probably due to political reasons, using wax crayons. Despite the underlying social and political tensions of this striking masterpiece, hope is represented with a small bouquet of white flowers that blossom out of the desert sands in the bottom right corner of the canvas. The present work represents both a 1973 historical event but also reflects the same tensions more than thirty years later to the extent that the artist was compelled to alter his composition. *Al Aabour* epitomises Ewais' Social Realist approach, both artistically and politically. The work itself has become an icon of Egyptian Social Realism but it also was a precursor of the early 21st century, bearing witness to the more recent political tensions of the region.

PROPERTY FROM
THE ESTATE OF HUSSEIN BEK SAÏD

*3

MAHMOUD SAÏD
(EGYPTIAN, 1897-1964)

Le Nil à El Derr (Nubie) (The Nile in El Derr, Nubia)

signed and dated 'M.SAÏD 1933' (lower right)

oil on panel

24½ x 31¼in. (62.3 x 79.3cm.)

Painted in 1933

US\$250,000-350,000

AED910,000-1,300,000

PROVENANCE:

A gift from the artist to his brother, Hussein Bek Saïd.

LITERATURE:

La Semaine Egyptienne. Cahiers des peintres et sculpteurs de l'Egypte moderne, no. 1 - Mahmoud Saïd, 31 January 1936, no. 40 (listed, not illustrated).

E. Dawastashy, *Mahmoud Saïd: Memorial Book on the Pioneer of Contemporary Egyptian Painting - On the 100th Anniversary of his Birth* (in Arabic), Cairo 1997, no. 294 (illustrated in colour, p. 294 & p. 310).

This work will be included in the forthcoming Mahmoud Saïd *Catalogue raisonné*, currently being prepared by Dr. Hussam Rashwan and Valérie Didier Hess.



The present lot *in situ* on the wall in Hussein Bek Saïd's home, Alexandria, circa 1940s.
© Hesham Salama, Alexandria.





Mahmoud Saïd, *Lever de soleil sur le Nil*, 1945. Private collection. (Christie's Dubai, April 2010; price realised: US\$902,500). © Christie's Images Ltd., 2010

Following the success of its sale of Mahmoud Saïd's *Négresse aux bracelets* in October 2015 (price realised: US\$665,000), Christie's Dubai is proud to present two further exceptional paintings from the collection of Hussein Bek Saïd, amongst which this breathtaking view of the Nile at El Derr, located in Lower Nubia. Hussein was the artist's only brother, besides his three sisters, Zeinab, Nahed and Badiha, the latter having died unexpectedly at a very young age. Hussein worked at Studio Misr, Egypt's leading film production studio since 1936, that remained Hollywood's counterpart for more than three decades. Mahmoud Saïd painted his brother's portrait, wearing a pilot's outfit in 1923, the year following *La Cathédrale de Lausanne* (lot 120, sale 1242) was painted, as well as the portrait of Hussein and Indji Hanem Zulficar's son Mohamed, in 1945.

Le Nil à El Derr stands out from Mahmoud Saïd's oeuvre as one of the most beautiful Nile scenes he painted, characterised by the warm light emanating from its complex colour scheme and by the lyricism of its simplified composition. Saïd painted several Nile scenes from various areas of Egypt, from Aswan to Béni Hassan, from Luxor to Karnak, yet the present work is the only known painting depicting El Derr and is his earliest large-scale view of the Nile. Many of his 'Nile-scapes' are of relatively small format and often, Saïd's Nile compositions feature figures and sail boats, that are both given more or less prominent roles in the painting. Several of these works also hint to surrounding archeological sites, such as in *Le Nil à Béni Hassan*, or as evident in the present work. El Derr is renowned for its 'speos' or rock temple that was built within the rock during the 19th dynasty by Pharaoh Ramses II. Writer and historian Nicolas Grimal claims that the temple 'consisted of a sequence of two hypostyle halls (probably preceded by a forecourt and a pylon) leading to a triple sanctuary where a cult of statues of Ramesses II, Amon-Re, Ra-Horakhty and Ptah was celebrated' (N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, London 1992, p. 259). Although historians disagree on the exact date of El Derr Temple's construction, there is no doubt that it was an important cult site during the Pharaonic era, which Mahmoud Saïd pays homage to in his luminous rendering of his Nile scene in El Derr.

In this painting, Mahmoud Saïd includes one of his beloved motifs, the quintessentially Egyptian vessels called *feluccas*, peacefully floating on the Nile with their abstract triangular sails. The *feluccas* are the main characters of the scene, casting a shadow on the actual human figures, whose significance is purely decorative rather than meaningful. Saïd subtly plays with the mirroring effects of the water, delicately blending in the reflections of each element from his composition, with the bright beige and brown tones from the



Mahmoud Saïd, *Le Nil vers Béni Hassan*, 1951. Private collection. © Hesham Salama, Alexandria

El Derr rock temple pouring into the Nile, as well as the white touches from the *felucca* sails and the olive green of the trees along the Nile riverbanks. These thick touches of various pigments that masterfully achieve the effect of the water's transparency due to Saïd's skillful colour combinations underline the calmness and almost stillness of the scene represented and soon became one of the Alexandrian artist's signature techniques. *Lever de soleil sur le Nil* of 1945 is comparable in terms of subject matter, style, technique and format to *Le Nil à El Derr*, yet the overall light effects in both works are radically different. The former is dominated by cool blue and soft purple tones through which a radiant sun pierces through to bring a fresh morning light to the bustle of a daily Nile scene. The blue sky and the green plain of fertile land in the lower right corner of the El Derr landscape are completely overruled by the earthy sepia, ochre and beige tones of Lower Nubia's topography, allowing the colour of the stones of El Derr Temple to permeate through the entire composition.

In terms of the painting's structure, Saïd emphasised the linear movement of the *feluccas* through the horizontality of the composition that is occasionally interrupted by the curves of the *feluccas'* bulging sails or by the suggestive blocks of rock alluding to the archeological site of El Derr. Painted in 1933, it seems that Saïd was not as rigid with his composition than he was for later comparable works, such as *Le Nil à Béni Hassan* of 1951. As opposed to the El Derr landscape, the latter's structural lines are strengthened by the verticals created by the *feluccas'* sails and the palm trees' trunks and by the curved diagonals from the Béni Hassan rocks, replicating the movement emerging from the *felucca's* bulging sail. All these compositional lines converge at the top of the sailboat's mast in the foreground, creating a peaceful balance within the composition yet at the same time breathing in a mystical dynamism to this scene on the Nile, very characteristic of Mahmoud Saïd's pictorial structure. The golden light emanating from *Le Nil à El Derr* simultaneously achieves a mystical dynamism and an eternal standstill of this Nile scene, in view of paying tribute to Egypt's Golden Age and celebrating the Nubian people's activities, achievements and heritage. This blend of past and present, commonly seen throughout Saïd's oeuvre, enables him to capture the essence of his country's history and people and to emphasise their resistance to all forms of modernisation in the context of a changing nation seeking independence from colonial powers. Just like the El Derr temple is embedded within the soil and rock of the Nubian land, the people are deeply-rooted in their history and cultural heritage. The reflection of the temple and land into the waters of the Nile and the flecks of colour reflecting from the clothes of the people in the *feluccas*, combine all these various elements into one, embodying the intrinsic values of Egypt.



PROPERTY FROM
A PRIVATE COLLECTION, EGYPT

*4

MAHMOUD MOKHTAR
(EGYPTIAN, 1891-1934)

On the Bank of the Nile

incised with artist's signature 'M. MOKHTAR' (on the base)

basalt

14½in. (37 cm.)

Executed *circa* late 1920s

US\$50,000-70,000

AED190,000-250,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired by the present owner's late father *circa* 1970s,
thence by descent.

LITERATURE:

B. Abou Ghazi & G. Boctor, *Moukhtar ou Le Réveil de l'Égypte*,
Cairo 1949 (possibly another version illustrated, unpagued).

B. Abou Ghazi, *Works of Mokhtar* (in Arabic), Cairo 2003
(a marble version illustrated, unpagued).

Dr. Emad Abou-Ghazi has kindly confirmed the authenticity of this work.



(alternate view of the present work)

Mahmoud Mokhtar has long been regarded by art historians and critics as the founder of modern Egyptian sculpture and rightly so. His recurring conscientious depiction of the Egyptian *fellaha* (peasant woman) in his oeuvre helped to not only elevate the status of the often-oppressed Egyptian woman, but shed light on the integral role she played in Egypt, particularly in the domains of agriculture and rural society. Mokhtar's devotion to the symbol of the *fellaha* was one of the earliest acts of support to the Egyptian feminist movement in his recognition and celebration of her contribution to Egyptian society.

Mokhtar portrayed the symbol of the *fellaha* in various roles, most famously in his magnum opus *Nahdet Misr* (Egypt Awakening), executed between 1920-1928, that has presided the entrance of the University of Cairo since 1958. It serves as a reminder of Egypt's modernist awakening referring an intellectual and social renaissance that was intended to capture the spirit of a nation keen on identifying a unique artistic aesthetic in the twentieth century that combined references to the monumental sculptures of its ancient past with elements of its present.

In *On the Bank of the Nile*, the woman carries a traditional water jug in her right arm, caught in the action of filling it. This water jug alludes to the Nile River, a *leit motiv* in the sculptor's oeuvre. She holds back with her left arm her *melaya* – a traditional modest wrap worn by rural countrywomen – protecting it from being soiled by the thick mud on the riverbank, hinting to the land's fertility and agricultural activities.

The late Egyptian art critic (and nephew of the artist) Badr El Din Abou Ghazi claimed that this statue as was intended to represent the Egyptian people, symbolised by the harmonious lines which achieve a structural balance throughout the statue. There is no discontinuity or gap between each part of the statue, resulting in an elegant symmetry. The intelligent and calculated use of vertical lines with limited corrugation reveals the sculptor's compositional ingenuity and artistic skill. Mokhtar's ability in blending abstraction with classical figuration and in reconciling the glory of his nation's history and culture with the *fellaha's* simple daily ritual of water-gathering, was groundbreaking in the visual arts of the Arab diaspora and is beautifully embodied by the present sculpture.





PROPERTY FROM
THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF H. E. FRANCINE HENRICH, NORMANDY

*5

OMAR EL-NAGDI
(EGYPTIAN, B. 1931)

Sarajevo

signed and dated in Arabic (lower left of left panel & lower right of right panel);

signed and dated 'OMAR.EL.NAGDI 1992' (lower left of central panel)

oil on canvas, in three parts

each: 124 x 141³/₄in. (315 x 360cm.);

overall: 124 x 425¹/₄in. (315 x 1080cm.)

Painted in April 1992

US\$400,000-600,000

AED1,500,000-2,200,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner in 1993.

EXHIBITED:

Cairo, Al-Ahram Gallery, *Omar El-Nagdi*, 1992.

London, Egyptian Culture Centre, *Omar El-Nagdi*, 1992.

Paris, Institut du Monde Arabe, *Omar El-Nagdi*, 1994.

LITERATURE:

A. Zaoui, *Omar El Nagdi*, Honfleur 1999 (illustrated in colour, pp. 62-64).



'I see in you a talented artist who will give a universal dimension to Egyptian Art.'

(The artist, critic and academic Professor Ahmed Sabry to Omar El-Nagdi, 1958).



H.E. Francine Henrich (in white, on the left) and guests, including H.R.H. Farah Pahlavi, H.E. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and his wife Lea Boutros-Ghali and H.E. Anne-Marie Lizin (former President of the Belgian Senate), in front of *Sarajevo* at the Château du Chesney, Pressigny-L'Orgueilleux, 2007. Courtesy H.E. Francine Henrich.



Omar El-Nagdi in Pressagny L'Orgueilleux, France, painting the final touches on *Sarajevo*, 1992. Courtesy H.E. Francine Henrich.



Sarajevo, exhibited at Al-Ahram Gallery, Cairo in 1992. Courtesy H.E. Francine Henrich.

Christie's is honoured to have been entrusted with the sale of Egyptian artist Omar El-Nagdi's museum-masterpiece, *Sarajevo*, from the prestigious collection of Her Excellency Ambassador Francine Henrich. The *Sarajevo* triptych is undeniably the most important and the most ambitious work produced by El-Nagdi in terms of complexity, monumentality, expression and subject matter. Together with Iraqi artist Dia Al-Azzawi's mural-size painting *Sabra and Shatila Massacres* of 1982-1983, that was acquired by the Tate Modern, London, in 2012, El-Nagdi's *Sarajevo* is without doubt one of the most poignant depiction of the horrors of war ever painted by an Arab artist since 1937, when Pablo Picasso realised his iconic piece *Guernica*.

Shortly after it was completed in 1992, *Sarajevo* was exhibited at the artist's one-man show organised at Al-Ahram Gallery, Cairo, the opening of which was attended by Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sidky; Egypt's Minister of Culture at the time, Farouk Hosny; Omar Abdel Akher, Cairo' Governor;



Omar El-Nagdi and Giorgio de Chirico in Rome, 1960. Courtesy H.E. Francine Henrich.

Youssef Afify, Giza's Governor and Ibrahim Nafaa, Chief Executive President of Al-Ahram. This event was filmed and reported by CNN and several European channels before the exhibition travelled to London.

Having started his artistic education at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Cairo under the tutorship of Ahmed Sabry (1889-1955), Omar El-Nagdi pursued his training at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice in 1959, where he studied frescoes and mosaics. Travelling between Venice and Rome in 1959-1960, Nagdi found himself at the heart of the avant-garde artistic, musical and intellectual circles of these enchanting cities, with Italian 'metaphysical' painter Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978) as one of his most influential mentors. Before even turning 30, Nagdi was already praised as an established artist by the contemporary Italian, Greek and English press, earning him the designation of the '*Egyptian Picasso*'. His fruitful encounter with the Roman and Venetian art scenes led him to participate to several group shows alongside 25 international artists, which included Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) in Sardinia (Italy) and Saragossa (Spain) in 1961.

As indicated in the triptych's title, the subject matter refers to the atrocious tragedies of war that ravaged Sarajevo during the Serbo-Croatian-Bosnian conflict between 1990 and 1994 and particularly to the ethnic cleansing of the Muslim Bosniak and Croat population by Bosniak Serbs, mainly taking place in Eastern Bosnia. The Bosnian Institute in the UK recorded the destruction of almost 300 Bosniak villages by Serb forces around Srebrenica during the first three months of the war, between April and June 1992. This led to the displacement of more than 70,000 Bosniaks and the massacre of around 3,200 Muslim Bosnians in that short period of time. This turned out to be only a prelude to the dramatic Srebrenica genocide of July 1995, during which more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were massacred by the Bosnian Serb Army led by General Ratko Mladic. Meanwhile, *Sarajevo* was under siege from 5th April 1992 until 29th February 1996, the longest siege to date in modern history, counting

more than 10,000 victims hit by more than 320 shells per day. Like many Muslims around the world, Omar El-Nagdi deeply felt the persecution of the Bosnian Muslims. Their ongoing massacres by Bosnian Serbs, starting in 1992, profoundly affected the Egyptian artist and urged him to react to these monstrosities by spontaneously expressing himself in his monumental composition of *Sarajevo*.

The pictorial vocabulary and compositional virtuosity used in *Sarajevo* is unique in its violence, as it translates the artist's feelings of anger, shock and compassion as well as being a visual requiem of the actual contemporary deadly events raging through Sarajevo and its surroundings in 1992. In *Sarajevo*, El-Nagdi transcribes literally the chaos of war, isolating each disproportioned figure onto the canvas yet bringing them all together through the agony expressed in their faces. His figures, or rather creatures, appear inhuman, resembling animals more than people, showing how the sufferings and torturing of war has stripped them bare of their humanity and dignity. Each movement, each body part and each expression scream out onto the canvas, such as the hand reaching out of despair from the canvas at the lower edge, between the central and right panels, or the frightening bulging eyes of the figure in the lower right quadrant of the triptych, who is staring right out to the viewer, or the disturbing detail of the two feet hanging at the upper edge of the left panel.

Although El-Nagdi is known for his colourful folkloric depictions of daily life scenes, *Sarajevo* demonstrates that he also excels in capturing the essence of these people's pain as each part of his monumental composition depicts a different distressing angle of this outrageous slaughter. Producing such a large-scale triptych with such aggressive iconography not only shows the artist's commitment to denouncing the atrocities of the Bosnian War but it also unavoidably engages the viewer by provoking profound feelings of revolt and opening his or her eyes to the reality of these unforgivable crimes.

With slaughtered figures flooding out from El-Nagdi's canvas, it suggests that the massacre has no end. Sadly, the artist proved to be right, as his figure on the left panel of *Sarajevo* appears to have unknowingly announced the 1995 Srebrenica genocide, as it carries a sign with blood-red Arabic writing, that can be translated as '*a nation is being slaughtered and its people are becoming extinct*'. In terms of palette, El-Nagdi immerses the entire blood-bath scene in a beautiful and almost surreal turquoise-blue light on a warm ochre background, confirming once again the Egyptian painter's prodigious mastery of colour.

Sarajevo joins the series of iconic worldwide-known museum masterpieces that depict the horrors of war and that visually scream out the great artists' reactions to historical events contemporary to their time. 17th century Flemish



diplomat master Peter-Paul Rubens depicted many war scenes, amongst which his famous vast composition entitled *The Consequences (or Horrors) of War* painted in 1638-1639, currently exhibited at the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, or his two elaborate versions of *The Massacre of the Innocents*, one dating of 1611-1612 in the Art Gallery of Ontario, the other of circa 1637 from the Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

Omar El-Nagdi breathes in a similar energy as Rubens in his figures and in the drama of the scene with the virtuosity of his brushstrokes and his intricate composition. However, El-Nagdi abandons the classical perspective, the linear structure and the realistic characters of Rubens' paintings, opting for a more dislocated and absurd composition, inventing his own representation of the people. It is therefore not surprising that El-Nagdi's *Sarajevo* has always rightfully been compared to Pablo Picasso's most notorious monumental painting, *Guernica*, painted in 1937, that prominently hangs today in the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid. Whilst the 20th century Spanish painter denounced the horrors of the Nazis' mass destruction of the Basque city of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War, El-Nagdi depicted the massacres of the Bosnian War in *Sarajevo*. Both mural-size masterpieces are strong political statements and feature unprecedented images of violence, that resonate the dark and brutal depictions of death and destruction found in Spanish painter and printmaker Francisco Goya's renowned series of 82 prints, *The Disasters of War*, executed between 1810-1820, showcased in the Prado Museum, Madrid.

It is undeniable that El-Nagdi greatly admired both Picasso's way of representing humans as dismembered, animal-like, surrealist creatures and Goya's crude and factual depiction of the consequences of the so-called *Dos de Mayo Uprising* of 1808, when the citizens of Madrid rebelled against the occupation of French Napoleonic troops, leading to the Peninsular War of 1808-1814, raging through Spain. *Sarajevo* definitively inscribes itself as a continuation of world art history in which artists actively engaged themselves with contemporary conflicts of their time, using their paintings and visual vocabulary as their powerful weapons.

A comparable and almost contemporary mural-size masterpiece to that of El-Nagdi's triptych is Iraqi artist Dia Al-Azzawi's impressive polyptych depicting the *Sabra and Shatila Massacres*, painted in 1982-1983. It was also executed by a Middle Eastern artist who witnessed from a distance the tragic murder of between two and three thousand Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in and around the refugee camps of Southern Beirut in 1982. Like *Sarajevo*, the panels of *Sabra and Shatila Massacres* express the artist's disgust and outrage to the 1982 slaughter, but also his compassion towards the victims. Both Azzawi and El-Nagdi pay tribute to their forerunners Pablo Picasso and Francisco Goya in their high-impact images of war, sufferings and death. Nonetheless, whereas Azzawi's intentionally chaotic composition overflows with figures and shapes, El-Nagdi's is to some extent more structured in



Peter-Paul Rubens, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, circa 1637. Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Bridgeman Art Library.



The present work.

its linear succession of victims. Azzawi was much more inspired by the monochromatic black and white tones of Picasso's *Guernica*, sparsely adding some discrete colours to his composition. El-Nagdi has a more colouristic approach to the theme as he meticulously paints with a rich palette of warm brown, ochre, maroon, turquoise, royal blue and beige pigments. Whilst Azzawi takes Picasso's Surrealist depiction of figures and animals even further towards abstraction, El-Nagdi brings it back to its more figurative roots to highlight the absurdity of these humans who are being treated with such inhumanity. Together with the Tate Modern's *Sabra and Shatila Massacres* and the Museo Reina Sofia's *Guernica*, El-Nagdi's *Sarajevo* is one of the most outstanding and provocative painting of the horrors of war of modern history.

El-Nagdi's *Sarajevo* is an unprecedented example of its type in the history of art not only because of the artist's unparalleled imagination of the scene, but also because of its unique subject matter. El-Nagdi, a Muslim Egyptian painter represents the slaughter of his Bosniak brothers in Sarajevo and its surroundings on the traditionally Christian format of the triptych, a theme that no other artist has ever dared to paint on such a vast scale. Watching the horrors of the Bosnian-Serbian conflict from a distance, El-Nagdi was also able to infuse his painting with an extraordinary beauty despite the violence and inhumanity of the scene. The frieze-like aspect of this monumental painting, enhanced by the alignment of elongated starving and dying figures, features such vitality rendered through El-Nagdi's colours and brushstrokes. At the same time, the liveliness and energy of the scene conveys a sense of eternity, in that these victims of the Bosnian-Serbian massacres will become martyrs, with their haunting eyes staring out to the viewer.

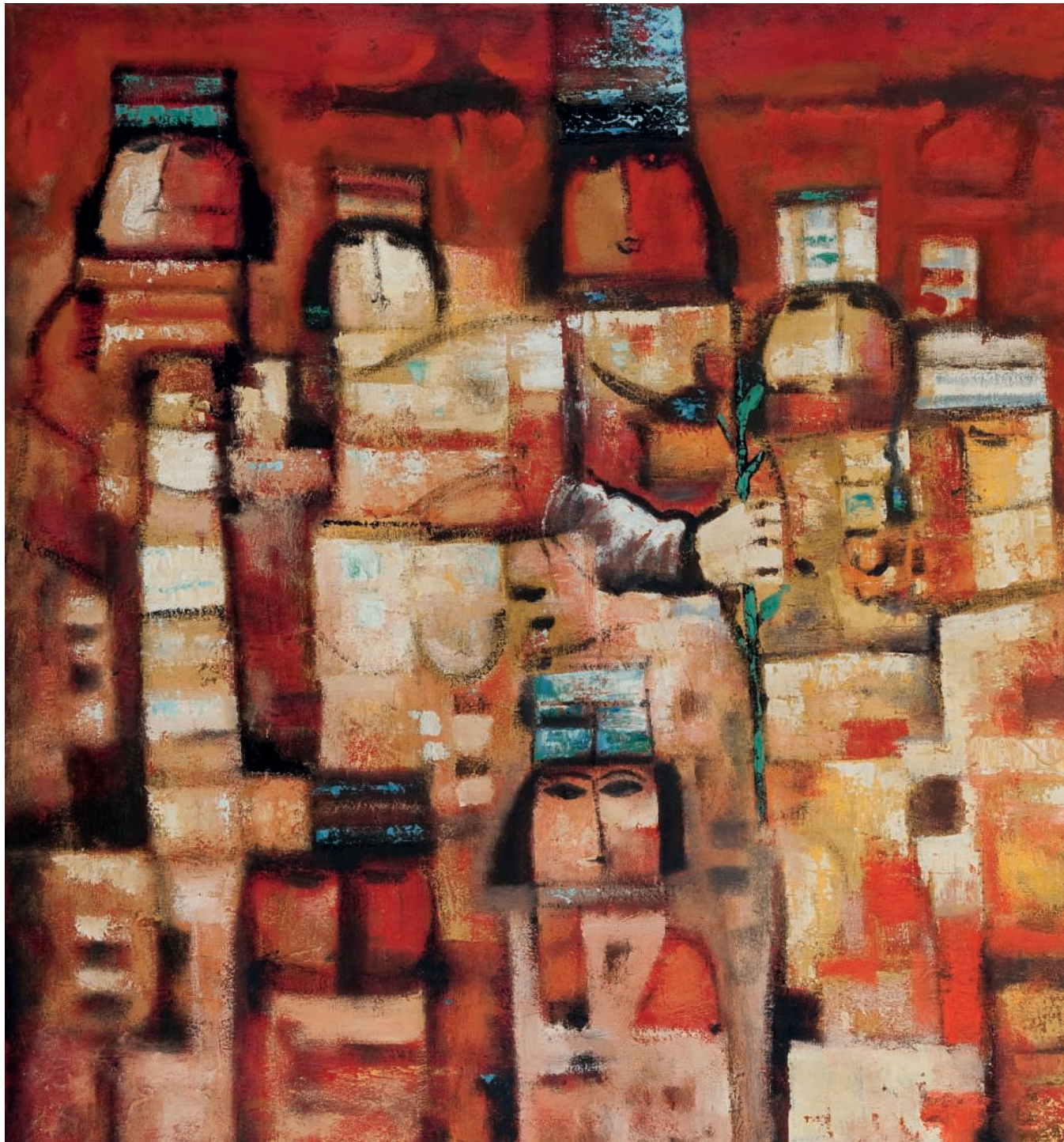
El-Nagdi's intricate calligraphic work in the background of the central and right panels pays homage to Islamic art and architecture, emphasising the cultural, historical and religious relationship between the artist and the persecuted Bosniaks. *Sarajevo* triptych acts not only as the artist's weapon and word against the atrocities of the Bosnian-Serbian war, but at the same time it is a spectacular memorial to the Bosniak population that unavoidably impregnates forever each viewer's spirit with its powerful pictorial language.



Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937. Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid.
© 2016 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / Bridgeman Art Library.



Dia Al-Azzawi, *Sabra and Shatila Massacres*, 1982-1983. Collections of The Tate Modern, London.
© Dia Al-Azzawi. Courtesy Claude Lemand Gallery, Paris.



*6

FATEH MOUDARRÉS

(SYRIAN, 1922-1999)

Untitled

oil on canvas

signed in Arabic, signed 'Moudarres' (lower right)

49¼ x 88½in. (125 x 225cm.)

Painted *circa* early 1980s

US\$200,000-250,000

AED730,000-910,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner.





Fateh Moudarres, *Untitled*, 1980. (Christie's Dubai, April 2013; price realised: US\$315,750.)
© Christie's Images Ltd. 2013

Undeniably one of the most intriguing and captivating life journeys in both Syrian Modern history and Levantine art movements, acclaimed artist Fateh Moudarres' distinctive signature continues to dazzle, charm and inspire all those who come across his works. Throughout his long and prolific life and career Fateh Moudarres managed to create a school of artistic thinking and expression in himself. The richness and diversity of his experience not only in fine arts, but in poetry and writing as well, remain an inspiration to the generation of Syrian and Arab artists of today, particularly in the multiple and meticulous means of expressions he adopted to present his thoughts and ideologies. Few subjects define his oeuvre; his personal life tragedies, Modern Arab politics and ideologies and ancient Civilisations. A main witness of the development of the Modern Arab age, Moudarres' was clear in his choices and his positions, siding with the oppressed and the poor, expressing himself, indirectly, through his painting. With a developed aesthetic that was rooted in

the region, despite his exposure to Western and international schools of art such as in Italy and France where he studied, Moudarres continued to use the heritage of his native homeland to create a distinct style that is quintessentially his.

Moudarres' father was brutally killed when the artist was less than two years old. Although it happened while he was still rather young, this event left a deep impact on him and whenever his childhood was recalled, Moudarres used to consider the killing as a turning point in life. This had an important impact on his formation and perspective on life, explaining certain aspects through his painted compositions. Forced to relocate to Aleppo from the rural village of Harita, where he had felt safe with the refuge of his mother's care, Moudarres would in turn hold very dear the memories of his native surroundings and incorporate them into his works. As a result, many of his paintings shift back and forth between themes of martyrdom, crucifixion and departure,

which Fateh expressed in most of what he produced. Later when he was to marry, tragedy would also strike when his two children passed away leaving him profoundly devastated.

The figurative representations in Moudarres' oeuvre come from two straits of his unconscious; combining his childhood memories with those of his homeland. Fateh's childhood had a strong impact on his life and art, influencing him more than it did others, as if it had always been with him in many forms. Although time and his travelling experience shaped, refined and at times changed him, childhood was his main theme from beginning to end, disappearing at times only to reappear again stronger.

Besides childhood and death, the artist was influenced by the turbulent events in the region; the French occupation, the Palestinian question, the Lebanese Civil War and the downfall of Pan Arabism and Arab Nationalism. As a witness to the unravelling of these events, Moudarres would take the opportunity to use his visual expression on canvas to imply his political expression through metaphor. In intricate depictions of rich tapestry-like compositions of captivating faces as if fragments of mosaics, Moudarres would re-appropriate mythological subjects harking back to the archaeological traditions of the Canaanites, Aramaic and Assyrians that are present in Palmyra, Mari, Ibla, Maaloula and Saidnaya, into political satire which thus became elements of his staggering success.

Christie's is proud to present a seminal work by the artist from the 1980s that shows the artist's mastery and craft in shaping what has become an art history rich with deep rooted symbolism. One of the few rare works by the artist of this size and scale, it exemplifies the artist's ability to delve into thousands of years of civilisation to rewrite a new chapter of history whilst creating a modern visual language. Much like the world record for the artist at auction, *Untitled* from 1967, which achieved \$374,500 at Christie's Dubai in October 2010 and *Untitled* from 1980, which achieved \$315,750 at Christie's Dubai in October 2013, a sea of faces fill the expansive canvas in a dense and powerful multi-layered composition. Although confined within the boundaries of his canvas, as if huddled in unity, the figures he uses employ a sort of psychological tension through their solitude, rendering them simultaneously mysterious, monstrous, ambiguous, naïve and expressive, oblivious yet knowledgeable, profane yet mythical. Using thick black lines that are reminiscent of Mamlouk Damascene architecture, Moudarres creates an amalgamation of faces in a totemic fashion - yet another reference to Assyrian architecture; some hinted at faintly in the background, others prominently coming to the fore of the composition. Despite their strong presence, upon closer view, one realises that although their eyes may in some cases remain open, their mouths



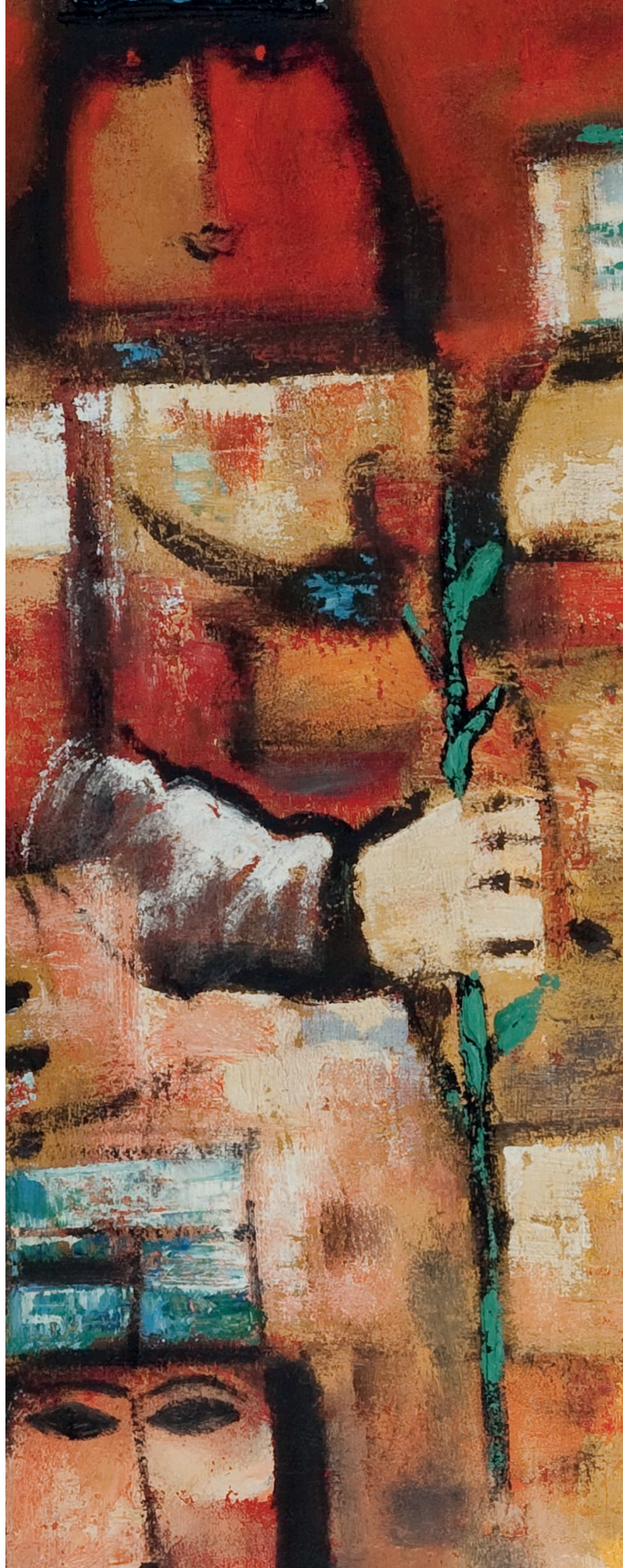
Fateh Moudarres, *Untitled*, 1967. (Christie's Dubai, October 2010; price realised: US\$374,500.)
© Christie's Images Ltd. 2010

remain closed. Emerging with apparent fear, their silence speaks of their inability to express themselves, a metaphor for the inability for Syrians and Arabs to express their own personal political and social opinions, which Moudarres was not shy to criticise. Each of the figures' square faces hark back to the archaeological traditions of the region's history. By employing the use of historical visual codes into a modern context, the artist is clearly highlighting the repetition and inevitability of history, violence and political upheaval.

Within *Untitled's* magical multi-layered composition the relation between line, colour, movement and light is tightly-knitted. A heavy and overpowering palette of red fills the canvas with an intensity that is akin to the passion of the artist, the brutality of the current events of the 1980s while brashly speaking of a quiet violence that can be challenging. Moudarres would recurrently use the colour red throughout many of his works, it was a colour he adored and glorified for its intensity. It would also reference the deep rich red and ochre soil of his beloved hometown, which with the browns and beiges he would incorporate, hint at the mountains that provided him with solace and serenity. Shining bright with an intensity that is often reserved for the intense heat of the sun, in the present work, Moudarres uses his signature colour palette for his depiction of peasants from the village to exemplify the notion that the masses were the solid foundations on which a city could be built. These peasants are essentially the land itself, the foundations for the better future filled with hope that implies a sense of renewal that comes as if they emerge from the ashes.

Although his works are underlyingly dark in their nature, they also hold within them a sense of beauty and goodness that radiates a fundamental sense of optimism. A closer look at the composition reveals elements that hint to the hope of a better future; touches of white and pink scattered throughout help to extinguish and satiate his use of fiery reds. In the centre of the crowd a bright and luminous stroke of green emerges out of the canvas in the hands of the smiling figure. On closer inspection, it appears to be a branch of the Laurel tree. Native to Fateh's appropriated hometown and Aleppo, it is of particular symbolic importance within history; it represented high status within Ancient Greece, in Ancient Rome it became the symbol for victory. In the Bible, the laurel is often an emblem of prosperity and fame, whereas in Christian tradition, it symbolises the resurrection of Christ, particularly as His crown of thorns became replace by a laurel wreath. With this in mind, the artist thus hints at a possibility of victory during a turbulent political and social period in Syria. Severely affected by the sectarian conflict that was raging through the region, Moudarres' depiction of the hand, almost three dimensional in quality, immediately stands out in stark contrast to the faded figures in the background, implying that all should come together to be united under 'one hand' so to speak to emerge proudly victorious. In this sense, the painting becomes a call for the masses, it is clear that Moudarres' intention is to inspire his viewers to come together and unite against the tragic events that had already plagued Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine for peace and hope for a new life.

Fateh Moudarres intended to have an exhibition of his works before 1982 and so between 1975 and 1982, he painted a group of large works that were limited in number. These spoke of the tragedies that had afflicted the region and varied between horizontal and vertical orientations that are reminiscent of ancient cave and wall paintings. However as events unravelled in Lebanon during the Civil War, unrest in Syria led to the assassination of a highly intellectual group of Alawites. In retaliation, the massacre of Hama took place in 1982 and waves of shock rippled through the country as a result. Following this unrest, the authorities stopped all exhibitions of art in Syria until 1991 when galleries began to open up again. As a result many of these large works by the artist remained hidden in his studio or in private hands and became difficult to trace. To this end, the top three world records for the artist's work at auction are of a similar size, yet none are as full in composition or as vibrant as the present work in a horizontal format. A rare jewel from the artist's oeuvre, the present monumental composition is thus the ultimate collector's piece.



PROPERTY FROM
A PRIVATE COLLECTION, BEIRUT

*7

LOUAY KAYYALI
(SYRIAN, 1934-1978)

Al Shakikatan (The Sisters)

signed and dated in Arabic (lower right);

titled in Arabic (on the reverse)

oil on masonite

37³/₈ x 29¹/₂in. (95 x 75cm.)

Painted in 1974

US\$ 100,000-150,000

AED 370,000-550,000

PROVENANCE:

Hanifa Jabiri Collection, Aleppo.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Aleppo, Aleppo Club, *Exhibition for Aleppine Artists*, 1974.

LITERATURE:

M. Kashlan, *Louay Kayyali*, Damascus 1974 (illustrated, unpagged).

T. Al-Sharif, "Louay Kayyali, Modernisation in art...A Human aspect",

in *Al Hayat Al Tashkiliya* (in Arabic), issue 57-58,

Damascus 1994 (illustrated, p. 48).

S. Maksoud, *Louay Kayyali*, Damascus 1999 (illustrated in colour, unpagged).

T. Al Sharif, *Louay Kayyali, Modernisation in Art...A Human Aspect*

(in Arabic), Damascus 2008 (illustrated in colour, p. 18).

A. Makhzoum, *The Modernisation Trends in the Syrian Art* (in Arabic),

Damascus 2010 (illustrated in colour, p. 73).

This work will be included in the forthcoming Louay Kayyali Monograph currently being prepared by Hala Khayat.

'[Kayyali] seemed to have encapsulated all his force at the height of his health status, and finally his use of the Masonite medium took its place as a great signature, so as we see in the picture of 'Al Shakikatan' the red pigment plays a striking role, and we are confronted with a very anatomical approach pushed to other dimensions, showing the humane as well as the expressionist side. We can see this clearly in the positioning of the relaxed hand of the sister of the right, on the shoulder of the sister of the left. Wrapped in a very rare tenderness. However, the bottom part of the composition becomes sculptural with harsh details, balancing in a positive contrast the shy flowers on her hands...'

(S. Mohammed, quoted in "Critical Study", S. Maksoud, *Louay Kayyali*, Damascus 1999, translated from Arabic).





A selection of books in which the present work is illustrated.

Christie's Dubai is proud to be entrusted with two very important works by the Syrian artist Louay Kayyali. Who is internationally acclaimed as Syria's finest modernist painter. He produced an extensive oeuvre in his short-lived life documenting people of various social standing. By age twenty-six Kayyali was already an established and sought after artist for his series of flowers, still lives, fine commissioned portraits and his street vendors' series. After completing his art degree at the Academy of fine arts of Rome in the early 1960s, he returned to Damascus during its golden era, a time of zeal and fervour that followed Syria's independence. Brought up in a bourgeois family from Aleppo, he was welcomed with open arms by the elite social circles of both major cities, Damascus and Aleppo. However Kayyali's real interest lay somewhere else, his heart and mind was occupied with the ideologies of freedom and with the political activists which witnessing a parallel rebellious movement subjecting the miseries in the streets of his nation. As a result, Kayyali sought to uncover and reveal the harsh socio-economical reality of 1960s Syria which contrasted with the seeming reality of the country's burgeoning cultural art scene.

This season, Christie's is offering two very distinct works from two different periods and moods from the enigmatic artist's life. These two seminal works are particularly special as they are two of the most documented and critically referenced works from the artist's oeuvre which were later used as visual tributes to his life and work posthumously.

The first of this exception works entitled *Al Shakikatan* is undeniably one of the most intriguing and important compositions from Kayyali's golden period. In his turbulent life, Kayyali's temper

fluctuated from extreme moments of content and acceptance to dark moments of self-criticism and sadness. The following work could be listed as one of his happiest works depicting figures. It was of such particular personal importance to the artist that in 1974, he chose to present it with four other distinct works; *Azef al Oud*, *Amam Bab Al Makk'ha*, *Al Hammel* and *Al Murdi'a* at the major exhibition of Aleppine artists in Aleppo club.

Usually depicting single figures in his works, in *Al Shakikatan*, Kayyali surprised the art community with the introduction of a second figure in this unusual composition. Shaking the usual perfect balance of the lone and solitary figures he was mostly known to depict, by painting these two anonymous mysterious sisters, Kayyali reinvigorated his aesthetic with a subtle change. In this composition, the sisters dominate the canvas, their slender bodies covered in modest yet colourful clothing while their hair is worn in a simple fashion of those days.

The colour of their garments are contrasting, yet similar in style, thus creating harmony and balance between the two characters. His use of Masonite, which at the time was a new choice of medium for the artist, offers a rich texture in its simplicity that highlights Kayyali's command of spatial composition.

The significance of this composition lies in the depiction of the close sisterly bond shared by the figures, wrapping each other in a tenderness embrace. One sister extends her arm around her sibling in a demonstrative and affectionate gesture while the other nurses the bouquet of flowers, like a baby. Kayyali has delicately painted the elegant features and gestures of the two sisters

to highlight their pleasant personas and presence. This tantalising composition is reinforced by the bouquet of daisies, which both lovingly caress. The daisies are a symbol for the loving, protective and caring bond the sister's share - a touching tribute to a beautiful, yet intimate relationship. This peculiar composition is demonstrative of an underlying sense of warmth, which is argued by many to be a visual metaphor for an illicit relation between Kayyali and a lover, personified in the bodies of two women. In this sense, *Al Shakikatan* holds particular importance in the context of the artist's body of works and is undeniably a collector's piece.



The present work featured in *Al Hayat Al Tashkiliya* (in Arabic), issue 57-58, Damascus 1994, p. 48.



LOUAY KAYYALI (SYRIAN, 1934-1978)

Hamel Al Shibbak Al Saghir (The Young Net Carrier)

signed and dated in Arabic, signed and dated 'Kayali '65' (lower right); signed, titled, dated and inscribed in Arabic, signed and dated 'Louay Kayyali 1965' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

37³/₄ x 22³/₄in. (96 x 57.8cm.)

Painted in 1965

US\$150,000-200,000

AED550,000-730,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Damascus

(acquired directly from the artist *circa* late 1960s.)

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

LITERATURE:

T. Al Sharif, "The Departing Artist Louay Kayyali on the Fifth Occasion of his Death", in *Al Hayat Al Taskhkiliya* (in Arabic), issue 15, Damascus 1984 (illustrated, p. 16).

S. Maksoud, *Louay Kayyali*, Damascus 1999 (illustrated in colour, unpagged).

T. Al Sharif, *Louay Kayyali, Modernisation in Art...A Human Aspect* (in Arabic), Damascus 2008 (illustrated in colour, p. 23).

This work will be included in the forthcoming Louay Kayyali Monograph currently being prepared by Hala Khayat.

'In Louay's paintings, the human being lives a life that he was not destined to live.. he just represents the sadness concealed in the depths of his heroes' souls, the kind of sadness that is built on rejecting the reality, which he lives through his characters as an artist: the child who is deprived from childhood; the woman who is deprived from her femininity; the little girl who doesn't laugh as she forgot what laughter was whilst trying to dip her little piece of bread in blood! His aesthetic approach is as simple as childhood.... the 'realism' in his oeuvre reflects Louay's strong and honest opinion, embodying a total rejection and a muted cry.'

(G. Al Khaldi quoted in M. Kashlan, *Louay Kayyali*, Damascus 1974, p. 70, translated from Arabic).

As one of the most radical artists in the foundation of Modern Syrian Art in the early 1960s, Louay Kayyali's realist perception of art shed light on the engulfed side of life that emerged from the small alleys, from the shores of the Mediterranean coast, and from the cafés, hence offering a new way of observing the harsh reality of the working class. In this theatre of life, his art drew attention to the children performing heavy labour as a means to support themselves



Louay Kayyali, *Sleeping Boy*, 1972
(Christie's Dubai, October 2008;
price realised: US\$146,500)
© Christie's Images Ltd. 2008

and their families. These exploited children became staged as fictional characters in Kayyali's pictorial space, sharing their inner emotions and desperate cry out for mercy. Kayyali painted them thin and pale, barely clothed with rags, their hands often bruised because of labour, hence creating an aura of fear and vulnerability around them.

The second lot on offer this season is an elegant composition of a young fisherman from 1965, entitled *Hamel Al Shibbak Al Saghir (The Young Net Carrier)*. In this example, Kayyali depicts his subject with an angelic face and oversized and dark hollowed eyes, stressing his hypnotic gaze capturing the viewer's attention. The boy gracefully holds a blue celadon net, draped gracefully on his right shoulder, struggling to bear its heavy weight along with the weight of all his troubles. Despite this apparent agony and misery, the young fisherman still radiates an inner light of innocence and beauty that is emphasised by the light that appears to protrude from his white shirt, imbuing the figure with a saint-like quality, presumably a reference to Kayyali's time spent in Italy or from the iconography of the many churches in Aleppo he frequented.

Just as the fearful and young fisherman's eyes are wide open contemplating on the sad reality of his life, Kayyali incites the upper class people to open their eyes with compassion at this harsh reality instead of avoiding it with their arrogance, ignorance and pretention. Kayyali saw himself as a protector of humanity and by imbuing these works with an underlying sense of holiness, he urges his viewers to cherish the sanctity of an innocent child. A comparable work, entitled *Sleeping Boy* sold at Christie's in 2008 for US\$146,500, depicting an exhausted boy sleeping on the ground with an empty begging box in front of him.

Kayyali was one of its most prominent socio-political artists, his paintings externalising the pressing humanitarian and political issues that surrounded him. His powerful depictions of ordinary people are characterised by strong fluid lines that define the figures and the absence of extraneous detail. Although reminiscent of Russian social realist painting, through his humane treatment of his subjects he conferred them with more individuality and pathos, imbuing a sense of underlying responsibility that remains poignant today.



PROPERTY FROM
A PRIVATE COLLECTION, BEIRUT

*9

AREF EL RAYESS
(LEBANESE, 1928-2005)

Untitled

signed and dated 'RAYESS 63' (lower right)

oil and sand on canvas

31½ x 39¾in. (80 x 100cm.)

Painted in 1963

US\$50,000-70,000

AED190,000-250,000

PROVENANCE:

Cesar Nammour Collection, Beirut.

Contact Gallery, Beirut.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Baalbeck, *XIX International Festival of Baalbeck*, 1974

(illustrated in colour, unpagged).

LITERATURE:

N. Salamé Abillama & M. Tomb, *Art from Lebanon -*

Modern and Contemporary Artists 1880-1975, Vol. I, Beirut 2012

(illustrated in colour, p. 15).

One of the most eclectic Lebanese artists in style and artistic interest, Aref El Rayess is undoubtedly one of the leading figures in Lebanese art history. Born in Aley in 1928, his eclectic upbringing between Lebanon and Dakar exposed him to a plethora of inspirations that served as the basis of his prolific body of works. In the 1950s, El Rayess relocated to Paris where he concentrated on developing his knowledge in etching. In the hopes of exhibiting his works, he had sent some images to advertise his paintings in the infamous *Art et Spectacle* Magazine, which created a wave amongst his artist counterparts already based in Paris. It was a turning point in his career when Nicholas Al-Nammar took the young El Rayess under his wing and El Rayess used Al Nammar's atelier as a base to explore new ideas and the works in the museums of Paris, exposing himself to the masters of art history, including mime, theatre, African textiles and the works of Fernand Léger and André Lhote. As a result, El Rayess became known as a multi-disciplinary artist and thinker, who expressed himself in sculpture as well as painting, with a rich body of illustrations. Although El Rayess managed to create a few distinct styles over the five decades of his work, he was fast to switch between these multiple styles in different periods of his artistic career, revisiting and re-appropriating his many subject matters and compositions throughout.

Christie's is honoured to be showcasing, for the first time at auction, a work by the artist from 1963 that provides deep insight into the inner workings of a mysterious yet esoterically ancestral Modern master. From 1957 to 1958 El Rayess returned to Lebanon to study the intricacies of the Semitic art forms of Phoenician, Assyrian, Sumerian and Pharonic art. Armed with a plethora of symbolic inspiration, in 1959, a grant by the Italian government relocated El Rayess to Rome and Florence until 1963, serving as a base for his many international exhibitions in the US and around Europe. There, challenged by the emerging Arte Povera movement, studies of these artworks along with his knowledge of ancient forms, manifested themselves in a new set of works attributed as the *Sand Period* that explored the notions of symbolism of which the present work is a seminal example.

Arte Povera - 'poor' or 'impoverished' art - was the most significant and influential avant-garde movement to emerge in Europe in the 1960s. It

'My paintings express my personal tendencies purely, more often than not, I translate these through Abstract painting. It proves to me that from time to time, that I need to return to the simplest and naive of forms.'

(The artist, quoted in *Après La Galerie Pogliani à Rome, Aref Rayes expose à la Licorne*, 1963; translated from French).

grouped the work of around a dozen Italian artists, such as Giovanni Anselmo, Alighiero Boetti, Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Giulio Paolini and Giuseppe Penone, whose most distinctly recognisable trait was their use of commonplace materials that might evoke a pre-industrial age, such as earth, rocks, clothing, paper and rope. Their work marked a reaction against the modernist abstract painting that had dominated European art in the 1950s. In this respect Arte Povera works oppose modernism and technology, using evocations of the past, locality and memory as an emphasis.

With this in mind, El Rayess' compositions adopt the use of sand with paint in a representation that is on one level architectural and on the other mystical. A combination of geometric shapes with tribal colour palette harks back to the artist's African exploration while retaining the rawness of his use of sand, the most basic of mediums. In an amalgamation of forms and lines, the painting appears to be situated at a point of fusion between the fantastical and the real. At this level lines and colours are transformed into symbols where forms, words, shapes or anything familiar is voided, nothing is sensible. Instead the viewer is teased with a memory of the past, a sense of a mythical land that is a sanctuary for the artist's inner workings and thoughts that are spontaneously brought together into one composition. Although El Rayess travelled extensively throughout his lifetime, appropriating a local visual vocabulary, it is clear that his works always hint at his native homeland; although abstract in its depiction, each of the geometric forms and lines are reminiscent of the amalgamation and melting pot that was Lebanon in the 1960s, the scratchings referencing Phoenician iconography - everything becoming intertwined in a deliriousness that is visually rich and delightful.

El Rayess' legacy leaves behind a rich body of works that embrace expressive realism and symbolism while reaching some form of abstraction. His *Sand Period* did not last long and thus using different channels as the intellectual necessity required, he later used research and experimentation with Arabic calligraphy, blocks of shapes, surfaces of objects, light and colour in a multitude of artistic style and practice. *Untitled* is thus a pivotal piece in the large puzzle that is El Rayess' oeuvre, representing a period of experimentation that was quickly transformed as the artist exhibited extensively in America.



PROPERTY FROM
THE ARTIST'S ESTATE

*10

PAUL GUIRAGOSSIAN
(LEBANESE, 1926-1993)

Souk

signed 'Paul.G' (lower right)

oil on masonite

54 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (137.5 x 130.5cm.)

Painted *circa* 1990

US\$200,000-250,000

AED730,000-910,000

PROVENANCE:

The Artist's Estate.

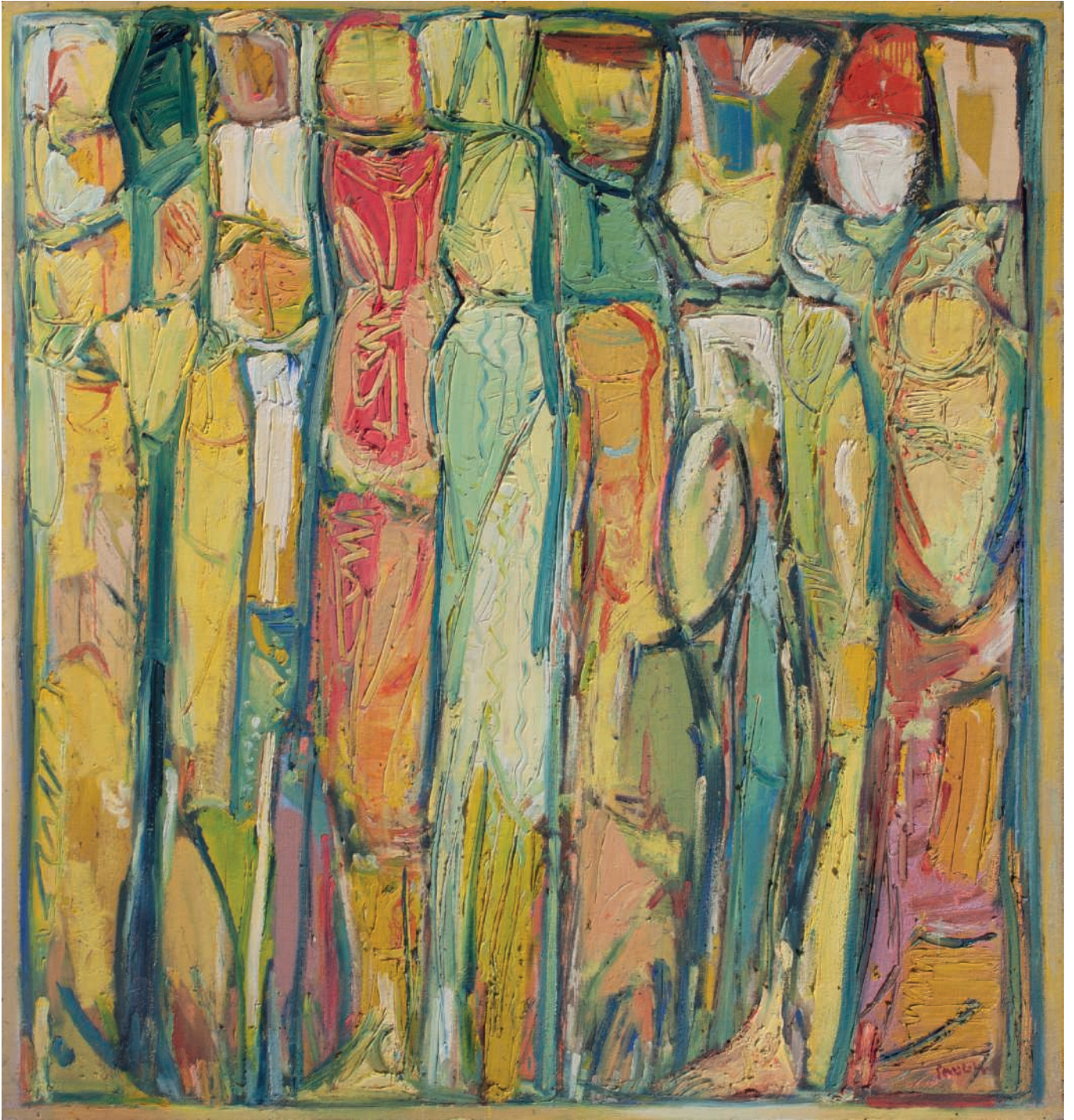
The Paul Guiragossian Foundation, Beirut, has kindly confirmed the authenticity of this work. We thank the Paul Guiragossian Foundation for their assistance in researching this painting.

'In the marketplace I draw the veiled women, the merchants of vegetables, the porters, the popular themes and the people. I felt that the more I did their ancient costumes I should also do the oriental language of drawing and colour so flattened the forms and worked in 2 dimensions which is very flat. With time I went back to the western technique but since we live between the east and the west, in Lebanon there is no such thing as typically eastern or western, so we create a synthesis which is eclectic and we do what comes naturally, what we feel.'

(Excerpts from short documentary *Styles* by Jean Antoine, 1973; translated from French).



Film still from short documentary *Styles* by Jean Antoine, 1973.
Courtesy of the Paul Guiragossian Foundation, Beirut.





Paul Guiragossian, *La Lutte de l'Existence*, 1988, 130 x 200cm.
 (Christie's Dubai, October 2013; price realised: US\$ 605,000).
 © Christie's Images Ltd. 2013



Paul Guiragossian, *Le Grand Marché*, 1989, 130 x 170cm.
 (Christie's Dubai, October 2008; price realised: US\$ 230,500).
 © Christie's Images Ltd. 2008

Christie's is delighted to offer in their 10th anniversary sale a seminal masterpiece by the Father of Modern Art in Lebanon, Paul Guiragossian. Born in 1925 in Jerusalem to Armenian parents who survived the genocide, Guiragossian experienced the consequence of forced exile from a very young age. Separated from his mother as a child and raised at boarding schools, he found refuge in art and dedicated himself ever since to his creativity. In the early 1940s, Paul moved with his family to Jaffa where he attended art courses, before moving and settling in Lebanon in 1947, where he soon married Juliette Hindian, herself a young painter. One of their children died prematurely and since, Paul's paintings were often centred on the mother and child figure, as a way to express his longing for his mother as well as the tragic sentiment of loss following that of his infant child. Awarded with the first prize in a painting competition in 1956, Guiragossian received a scholarship and travelled to Florence to enroll at the Accademia di Belle Arti. Later in 1962, he moved to Paris and has had multiple exhibitions internationally since. Undeniably one of the most celebrated artists of his time, Paul Guiragossian is considered by many as a pioneer and the father of Modern painting in Lebanon.

Inspired by icons and classical painting, his earlier paintings depicted figures and sometimes landscapes that often evoked the history of his people and the sentiments of motherhood, patriotism, fear and exile. From the 1960s onwards, Guiragossian opted for rather abstract brushstrokes and in the late 1980s, he took abstraction to another level. His paintings became highly abstracted, yet they always subtly alluded to the human form, albeit in a very minimal and expressionist style. His expressionist-

like compositions, of which the present work entitled *Souk* is a seminal example, reveal line drawings that exhibit masterful renderings of gesture with fluid outlines of clothed figures, while his paintings reckon human form through thick, elongated brushstrokes. Guiragossian uses the composition of long vertical brushstrokes to seek a balance between an Expressionist touch capturing emotional movements punctuated by the vivid rhythm of tenderly curved lines.

Painted circa 1990, at a time when the Middle East was in upheaval and Lebanon was witnessing the return to peace following its ravaging Civil War, *Souk* is one of Paul Guiragossian's largest and most captivating museum-quality masterpieces. The dynamic brushstrokes and the proximity of the figures to one another suggest their presence in a narrow, busy and boisterous alley. They come together in unity and with very little space visible between the tall figures, the artist creates a sense of depth in his handling of the vast crowd. Interacting with each other and seemingly willing to move beyond the surface of the canvas, the figures appear to be marching hand in hand, thus revealing a sense of positivity and union that stands against the division and grief that the country was then witnessing.

The bold lines coupled with the thick impasto, the textural quality and the density of the colours create an abstract composition. The women, men and child - who is held with affection by the far right figure - indeed become faceless imprints delineated by powerful brushstrokes, as they are each depicted by combining patches of colours. They appear to be close, yet none of them overlap and each figure, albeit deprived of apparent human attributes and expressions, convey a sense of tragedy and melancholy. Emotionally captivating

and evoking both hope and despair, *Souk* is about contemplating art as a self-reflection of Guiragossian's own journey, both personally and in the context of the aftermath of the Civil War. It beautifully renders, on the surface of the canvas, the noise and atmosphere of the imaginary scene, the joyful buzz of the market place contrasting with the feeling of melancholy that transpires from the figures' abstracted appearance as their heads seem to be bent in a sign of desolation. Through his use of strong symbolism and effervescent colour palette, Guiragossian shares his ultimate personal journey combined with his creative vision that leaves the viewer with a vocabulary that represents an authentic human reality, stretching in the wide spectrum between the pain shared by people and the struggle for unity, goodness and love.

During his career, Paul Guiragossian has painted several versions of the market place - one of his favoured subject matters - a few of which have appeared at auction. Living in the heart of the Armenian neighbourhood of Bourj Hammoud for a quarter of a century, the artist would spend hours and days observing the people around him and sketching drawings that depicted their daily activities and occupation. Inspired by the popular traditions of his neighbourhood, he would 'assist to all the celebrations, sometimes wedding scenes, group weddings from every few neighbourhood, five or six people getting married... everyday [he would hear] the church bells and the passing funerals which [he] draw... the children playing in the streets, the pregnant women, the discussions among women and men, it was full of life' (the artist quoted Excerpts from short documentary *Styles* by Jean Antoine, 1973; translated from French). Acquainted with most of the people living in Bourj Hammoud, Guiragossian carried



Paul Guiragossian, *La Famille*, 1991, 137 x 130cm. (Christie's Dubai, October 2011; price realised: US\$ 242,500). © Christie's Images Ltd. 2011



Paul Guiragossian, *Automne (Autumn)*, 1989, 140 x 140cm. (Christie's Dubai, 18 March 2015; price realised: US\$ 293,000). © Christie's Images Ltd. 2015



Paul Guiragossian, *Celebrations*, 1990, 150 x 135.5cm. (Christie's Dubai, April 2008; price realised: US\$ 217,000). © Christie's Images Ltd. 2008

his sketch pads with inks and colour pencils in the streets of Beirut to draw various sketches that he would in turn combine or use as preparatory studies to his larger paintings, once he was back in his studio. Known as the 'painter of the people' as he describes himself in Jean Antoine's 1973 documentary *Styles* on the artist, Guiragossian immersed himself within the popular crowds and it is through painting that he expressed his impressions. *Souk* epitomises his fascination with the people and the dynamism and activities that he would observe in the streets of Bourj Hammoud; the subject matter of the market place was in fact a vehicle to express his impressions of the popular habits and traditions that fascinated him as a painter and a man throughout his life.

As one of Guiragossian's largest paintings ever made and to ever appear at auction, *Souk* is not only majestic in its composition and textural quality, but also in its size and monumentality. One of five works by the artist that are above 130 x 130cm., the present work is as captivating as works that set previous records set at auction at Christie's Dubai, namely *La Lutte de l'Existence*, *Le Grand Marché* (which in fact is another depiction of the market place, albeit with more abstracted brushstrokes and less of a textural quality, making the present example a stronger composition), *Celebrations*, *Automne* and *La Famille*.

The present work encapsulates all the stylistic qualities that have placed Guiragossian at the forefront of Arab Modern art. Filled with references to the social realities of his time, evoking the difficulties and anguish witnessed during the Lebanese Civil War, it also brings together the iconography for which he is known. A striking example amongst his various depictions of the market place, *Souk* is undeniably one of the textural and most complete versions of his favoured

subject matter, given the texture and the intricate details that are beautifully combined to create this masterpiece. The mother figure, another favoured subject matter that is visible throughout Guiragossian's oeuvre, is repeated throughout the composition and accentuated with the abstracted depiction of an infant in the far right of the composition; the proximity of the figures allude to the presence of a family and the hope for unity, the rough brushstrokes create a sense of torment while the colourful palette infuses a feeling of positivity. The attention to details is outstanding; whilst the figures have become faceless imprints of their time, Guiragossian has delicately poured his work with intricate details. The feet at the forefront of the composition, intentionally placed on the extreme edge of the canvas, evoke the attachment to the soil and to the land, therefore becoming metaphors for the sense of national identity and belonging that is observed typically during times of conflict. The details in the white drape that covers the central figure also create a sense of depth, giving importance to the figure and perhaps hinting at her matriarchal role, one of Guiragossian's favoured subject throughout his oeuvre. With her hands joined, as if in a position of prayer, the central figure impersonates the sense of hope that is distilled throughout the work and seemingly bonds the figures around her.

Seeking a balance between an expressionist touch that references reality and chromatic elements that express emotional movement and a new reality, the present work shows a remarkable precision in the artist's brushstrokes and the overall composition. *Souk* is a visually arresting, multi-layered composition which has been held in the artist's family collection since its execution in the late 1980s and is undeniably one of the most important works ever made by the artist, truly a collector's piece.



Film stills from short documentary *Styles* by Jean Antoine, 1973. Courtesy of the Paul Guiragossian Foundation, Beirut.

PROPERTY FROM
THE ARTIST'S ESTATE

*11

SHAFIC ABBOUD
(LEBANESE, 1926-2004)

Café Hajj Daoud, Café Al Bahrein, Café Palestine, Café de Verre (from *Les Cafés Engloutis* series)

each: numbered (on the reverse)

tempera on panel, in 130 parts

each: 4¾ x 6¼in. (12 x 16cm.);

overall: 47¼ x 81⅞in. (120 x 208cm.)

Painted in 1990

US\$300,000-400,000

AED1,100,000-1,500,000

PROVENANCE:

The Artist's Estate.

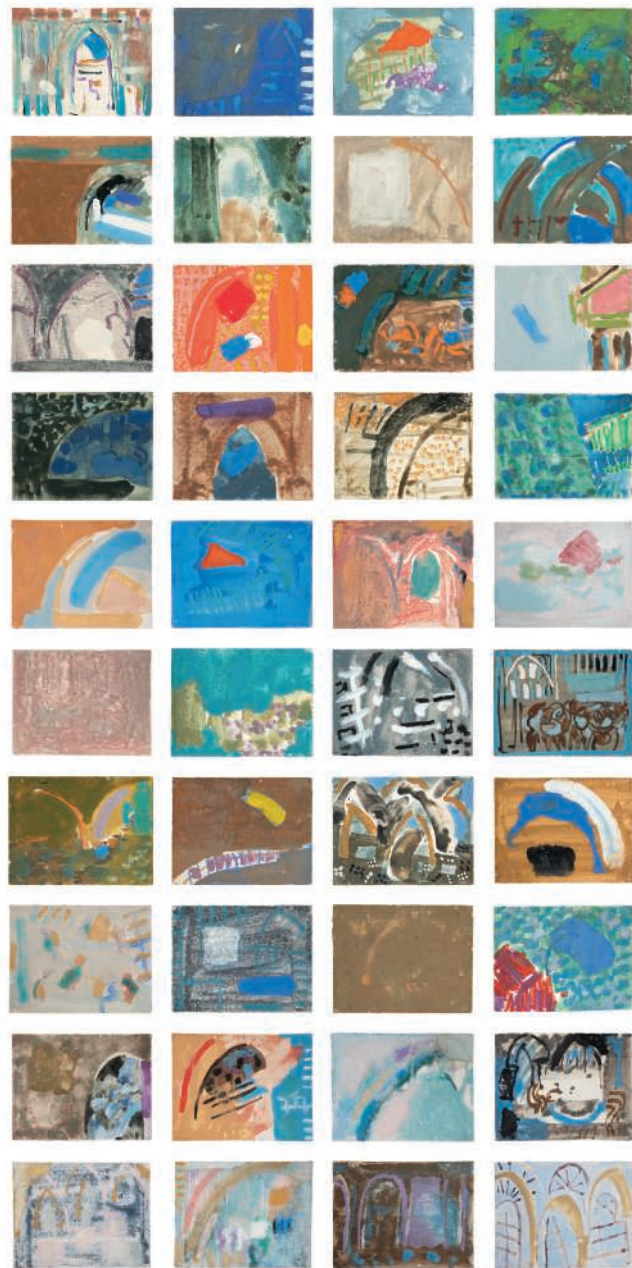
EXHIBITED:

Beirut, Beirut Exhibition Centre, *Retrospective Shafic Abboud*, 2012 (*Café Hajj Daoud, Café Palestine & Café de Verre* exhibited).

LITERATURE:

P. Le Thorel, *Shafic Abboud*, Milan 2014 (partly illustrated in colour, p. 172).

This work is sold with four photo-certificates from Christine Abboud numbered *ID1860, ID1861, ID1862 & ID1863*.



Detail of the present work hanging in Shafic Abboud's bedroom in his apartment near Parc Montsouris, Paris, circa 2000.
Courtesy Claude Lemand, Paris.

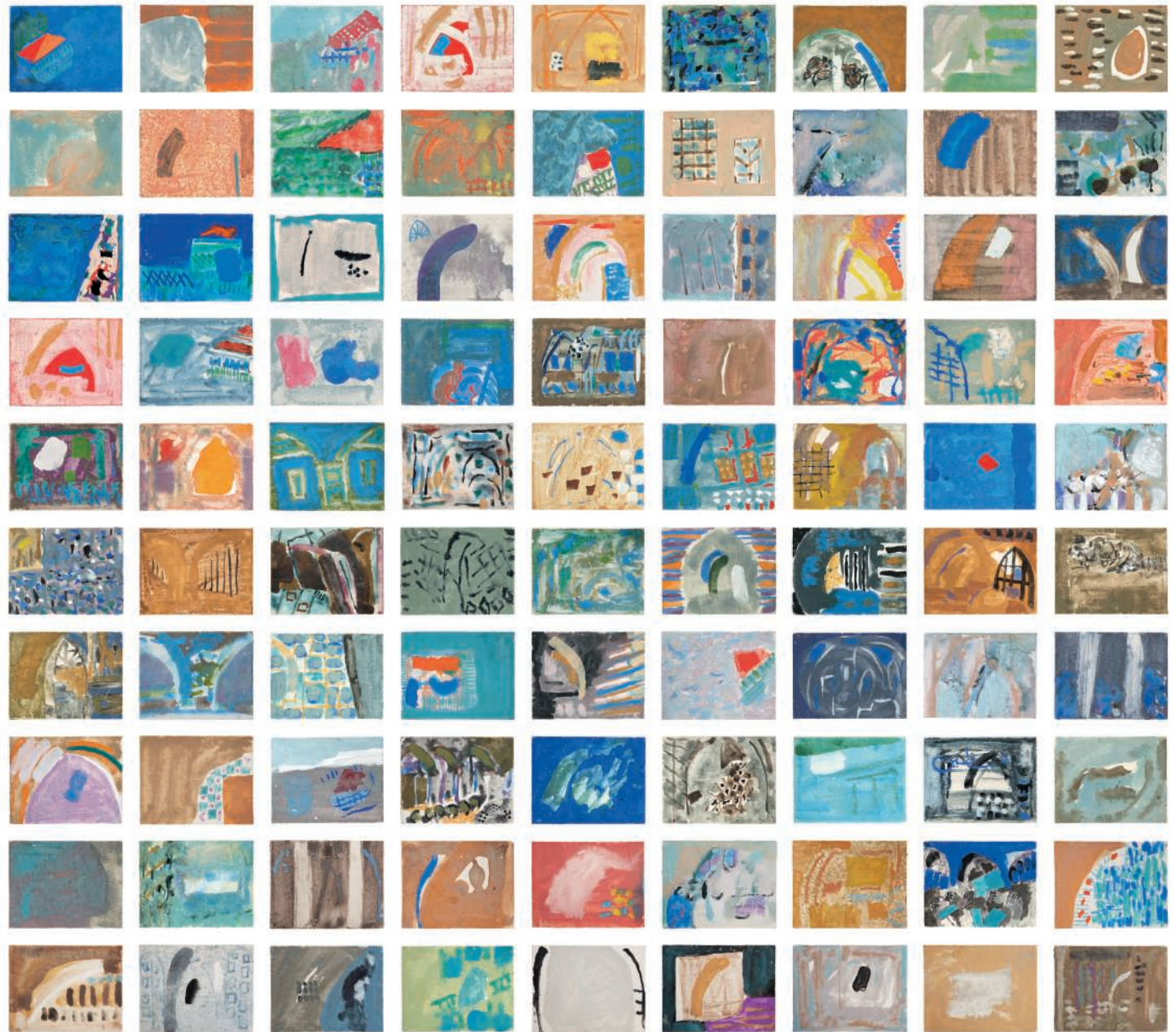




Photo-album of *Les Cafés Engloutis*.
© Succession Shafic Abboud.



Photo-album of *Les Cafés Engloutis*.
© Succession Shafic Abboud.



Photo-album of *Les Cafés Engloutis*.
© Succession Shafic Abboud.

Café de Verre, Café Hajj Daoud, Café Palestine, Café Al Bahrein is undeniably the most extraordinary work, or rather, ensemble of works forming one unique masterpiece, by Lebanese pioneer artist Shafic Abboud to ever appear at auction. Comprising of 130 individually painted tempera on panels, they not only provide a rare insight into Abboud's personality and embody the essence of his oeuvre, but they also pay tribute to the 'cafés engloutis' of Abboud's beloved city, Beirut. Coming directly from the artist's Estate, these temperas used to hang on the wall of the artist's own bedroom in his apartment near the Parc de Montsouris in Paris' 14th arrondissement where he had permanently settled since 1977 until his death in 2004.

Literally translated as the 'engulfed cafés', the 'cafés engloutis' are one of Abboud's most important series from a psychological, historical and stylistic point of view. The 'cafés engloutis' refer to the vanishing café-culture that had been widely popular in the Arab world and more particularly in Ras Beirut, an area west of downtown Beirut, in the 1950s and 1960s. These cafés were 'engulfed' by the civil war that broke out in 1975, being 'drowned' within the destruction of the city and 'swallowed' by the consequences of war. The café-culture slowly disappeared, yet the conflicts ravaged not only the physical building of the café but equally as important, it dissipated the effervescent intellectual, political and artistic circles that had emerged from these cafés and that were at the core of Modern Lebanese art and literature. Furthermore, during the various cycles of conflict raging through the mythical Lebanese capital in last quarter of the 20th century, the 'cafés engloutis' also served as an escape to freedom, spare of any sectarian division, a place for Beirutis to reminisce the past, to contemplate the present and to hope for a better future. As political and religious turmoil still haunts the city today, Beirutis struggle to find Abboud's 'cafés engloutis' to be their recreational refuge and emotional relief from the torment surrounding them.

The present work encompasses four series of 'cafés engloutis', with 30 panels dedicated to the *Café de Verre*, 35 depict the *Café Hajj Daoud*, 35 refer to the *Café Al Bahrein* and the remaining 30 pay homage to the *Café Palestine*. The latter opened its doors in 1936 and was renowned as a preferred spot for playing cards and for smoking water pipes. *Café Palestine* is the only name out of the four cafés which he spelled out in Arabic in a vibrant blue calligraphy in one of the 130 temperas of the present work (third row from the bottom, second column from the right). The *Café Hajj Daoud* was one of the popular cafés on stilts, located on Beirut's coast, that Abboud's daughter recalls going to with her father as a child. It was also often frequented by families from Damascus on Fridays and author of the Lebanese national anthem, Amin Nakhle and Lebanese poet Moustafa Faroukh were amongst its regular clients. The *Café de Verre*, literally translated from its Arabic denomination 'Ahwat al-Azaz' and otherwise known as *Café Gemmayzeh* is probably the best known out of the four. Situated in downtown Beirut on Gouraud street, near Martyr's Square in the historical district of Gemmayzeh, its architecture and location fused Ottoman elegance with an Art Deco bistro-style whilst its food and ambiance incarnated the heart of Lebanese culture. *Café de Verre* recently made the headlines of the international press when it was closed down in January 2011, having opened its doors in 1920, because of the building's annual rent being unaffordable after it tripled. Angèle Abi Haidar, whose family managed the *Café de Verre* since 1951, was interviewed by UAE-based news agency Emirates 24/7 and explained that, 'the history of this café is closely intertwined with the history of Beirut (...) Every inch of this café carries a story. It has witnessed the country's major political events and survived through the 1975-1990 civil war (...) The café was also popular among intellectuals who could sit for hours debating about culture and poetry' (AFP, "Beirut's iconic 'Glass Café' takes its last bow", *Emirates* 24/7, Thursday 6th January 2011).



Café Hajj Daoud, Beirut, 1972
© Dieter Kloessing.



Detail of the present work *Café Palestine*.

Franck Salameh, in his biography of Charles Corm, wrote that *'the famous Glass Café with its towering iconic glass windows would come to represent a symbolic and actual 'looking-glass' through which pivotal events of modern Lebanon's history would play out, get witnessed and recorded'* (F. Salameh, *Charles Corm: An Intellectual Biography of a Twentieth-Century Lebanese 'Young Phoenician'*, Lanham 2015, p. 150). Salameh further described Charles Corm *'as an ambulant Glass Café in his own right'* (*ibid.*) because he first-handedly witnessed Beirut's turbulent times, just as Abboud was an *'ambulant Glass Café'* transcribing his emotions and reactions to the war raging through his country into these wonderfully intimate temperas, that he painted in Paris. Although he had moved to France in 1947 and adopted French nationality in 1969, he frequently visited Lebanon, usually teaching in Beirut for three months every year, except during the tense years of Civil War from 1976 to 1991. The fact that these *'cafés engloutis'* surrounded him in his modest Parisian home not only soothed his nostalgia and homesickness, but they were also a reminder of the sad reality looming over his country, the pain of which was remedied by the lively atmosphere of these traditional Beirut cafés.

Within Abboud's oeuvre, *Café de Verre, Café Hajj Daoud, Café Palestine, Café el Bahrain*, form the continuity to a similar ensemble he had produced a year earlier in 1989, entitled *Les Inspirations*, described as *'a sort of inventory of matrix forms; in them, one finds all his themes: the seasons, windows, studios, rooms, women, nudes, nights, childhood memories, landscapes, etc.'* in the artist's most recent monograph (P. Le Thorel, *Shafic Abboud*, Milan 2014, p. 166). In *Les Inspirations*, Abboud told a story through colourful snapshots of his childhood memories transcribed onto 91 temperas on panel. In the present ensemble of 130 temperas, Abboud revived his lively moments, this time from his adulthood, spent in these *'cafés engloutis'* that he frequented with his friends, but he also paid tribute to an aspect of Beirut's

history and captured the intrinsic nature of Beirut culture. Abboud's wide variety of pigments, textures and designs that animate each individual tempera echoes the liveliness, cultural richness and hope embedded in the Lebanese people, that have resisted decades of war and terror and still permeate through the city today. Whereas he gave shape and colour to his *'inspirations'* in the ensemble of 1989, he transcribed his impressions and emotions in *Café de Verre, Café Hajj Daoud, Café Palestine, Café el Bahrain*. There is no doubt that these *'vanished cafés'* impregnated not only Abboud's memory, but also his five senses, enabling him to grasp and to communicate with his palette of pigments the sight, smell, sound, touch and taste of these legendary places that had been his own refuge so many times.

In 1989-1991, Abboud also painted four single large-scale canvases bearing the title *Les cafés engloutis*, in which he further explored the sensorial

impact that a particular café had on him. At the same time, he worked on the present ensemble whilst carefully putting together a photo album of images of these temperas, classifying them by the names of the four different cafés. Later in 1998, the same series inspired him for a fifth monumental work, *Les cafés engloutis: La collection*, which presents a medley of the present work's temperas. The ensemble of 130 small panels allows the viewer to have a more comprehensive vision of an important and profound aspect of Abboud's life. Despite their melancholic connotation, they provoke an explosion of colours and emanate a transcendental light that brought memories, hope and a certain gaiety to the Lebanese artist in his bedroom in Paris, just as they constitute a mosaic of joyful colours and emotions to the viewer today and celebrate a precious fragment of Beirut's vanishing café-culture, transformed by the Civil War and threatened by globalisation.



Shafic Abboud, *Les Cafés Engloutis : La Collection*, 1998.
Private Collection, Lebanon. © Succession Shafic Abboud.

PROPERTY FROM
A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

*12

SALIBA DOUAIHY
(LEBANESE, 1912-1994)

Untitled

signed and dated 'Douaihy 1972' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

63¾ x 39¾ in. x (161.9 x 100.9cm.)

Painted in 1972

US\$100,000-150,000

AED370,000-550,000

PROVENANCE:

A gift from the artist to the present owner in 1973 in New York City.

'I saw the colours, warm and vivacious, as far from reality as possible: a symbolic, fictional picture of the real world. Colours themselves had new meanings; lines became straighter and kept rising. Depth of field evolved shape and size and the background became closer to the foreground, solidifying the painting into a more tightly knit amalgamation of lines and colours. The fluff and details, the nuanced motifs and gradients that were once part of my work, slowly eroded and made way for more solid, defined and minimalist elements.'

(P. Jean Sader, *The Art of Saliba Douaihy*, Beirut 2015, p. 84).

Christie's is delighted to offer the present work by Saliba Douaihy that perfectly captures the signature abstraction and colouration of the legendary Lebanese Modern artist. Saliba Douaihy has a way with colour and form. His bright canvases famously feature vivid blues, reds, yellows, oranges and greens; a dominant broad area of colour is typically punctuated with narrow, angular passages of colour, which at once separate each colour as well as unite them. Douaihy's work demonstrates the artist's deep understanding of the minimalist aesthetic as well as abstract expressionism. His oeuvre can be divided into three periods of artistry – landscapes, followed by stained glass windows and canonical works and, lastly, vibrant abstract expressionistic works like the present composition. The most striking of Douaihy's works come from the latter period where he developed his own visual lexicon, allowing himself to exaggerate colours on his canvases.

Born in 1912 in the town of Ehden in the mountains of Northern Lebanon, Douaihy spent much of his early childhood copying pictures from his schoolbooks. As a young child, Douaihy was mesmerised by the natural and scenic landscapes of his native land. Inspired by the quaint villages, churches and pastel architecture of rural Lebanon,

the artist began painting at an early age. A young Douaihy moved to Beirut in 1928 and flourished under the apprenticeship of the well-known painter Habib Srour.

Later, Douaihy went to study in France after he received a scholarship from the Lebanese government to attend the School of Decorative Arts in Paris from 1932 to 1936. His initial works were a combination of figurative art, classical scenes and landscapes. After finishing his art education, Douaihy returned to Ehden to paint its four seasons, the coast as well as the life of farmers and labourers in the mountains. In 1950, Douaihy moved to the United States where he participated in group exhibitions at the New York International Fair, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and also at the renowned Guggenheim. Furthermore, the Lebanese artist presented solo exhibitions of his works at the Art and Science Centre of New Hampshire, the Contemporary Gallery of New York and the North Carolina Museum of Art. Two works that were on display in the latter institution's 1978 exhibition called *The Art of Saliba Douaihy* which are now held in important collections.

Charged by the energy of the exploding art scene and discovering the works of his American contemporaries while in New York, including Abstract Expressionists Mark Rothko, Hans Hoffman and Ad Reinhardt, Douaihy moved away from his earlier academic style and began his much sought-after series of minimalist abstract paintings. By the end of the 1950s, the artist's works encompassed of flat monochromatic forms, fine lines and sharp edges, anticipating the more successful half of his illustrious career. Until his death in 1994, Douaihy continued to paint his minimalist canvases, which remained the epitome of artistic simplicity in both colour and form.

Douaihy's third artistic phase, from which this present work belongs, is when his canvases featured a non-naturalistic use of colour. Colours

vary 'from primary to secondary, from harmonising to contrasting and from brilliant to subdued and varying in contours from large to small and from angular to curved, the canvas always integrates and guides the eye easily from the dominant focal colour to the outer edge and back' (P. Jean Sader, *ibid.*, p. 178). The underlying purpose was to exaggerate colour to the point where it did not reference the natural world or reality.

The colour passages in his works are oriented vertically, as if extended towards infinity. The precision of line and colour is derived not from geometric exactitude but rather from balancing different intensities of colour that makes the passages and colour planes seem perfectly defined. Moreover, slivers of colour appear dynamic as if pushing and pulling other planes of colour. The present work showcases Douaihy's unique interlinking of planes and shafts, each one filled in with a distinctive colour, appearing to extend beyond the boundaries of the picture. The painting is dominated by an expanse of blue-green, intersected by an olive-green asymmetrical plane and red, yellow and green passages. The beauty in the painting, with its strong and opposing colours, resides in the overall harmony and coherence – a harmony that references nature in that, despite its myriad colours, there is an overarching unity in the natural world. In true Douaihy form, the use of these flat colours in the present work imparts a sense of two-dimensionality to the paintings, yet the verticality suggests depth. He believed that harmony of colours was more important in a painting than the accurate representation of a scene. The present work, significantly larger in scale than most of his abstract works to appear at auction, is a one-of-a-kind masterpiece that comprises of the very best of Douaihy's skilful techniques and inspirations, a signature style that has been widely celebrated and acclaimed since the 1960s and have placed him at the forefront of Modern Abstraction in the Middle East.



Saliba Douaihy, *Regeneration*, 1974.
(Christie's Dubai, April 2012; price realised: US\$278,500)
© Christie's Images Ltd. 2012



*13

HUGUETTE CALAND

(LEBANESE, B. 1931)

Untitled (from the Bribes de Corps series)

oil on canvas

28³/₈ x 28³/₈in. (72 x 72cm.)

Painted *circa* 1965

US\$50,000–70,000

AED190,000–250,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner.

‘She is, in the broadest meaning of the word, a humanist; sensual and spiritual, erotic and sentimental, humourous and playful, fearful and daring, compassionate and detached, pragmatic and impulsive. All these qualities are found in her art.’

(The artist, quoted in “Pure Visual Delight in Pencil and Ink: Never Tormented always amusing”, in *Huguette Caland*, exh. cat., Beirut Exhibition Center 2014, p. 23).

Charming the art world with her distinctive avant-garde style and outspoken character, Huguette Caland is arguably the most influential Lebanese Contemporary feminist artist of her time. Through her elaborate yet humble works, fantasy and reality meet together to create a unique mixture of rigour and freedom, seriousness and lightheartedness that is distinctive in style. Born in 1931 in Beirut as the only daughter of the first President of the Republic of Lebanon Bechara El Khoury, Caland pursued art and literature as a means of expression. Having felt dismissed by many for being within such a political environment as the President’s daughter, whilst also battling with her ever increasing weight, Caland used her art as a way of cementing her presence within the patriarchal society that dominated Lebanon in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time Beirut was an intellectual and artistic hub, relatively peaceful with a sense of democracy and freedom of expression - that instigated an open atmosphere of exchange that led to the formation of many Arab nationalist ideals. It served to be the perfect breeding ground for Caland’s distinctive world filled with a childlike awe reminiscent of the scents and textures of Beirut, love, family, war, exile and freedom.

She began painting at the age of 16 under the private tutelage of Fernando Manetti, an Italian

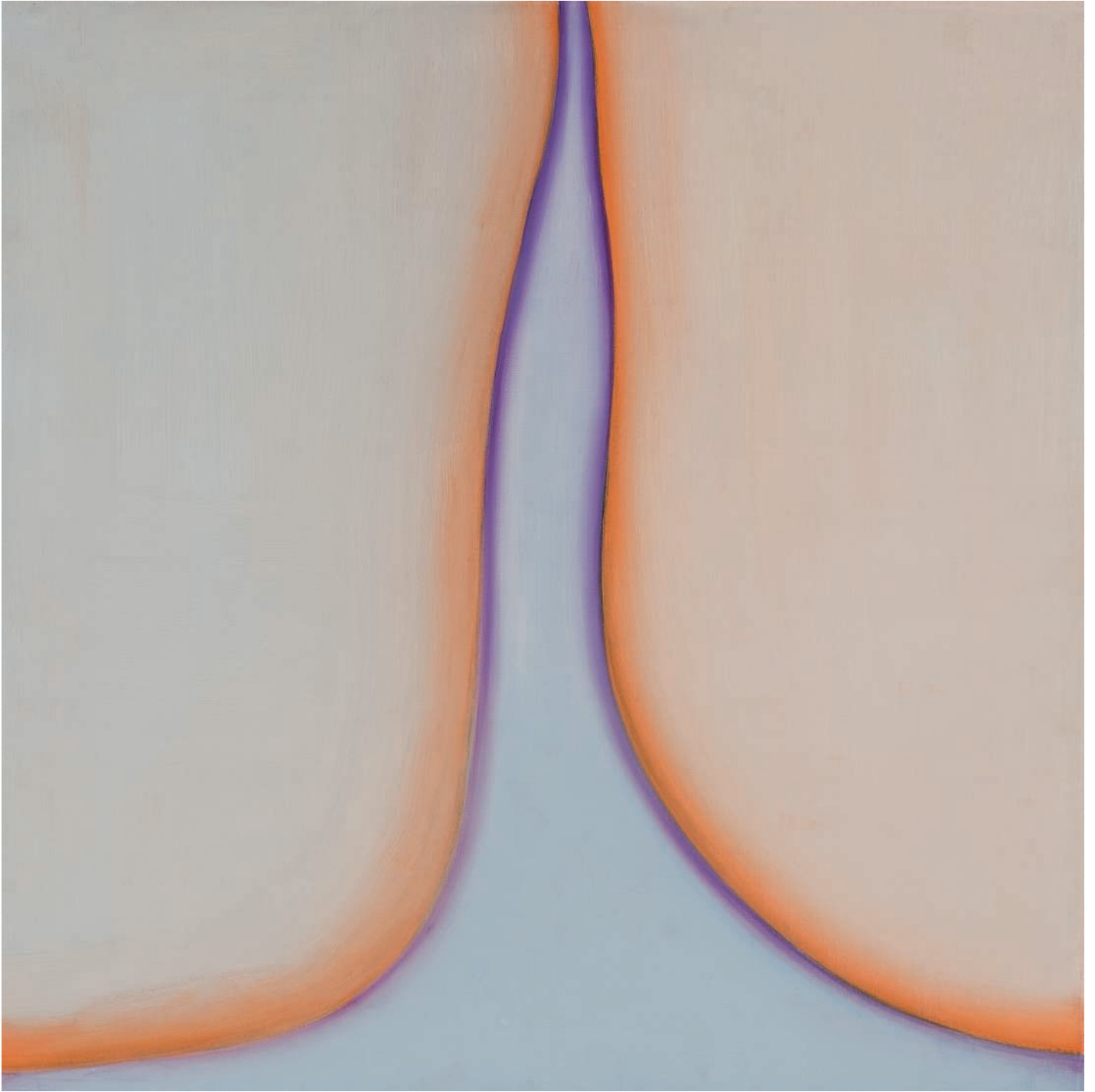
artist who resided in Lebanon and then pursued her studies at the American University of Beirut with the likes of Aref El Rayess, Helen Khal, Shafic Abboud, Janine Rubeiz and many others. Developing her own fiercely individual aesthetic approach, Caland began the first in what was to be three distinct periods throughout her artistic career. Known as the *Bribes de Corps* (translated as *Body Fragments*), they are inspired by Caland’s sensitivity to her own body - she affectionately refers to her large body size as excess baggage - and femininity.

Christie’s is honoured to present a seminal example from this series this season, exploring her favourite subject of human anatomy. Extravagant and ludic on the one hand, sensual and tender on the other, it depicts through a suggestion of line and vivid expanses of colour, a classical rendering of areas of the human body, evocating an intimate feminine exploration of life and love that is strangely soothing.

Demystifying the notion of the body and sexuality becoming decorative in nature this freedom of expression was rare in the Middle East in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite her father’s position, Caland capitalised on her exposure to a period of cultural vitality in Lebanon. Her mastery was to evoke the complex idea of womanhood

during these decades and its symbols by creating liberating pictures. She would represent the body in subtle semi-abstracted imagery where female forms became soft landscapes seducing the viewer with modernist renderings of tangled bodies as supple landscapes without beginning or end, her body parts and curves of flesh becoming the mountains and valleys. Caland sought inspiration from the western female artists of this time such as Georgia O’Keefe and Niki de Saint Phalle, who also explored natural forms, intimacy and bright colour palettes, celebrating femininity in its exultancy but with none of the tortured darkness despite her complicated childhood. Her work, of which the present work is an outstanding example, holds a lightness and everlasting childlike awe, therein lies the power of Caland’s oeuvre. In each of her compositions there is a deep-rooted sense of resilience, freedom and lust for life that radiates with charm, luminosity and rich sophistication.

Although Caland has become more well-known for her *Tapestries*, it is her older work, of which the present work is a strong example that has captured the attention of many and has cemented her already established title as a major figure in the Contemporary Middle Eastern art scene. A work from this period has recently been acquired by LACMA in Los Angeles.



PROPERTY OF
A PRIVATE COLLECTOR, AMMAN

*14

KADHIM HAIDER
(IRAQI, 1932-1985)

Al Buraq

signed 'K. HAIDER' (lower left)

oil on canvas

51 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 67in. (130 x 170cm.)

Painted circa 1967

US\$200,000-250,000

AED730,000-910,000

PROVENANCE:

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra Collection, Baghdad

(by whom acquired directly from the artist).

Sadeer Ibrahim Jabra, by descent from the above in 1994.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

LITERATURE:

J. I. Jabra, *The Grass Roots of Iraqi Art*, Baghdad 1983

(illustrated in colour, p. 32).

D. Al-Azzawi, C. Pocock & S. Faruqi (eds.), *Art in Iraq Today*,
Milan 2011 (illustrated in colour, titled: *Iraqi Mythology*, p. 26).







Stone portal guardian or Lamassu (mythical winged guardian) from the Palace of Sargon II (r. 722-705 BCE), Dur Sharrukin, now Khorsabad, Iraq. Louvre Museum, Paris. Pictures from History Bridgeman Images



Kadhim Haider, *The Martyr's Epic*, 1965. Collection of the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah. Courtesy Barjeel Art Foundation.

'His Buraq is in part the horse of the Prophet's night journey and in part the soul's journey through the dark blues of man's endless night of mystery.'

(Jabra Ibrahim Jabra).

Published in Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's infamous book on Iraqi art entitled *The Grass Roots of Iraqi Art* (1983) and originally part of the art critic and writer's private collection, *Al Buraq* is an outstanding example by pioneer Modern Iraqi artist Kadhim Haider. *Al Buraq* relates to the themes tackled in his most renowned body of work known as the *Martyr's Epic* ('*Melhamet Al Shahidi*' - 1965), based on a poem he wrote which refers to episodes from the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hussein at the Battle of Karbala.

The title of this monumental masterpiece *Al Buraq* translates literally as 'lightning' in English. It refers to a mythological creature in Islam, who carried the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to the 'farthest mosque' unanimously identified as Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and back during the 'Isra' or 'Mi'raj' or 'Night Journey', accompanied by the angel Jibril (Gabriel). During this 'Night Journey', Prophet Mohammed encountered the various heavens, the earlier prophets and God (Allah), hence defining his destiny.

Combining poetry, myth and metaphor, Kadhim Haider creates his own personification of *Al Buraq* using his symbolic pictorial vernacular to produce an abstract creature hinting to the above

description of *Al Buraq* with its 'two wings on his thighs' and it being a 'white beast'. Floating amidst a variation of deep blue tones, Haider omits the 'handsome-face' by removing all facial features, enhancing the magical powers of *Al Buraq*, that fills up most of the pictorial space of the present work with its imposing wings and possibly 'long ears'. Moreover, Haider opts for the Islamic tradition of suppressing the portrayal of the human figure, because of the fear that people would worship the image rather than God Himself. Stylistically and in terms of overall colour tones, *Al Buraq* is comparable to one of the highlights of the esteemed collection of the Barjeel Foundation in Sharjah, *The Martyr's Epic* in which Haider's signature and simplified forms and composition are closely related to that of *Al Buraq*. In terms of subject matter, the scene depicted in *The Martyr's Epic* commemorates the annual mourning for Imam Al-Hussein's martyrdom showing bright white horses participating to the ceremonies of grief under a symbolically blood-red moon. Pain and horror of the reality permeate through this painting as opposed to the more lyrical and metaphysical tone that dominates *Al Buraq*.

This large masterpiece by Haider epitomises what Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1920-1994) laid out in his

groundbreaking article of 1961 entitled *Art in Iraq Today* (published in D. Al-Azzawi, C. Pocock & S. Faruqi (eds.), *Art in Iraq Today*, Milan 2011, p. 32-33), in stating that 'most artists in Iraq look on ancient Mesopotamian sculpture and bas reliefs not only as a source of influence but also as the ground where their roots are implanted'. Despite *Al Buraq's* Modernist approach with its Cubist and Symbolist resonance, Haider also pays tribute to his homeland's cultural heritage and more particularly to Mesopotamian Art. This painting appears like a colourful two-dimensional Mesopotamian bas-relief and the subdued liveliness and strange features of this mythological creature seem to allude to the '*lamassu*', an Assyrian protective deity. It is often represented in art as hybrid creatures, having the body of a winged lion or ox and a human head, following the iconography that was first exposed in the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh. The religious and mythical connotations of Haider's *Al Buraq* are hence complemented by the poetic, nostalgic and historical dimensions skillfully infused by the artist. Haider simultaneously captures a fragment of the roots of Islam as well as an aspect of Mesopotamian art and civilisation, ultimately using these references as allegories for contemporary Iraqi socio-political history in this extraordinary painting.



*15

SHAKER HASSAN AL SAID

(IRAQI, 1925-2004)

Kitabat a'la jidar raqam (1) (Writings on the Wall number (1))

signed and dated in Arabic (lower left);

signed, titled and dated in Arabic (on the reverse)

oil on board

39³/₈ x 35³/₈in. (100 x 90cm.)

Painted in 1978

US\$ 100,000-120,000

AED 370,000-440,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Kuwait.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Kuwait City, Gallery Sultan, *circa* late 1970s.

'The use of the letters of the alphabet as an art form is nothing more than a version of the contemplative vision, because it tries to perceive simultaneously the unity of the two worlds in which he lives the world of thought through language and the plastic world of observation.'

(The artist quoted in Sartec/Ministry of Information of the Iraqi Republic (eds.), *Iraq Contemporary Art*, Vol.1 Painting, Milano 1977, p. 118).

One of Iraq's most prolific artists, Modernist Shaker Hassan Al Said, a practicing theorist, teacher and historian can be considered one of the most influential artists of his generation. Co-founding the Baghdad Modern Art Group with renowned artist Jewad Selim in 1951, his contribution in the shape of a vast amount of reflections and writings that led to the formation of a distinctive aesthetic and doctrine, shaped the Iraqi art movement. The Baghdad Modern Art Group established a distinctive local style that merged both the indigenous and international trends of the time. As such, Al Said is unrivalled in his synthesis of Islam, modernity and a regional Arab identity.

After a few years spent in Paris where he studied at the Académie Julien, at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs and the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Al Said returned to Baghdad to teach at the Institute of Fine Arts and in 1971, he founded the One Dimension group with a collective of artists who focused on the exploration of the Arabic letter. The group's deep-rooted interest in the Arabic alphabet, breaking with classical and traditional calligraphy and they were fascinated by the line itself and its endless possibilities of abstraction. They explored the visualisation and philosophy of Arabic script in Modern art under the influence of Sufism, exemplifying the notion of the spiritual in art through abstraction.

A rare work from the artist, the present lot is a beautiful representation of Al Said's oeuvre encapsulating the artist's everlasting quest for freedom and exploration of the Arabic letter following his establishment of the One Dimension. Searching for the spiritual in the epistemological meaning of art, rather than in the content or the visual vocabulary of the work, Al Said was indeed profoundly influenced by Sufism and as such, to him a work of art does not end or begin with the limits of the canvas, but rather penetrates beyond, attaining the metaphysical realm of the invisible. In this sense, Al Said's composition conjures up the image of an old derelict wall, which although appears ancient and worn, simultaneously anchors itself in the modern context through graffiti and abstract splashes of paint. In *Writings on the Wall Number 1*, Al Said's exploration of the dimensions of space and time are apparent and mesmerisingly connects the two-dimensional canvas with non-dimensional space through the cracks in the wall. Al Said pursues inspiration from tradition (*istilham al-turath*) as well as the Arabic letter (*istilham al-harf*)

while constructing a vision clearly rooted in modern culture. In the present example, the Arabic script presents a literary, symbolic, graphic and emotional significance despite its illegibility. Al Said's focus was turned not to the highly stylised and rule laden calligraphy of Arab tradition, but in fact searched for freedom in the simplest form of individual letters.

The Arabic letter becomes a line that leads to pure abstraction, turning away from the stylised calligraphy of the artist's contemporaries and rather focusing on the eternity of the surface. As such, even the scribbles on the wall and particularly Al Said's use of several circular components in his composition, becomes a means of instigating a state of mind akin to an intense trance, much in the same way as the intense meditative state that was of deep religious importance to the Sufis. In this sense, the notion of One Dimension was a referral to the one dimension that could connect Man with God. Unlike other examples from the artist's oeuvre that have appeared at auction, the artist's use of dense passages of black that drip slowly down the panel, confined within the upper part of the composition impose a burden of an impending change that carries the weight of history. Hinting at the events that had affected Iraq, in particular conjuring up the violent dripping of blood through his use of dripping paint, it is perhaps Al Said's intention through the use of circular motifs - a nod to the Mesopotamian heritage which he was heavily inspired by - to imply the repetition of war within history. As if the hope can rise from the dark ashes to be reborn again, the cycle of war, death and life appears to be never-ending.

Painted in 1978, the present work is particularly poignant within the context of Iraq's history, especially within the midst of the horrifying Iran-Iraq war. Al Said was notoriously affected by the deteriorating situation in Iraq that continued even into the 2000s. As a result, this became an underlying theme in his work, which he termed 'the experience of environmental truth in art'. Expressive in its colour palette, texture and sense of depth, this work captures the essence of Al Said's artistic magnificence. Willing to integrate the idea of a wall into his art to convey a sense of collapse of time into space, his fascinating iconography filled with spiritual, philosophical and historical references was to be perceived in his oeuvre until his untimely death in 2004.



*16

DIA AL-AZZAWI

(IRAQI, B. 1939)

Ashikan (Lovers)

signed and dated in Arabic (lower right); signed, titled and dated in Arabic, signed, dated and inscribed 'Dhia Al-Azzawi 69 IRAK' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

45¹/₄ x 39³/₈in. (115 x 100cm.)

Painted in 1969

US\$70,000-100,000

AED260,000-360,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Kuwait.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Kuwait City, Gallery Sultan, 1969.

Combining techniques of Modern art with motifs drawn from his Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian heritage, Dia Al-Azzawi is one of Iraq's most renowned and celebrated painters in the 21st century. Highly influenced by his studies in archaeology, the artist spent much of his time at the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad and was consequently influenced by the Mesopotamian and Islamic art.

He was one of the founding members of the New Visions Group (Al-Ru'yya al-Jadidah), which was established in 1969. His work falls within both categories of Modern Iraqi art and Contemporary Iraqi art owing to his long extensive practice and his ever-evolving style. Central to his work are the historical, social and political subjects of his home country Iraq and Arab culture in general. Furthermore, he regularly depicts the themes of pain, love, death and conflict, highlighting his extensive consideration of universal human experience.

The present work's title *Ashikan* suggests there are two lovers in the composition, yet only one can be clearly identified. The figure appears to be a woman, as hinted by the long locks of blonde hair that frame her face and by her lilac-colour garments. An abstract composition, possibly of her male lover, can be seen to her right, suggested by the large brown eye and the extended blue arm that grabs her towards him. A mythical galloping or flying horse with horns and a bright red eye, features to the left of the couple, insinuating that perhaps the woman is being carried or is fleeing on horseback with her lover.

Previous work by Al-Azzawi references his fascination and study of the use of protective talisman in popular Iraqi culture. This was done by both men and women who would seek variously shaped talismans from a locally appointed 'wise man' commonly referred to as a Sheikh. Although the Sheikh would not necessarily have any specific religious affiliation, people sought him outside of a religious context for the power of his talismans and amulets. It is believed that they would grant the wearer of the talisman power over the *jinn* spirits so that they could fulfill their most urgent desires, often related to matters of love, in addition to wealth, prosperity and good health. Although no specific reference to a talisman through text or symbols is present in *Ashikan*, the man's large eye and the vibrant blue pigment that stands out in the composition, hint to the commonly used symbol that wards off the evil eye and bad spirits. Turquoise is specifically included here to outline the female lover's arms, perhaps as an attempt to physically reject bad luck.

Ashikan epitomises Azzawi's signature style by its complex geometric patterning and its long arabesque brushstrokes that derive from tribal culture of the desert. As an iconic painting representative of Azzawi's 1960s style, *Ashikan* is a unique interpretation of a romantic subject tackled by the Iraqi master's rich symbolism deeply embedded in Mesopotamian history and culture and by a wide array of pigments, that already announce his distinctively bright palette that animate his more recent compositions.



PROPERTY FROM
THE ARTIST'S ESTATE

*17

AHMED DRISS EL-YACOUBI
(MOROCCAN, 1928-1985)

Mirage

signed 'Yacoubi' (lower right); dated and inscribed
'MIRAGE 46 x 36'-1982' (on the stretcher)

oil on linen

36 x 46 in. (91.5 x 122 cm.)

Painted in 1982

US\$50,000-70,000

AED190,000-250,000

PROVENANCE:

The Artist's Estate.

This work will be included in the Ahmed Driss El Yacoubi *Catalogue raisonné* currently being prepared by Carol Cannon.

'On the timeline of Ahmed Yacoubi's development in oil painting, the large canvas that is "Mirage" sits towards the end of his oeuvre where in 1982 instead of faces, entities, or worlds of his earlier years, he created timeless planes of numinous space. In the foreground is a horizontal trail of his characteristically deft palette knife work, defining a frenzy of complexity in refreshing blush to deep burgundy tones. With each receding plane Yacoubi transitions the viewer's eye from front to back, from bottom to top, from a wave form of dark, hot rose madder to the cool, diaphanous cerulean blue and white-filled sky refracting pure light. It is a mighty presence that stands silently shimmering in this "Mirage" - the spirit animating all things glistens from within the canvas- vast, powerful and as refined as the oscillating particles at the core of creation itself.'

(Carol Cannon, January 2016).



Ahmed Yacoubi with the present work. Courtesy Carol Cannon.
© The Estate of Ahmed Yacoubi.





Yacoubi

PROPERTY FROM
AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTION

*18

SOHRAB SEPEHRI
(IRANIAN, 1928-1980)

Untitled (from the Trees series)

signed in Farsi (lower right)
oil on canvas
39³/₈ x 51¹/₈in. (100 x 130cm.)
Painted *circa* 1970s

US\$250,000-300,000
AED910,000-1,100,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner *circa* 1970s.

*'He who can see a garden sketched in the
tree's memory
Is forever, enlightened by the rapture of
Eden's zephyr.'*

(An extract from Sohrab Sepehri's poem "Sureh Tamasha", in A. Kabir, *Sohrab Sepehri - Poet, Painter, Tehran 1990*, p. 141; translated from Farsi).

One of the largest and most enchanting paintings from his *Trees* series to ever appear at auction, the present work encapsulates the very best of what has placed Sohrab Sepehri at the forefront of Iranian art. A poet whose heritage is widely celebrated to this day, Sepehri is impartially considered the Father of Modern Art in Iran. Born in Kashan in 1928, avid of discoveries and with a curious mind, he travelled from a young age to explore the world. His journey began in 1957 when he first settled in Paris and enrolled at the Académie des Beaux-Arts. The following year, he stayed in Rome, visited the Venice Biennale, travelled to Africa and then India and ended his journey in Japan in 1960, where he found himself inspired by traditional Japanese art and culture. It is in Tokyo that Sepehri discovered the

Far-Eastern techniques in art and turned towards spirituality, an experience that changed his life and career as a multidisciplinary artist.

In 1965, upon his return to his native Iran and after having resigned from his occupation as a governmental employee, Sepehri focused on his art of poetry and painting and started a series of minimal and almost abstract compositions, referred to as his *Trees* series. In 1965, Sepehri settled in the US for a year, then again in Paris and again spent some time near New York in the early 1970s, where he acquainted the art of his fellow American artists.

In his most sought after series, the *Trees* echo his retrained persona as a poet, a painter and an intellectual. Depicted with an austere style, with an almost ascetic intent, the trees are either attenuated or broad - in this case the latter, often featured without leaves or branches rather focusing on the sturdy quality of their trunks. Abstracted from individual features, they reflect the artist's belief in the beauty of the concise, a principle deriving from the Zen tradition which he discovered during his life-changing stay in Japan. Depicted in an austere style, yet bold and entrancing, his trees are equally reminiscent of the misty landscapes of Japanese hand-painted scrolls whilst they reflect the gestural brushstrokes of the Abstract Expressionist art movement that was popular with artists in the US and Europe in the Post-War era.

Beyond the conventional style of landscape painting that was in place in the Iranian art scene at the time, Sepehri singularised himself and his art by injecting his poetry onto his canvas. The trees that Sepehri depicts surpass their physical remembrance and eventually incarnate the universal ideal of the Garden of Eden. As he reveals his deep understanding and admiration for the essence and the metaphysical meaning of the tree, he also positions his trees in the context of

modernity. The trees and branches depicted as a bold foliage in the centre of the composition seem to move beyond the boundaries of the canvas support; intrepid and monumental, they are deprived of superfluous details and highly textured, revealing the artist's gestural brushstrokes against a soothing background. They are fundamental and unpretentious representations of nature, bearing various meanings; one such significance is that of the tree of life as the bodies of trees are rooted in earth, taking from the earth its water and minerals in order to flourish. Trees are also often associated with immortality and longevity, thus subtly echo the philosophical beliefs of the artist.

Highly symbolic and spiritual in their essence, Sepehri's trees are set against vast swathes of empty space. Their restrained palette of warm browns and dark greens reflect the formal limitation of the Zen tradition and recall the ancient ink parchments illustrated by the Zen masters Sesshu Toyo and Hakuin Ekaku. The movements of the brush evoke the style of lyrical abstract and abstract expressionist artists, while the philosophy carried by the overall composition is essentially linked to Sufism and to the artist's Persian heritage. The amalgamation of influences and the aesthetic quality of the work are what define the signature style of Sepehri and his inspiring works left an indelible mark on generations of painters and poets after him.

Sohrab Sepehri, perhaps the most acclaimed Modern Iranian artist, was a constant traveller, a visionary poet and a passionate painter. He passed away prematurely in 1980, but his oeuvre had a lasting influence on generations of artists in and outside of Iran. One of the boldest and most impressive examples from his acclaimed *Trees* series, the present work, known to most admirers of Sepehri, was in private hands for decades. It is with honour and delight that Christie's is offering the work in their tenth-year anniversary sale this season.



Sohrab Sepehri in his studio, *circa* 1975.



PROPERTY FROM
A PRIVATE COLLECTION, BOSTON

*19

SOHRAB SEPEHRI
(IRANIAN, 1928-1980)

Untitled

signed in Farsi (lower right)
oil on canvas
39³/₈ x 27¹/₂in. (100 x 70cm.)
Painted *circa* mid-1960s

US\$80,000-120,000
AED300,000-440,000

PROVENANCE:

David Penn Collection.
A gift to the present owner's great-grandparents in 1967,
thence by descent.

Enraptured by nature with a deep and profound attachment to the beauty of his childhood home in the small city of Kashan, Iranian artist, poet and intellectual Sohrab Sepehri is undoubtedly a key figure in Modern Iranian Art, inspiring a generation of artists with his homage to his deep rooted heritage and untamed grace through the use of minimalism and partial abstraction merging East with West.

A constant traveller, Sepehri lived in France, Italy and Japan, before finally re-settling in Tehran where he dedicated himself and his life to the arts. His artistic style was principally influenced by his time in Tokyo in the 1960s, where he mastered the techniques of lithography and wood engraving. Inspired by the Far Eastern traditional arts, particularly haikus, Sohrab Sepehri painted dreamy images resembling calligraphy that are simultaneously reminiscent of both the misty landscapes of Japanese hand-painted scrolls and Persian literary sources, therefore fusing his myriad inspirations.

His majestic portrayals of semi-abstract groves of trees, with sweeping boughs within minimalistic Impressionist landscapes achieve a timeless reverie that captures the transcendent and mythical grandeur of nature and the forests he was so fond of. Harboring an undeniable mystical quality that was without a doubt inspired by Sufi philosophies, Sepehri's works create a richness of expression in purity and simplicity of form, colour and composition that create a harmonious symbiosis between nature and civilisation. Sepehri came to see that the purity of nature was an antidote to the corruption of the human condition and thus in his oeuvre, characterised by a deep fascination of nature, celebrates the tree as a symbol of compassion and stability in a world corrupted by ignorance and malevolence. Thus, the tree became a symbol of solace for the artist, in which he found a simplicity that would put him at ease, reflecting his introspection and state of mind.

Employing a minimalistic use of line, colour and tone, Sepehri's timeless works, of which the present painting is a delightful example, reflect an elegance that speaks of the miniature painting and Sufist ideals of Iranian heritage but with a sensitivity that is a nod to the Zen philosophy that heavily inspired the artist during his time in Japan. Exposed to the Japanese Haikus as well as the paintings of Japan's Masters Sesshu Toyo and Hakuin Ekaku, Sepehri thus plays on the flattening of space and earth palette to create a composition that is delicately textured and balanced in a thoughtful selection of angles and cohesion of lines, that hints at a tranquil and dreamlike world while simultaneously highlighting the artist's eternal love for Persian calligraphy.

Stylistically, the present work is a scintillating example of the very palpable sense of tension between naturalism and abstraction manifest in Sepehri's work. Sepehri was conceptually engaged by the universality of Zen painting, its advocacy of tonal minimalism and its shedding of excess and detail in favour of exploring true meaning through a process of efficient meditative brushstrokes, however this was heavily tempered by his desire not to forsake the identity of his surroundings. Ultimately, his attachment and love for his native home would never grant abstraction a total victory and it is in this tension, that his sincerity is most deeply revealed.

Deprived of superfluous details, the soft brushstrokes that Sepehri has employed harmoniously come together to bring the painting to life. Suggestions of green hint at the leaves gently blowing in the wind, while the passage of bright blue hints at a babbling brook, the complex yet simple cohesion of the pigments and washes layered upon one another hint at a serenity that washes over the viewer. As such, undeniably a collector's piece, the present work offers a captivating window into the spiritual heart and soul of the artist and his beloved connection to the serenity he felt when in his revered hometown.



*20

MANOUCHER YEKTAI
(AMERICAN-IRANIAN, B. 1922)

Untitled

signed and dated 'Yektai 64' (lower right)

oil on canvas

36 x 56in. (91.4 x 142.2cm.)

Painted in 1964

US\$ 100,000–150,000

AED 370,000–550,000

PROVENANCE:

Gertrude Kasle Gallery, Detroit.

Private Collection.

Anon. sale, DuMouchelles Fine Arts, 20 September 2015, lot 2048.

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Detroit, Gertrude Kasle Gallery, *Manoucher Yektai*, 1965.

Christie's is honoured to present a rare masterpiece by the highly acclaimed artist Manoucher Yektai. A seminal figure in the establishment of the New York School, Yektai's influence and reputation as a painter extend far further than the Middle East. His considerable contribution to the Post-War American language of creativity made him a respected peer of numerous pioneering artists in the West. This present work, an outstanding landscape painting, marks a distinct turning point from the norms of his painterly process, making this a truly one of a kind piece. Yektai relished in the opportunity to express his creativity in the freedom of the Western world. Whilst studying in Paris, he was exposed to the timeless technique of some of Europe's greatest painters such as Cézanne, Bonnard, Matisse and Vuillard. Drawing great inspiration from their technique, the artist crafts unique surface textures on his canvases through the use of thick impastos. This however was not enough for Yektai, who sought further channels for artistic expression. Moving to New York in 1947, Yektai established his artistic career amongst America's greats. Living amongst the action and vibrancy of this newly powerful nation, Yektai, who had moved from France, sought to establish his own artistic passage drawing from the great innovations of American Abstract Expressionism.

In 1952 Yektai gained the admiration of renowned gallerist Leo Castelli. Needing no further assurance in the quality of his artistic production, Yektai was enveloped into the emerging movement of Abstract Expressionism. Through Castelli, Yektai met Rothko, Tobey and Guston amongst others and in the mid-1950s, his work was displayed in shows alongside pioneering Modernist painters such as Pollock, de Kooning, Newman and Kline at the Stable Gallery in New York City. His time in Paris armed him with the knowledge to create vibrant and dynamic surface textures on his canvases. From New York, he identified with the notions of abstraction, all-over/gestural painting and the ability to paint at monumental scales. It is undoubted that Yektai forged his own creative path, formulating an aesthetic which did

not necessarily conform to the principles which seemed to guide Modernist American painters. True to his native Iranian roots, Yektai was never able to entirely negate figurative or representative forms.

Through multiple layers of paint, Yektai creates a scene which challenges the viewer's sense of perspective as well as the expectations for a landscape painting. By breaking up the surface into various segments, it is as though we are seeing the same landscape through multiple artistic lenses. In the background a lush green field with green and turquoise hues compliment the warmth of the blue and yellow sky whilst the right side of the canvas becomes harsher. As though we are traversing the various seasons, the ground becomes orange, autumnal and slightly turbulent. Through the introduction of darker hues and rougher surfaces with thicker application of paint, this small segment of the canvas causes an unusual break in the serenity of the scene beside it. Finally, the foreground is dominated by dynamic strokes in numerous shades of white, ranging from the pure to the muddy. As though we are metaphorically plunged the throws of winter, the gestural technique Yektai employs enhances the polarity between the various elements of the canvas and strongly juxtaposes the warmer colours of the background with an icy blast of cool colour. His ability to achieve such diversity on a singular canvas is a true artistic feat; its monumental scale and breadth of technical expression are evocative of the artist's skillful hand.

Shaping both his personal being as well as his visual lexicon, Yektai's masterful artistic procedure remains unparalleled. Two comparable paintings, also monumental in size, are held in Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Art and were acquired by the Empress Farah Pahlavi before the Revolution at the time where she focused on American Abstract Expressionism. The present work, of museum quality, is Yektai's largest landscape to ever appear at auction.





*22

BAHMAN MOHASSESS

(IRANIAN, 1931-2010)

Untitled

signed and dated 'B. Mohassess 66' (lower right)

oil on canvas

33 x 24⁷/₈ in. (84 x 63 cm.)

Painted in 1966

US\$ 100,000–120,000

AED 370,000–440,000

PROVENANCE:

Francesco B. Collection, Italy (acquired directly from the artist).

Anon. sale, Ader Paris, 4 December 2015, lot 117.

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

An androgynous figure, part human, part monster, stands proud on a dark red background, seemingly staring straight at the viewer, in an attempt to perhaps intimidate him. His well-built and dominant torso with protruding bones and inflated muscles contrasts with his thin and elongated neck while his face, deprived of any attributes aside two dark holes indicating his eyes, is heart-shaped and appears rather delicate. Filled with contrasts and surrealistic attributes, Bahman Mohassess' figure exists in an invented world, at crossroads between reality and fiction.

A reclusive artist who mingled with only a few peers, Mohassess constantly fought his own demons through life, art and poetry. Known for his dreamlike compositions of semi-human, semi-abstracted figures, he was passionate about Antiquity with its concepts of fragments, waste, ruins, but he also explored the art of the Renaissance and reflected upon the themes of Eros and Pathos throughout his art and career.

A dedicated and passionate artist, writer, poet and a celebrated translator of literary works, Bahman Mohassess was a distressed artist who burned and destroyed a great number of his paintings, collages, drawings and sculptures, leaving behind only a handful of works. Other works created before the Revolution were intentionally destroyed by officials as they were said to be

decadent and socially provocative. Trained as an apprentice in the atelier of Seyyed Mohammed Habib Mohammadi in Tehran, Mohassess enrolled at the Fine Art Academy in Tehran in the 1950s, but rarely attended classes, preferring to them the gatherings of the Cockfight art and culture society. A progressive artist at heart, he took part in the avant-garde trends of the Iranian art society early in his life, but his move to Italy changed the artist forever.

When in Rome, Mohassess attended classes at the Fine Art Academy then returned to Tehran temporarily, a time during which he was invited to participate to the Venice, Sao Paulo and Tehran Biennales and directed plays, including Pirandello's *Henry IV* at the Goethe Institute and Ghandriz Hall in Tehran. In 1968, Mohassess eventually returned to Rome and lived between his hometown and the Italian capital until his passing in 2010.

The present work, a captivating composition from 1966 that was until recently kept in the private collection of one of Mohassess' dear Italian friends, has the surrealistic features that the artist discovered in the metaphysical compositions of artists such as Giorgio de Chirico. When Mohassess settled in Italy following the coup against Mossadegh in 1953 and the Cultural Revolution that followed, he was escaping the wave of censorship in Tehran; Italy became his second home and Italian arts were his passion, although his works revealed until his death his attachment to the Iranian history and culture.

The anatomy of the surrealist character creates a sense of disarray and disturbance that are typical of Mohassess' style. The haunting figure is depicted like on a theatre stage, in an attempt for a visual monologue that is nonetheless made impossible as the absence of a mouth forces him to remain silent. Despite the hostile and menacing appearance of the figure and his imposing stature, the creature is forcefully harmless. The figure thus appears as a metaphor for the artist's anguish within the contemporary society as Mohassess himself seems equally incapable of expressing himself.

Captivating and enigmatic, the dreamlike composition is reminiscent of the paintings of the metaphysical artists De Chirico and Carlo Carrà and it undeniably epitomises what Mohassess is best at. He creates a mythical composition, bathed in surrealist light and sensitivity, yet captures the essence of humanity and alludes to the timeless struggles of the society. From his sought-after series of mythical figures, the present work is a charming rediscovery that carries the weight and splendor of Mohassess' acclaimed signature style.



Bahman Mohassess, *Untitled*, 1966.
(Christie's Dubai, October 2014; price realised: US \$257,000).
© Christie's Images Ltd. 2014



*23

PARVIZ TANAVOLI

(IRANIAN, B. 1937)

Heech Lovers

incised with artist's signature, date and number 'Parviz, 07, 3/6'
(on the base)

bronze

70⁷/₈ x 48 x 30³/₄in. (180 x 122 x 78cm.)

Executed in 2007, this work is number three from an edition of six

US\$300,000-400,000

AED1,100,000-1,500,000

EXHIBITED:

Dubai, Meem Gallery, *Parviz Tanavoli and Abbas Kiarostami*, 2009-2010
(another from the edition exhibited).

Tehran, 10Gallery, *Works of Parviz Tanavoli: Heech*, 2011

(another from the edition exhibited; illustrated, p. 41).

Wellesley, The Davis Museum Wellesley College, *Parviz Tanavoli*, 2015
(another from the edition exhibited; illustrated in colour, pp. 90-91).

LITERATURE:

C. Pocock, *Parviz Tanavoli Monograph*, Dubai 2010

(illustrated in colour, p. 96; illustrated, pp. 64 & 539).

Austin/Desmond Fine Art, *1970s-2011: Works from the Artist's Collection*

Parviz Tanavoli Poet in Love, exh. cat., London 2011, no. 38

(illustrated in colour, unpagged).

A. Smith, "Iran's most celebrated visual artist, Parviz Tanavoli,
speaks to MEMO about his work", in *The Middle East Monitor*,

3 February 2015 (accessed online).

G. Harris, "Iranian artist Parviz Tanavoli's solo US show",

in *Financial Times*, 6 February 2015 (accessed online).

S. Smee, "Iranian artist Tanavoli in the spotlight at Davis Museum",

in *Boston Globe*, 21 February 2015 (accessed online).

A. Shea, "Father of Modern Iranian Sculpture gets First U.S. Show

in Nearly 40 Years", in *National Public Radio*, 8 May 2015

(accessed online).

'I was fed up with artists misusing calligraphy in painting... So I decided to make something of nothing... Poets, such as [the 13th-century Iranian mystic] Rumi, draw attention to 'nothing' centuries before me. There are things and 'no things', they balance each other... It's a simple shape, it's abstract and it's very meaningful. It has a sculptural body different than any other known sculptural figures. I think there are many reasons why it became popular.'

(The artist quoted in A. Smith, "Iran's most celebrated artist, Parviz Tanavoli, speaks to MEMO about his work", in *The Middle East Monitor*, 3 February 2015, accessed online).





Another from the edition of the present work on view in the artist's first US retrospective at the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, in 2015.
© Charles Mayer Photography.

Christie's is proud and delighted to offer one of the most important and monumental bronze works, the *Heech Lovers*, by the Iranian artist Parviz Tanavoli. An avid collector of ancient Persian artefacts, a scholar, a poet and above all an internationally celebrated sculptor, Tanavoli is critically acclaimed and widely acknowledged as the father of Modern Iranian sculpture. Throughout the years, Tanavoli developed a style that is not only contemporary, but also reflects his Persian heritage. His majestic bronze sculptures and extensive body of works that include ceramics, prints, paintings, but also jewelry and rugs reveal the importance and scale of his work from the 1960s to the present day.

Born in 1937, Parviz Tanavoli received his general education in Tehran and later went to study in Italy where he trained under teachers such as Marino Marini and was acquainted to European art and culture. He graduated in 1959 from the Brera Fine Arts Academy in Milan and it was upon his return to his native Iran that he became profoundly inspired by and passionate about Persian culture and its aesthetic heritage. He was particularly struck by the urban rituals linked to the public water houses, in Farsi the Saqqakhaneh, built in bazaars, onto which the passers-by would make donations by tying up a piece of cloth or hanging locks hoping for their prayers to become true and hence perceiving these fountains alike shrines. Soon after his return, Tanavoli instigated the Saqqakhaneh school, a movement which has changed the course of Iranian art history ever since. Often referred to as a 'spiritual pop art' movement, Saqqakhaneh sought to incorporate religious symbols into art while reflecting the contemporary style and art that arose at the time in Western art. Tanavoli's complex lexicon of symbols and motifs that was established throughout the years in fact fused his traditional heritage with an utterly contemporary sensibility. At the same time, his artistic practice is tied to philosophy and spirituality and his works continuously reveal his favoured and long-standing thematics of the Poet, the Prophet, the Lovers, the Walls, the Locks and last but definitely not least the Heech.

When in 1961, the late American philanthropist and collector Abby Weed Grey visited Iran, she discovered Tanavoli's studio and was instantly struck by his works and techniques and invited him to an artistic residence at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where he soon acted as a lecturer and Professor. In 1964, Tanavoli returned to Tehran to teach at Tehran University's Fine Arts Faculty and became one of the closest advisors to Empress Farah Pahlavi as she was gathering one of the most important collections of art. It was during those

days, precisely in February 1965, that Parviz Tanavoli initiated the concept of Heech as a protest against the overuse of calligraphy throughout the works of his peers affiliated to the Saqqakhaneh school.

Composed of three letters in Persian language, the single word heech means 'nothing'. It reflects the feelings of unworthiness, frustration and ineffectiveness, which haunt modern man and permeate so much of the writing of contemporary literature. It also renders in a single word the mystical belief that recognises that God is permanent, while everything else has no true substance, bound to vanish. Long before Tanavoli, the notion of Heech was explored and studied by poets including the father of Sufism, Rumi, but also Khayyam and Hafez. A philosophical concept that went beyond borders, the core of Heech also profoundly inspired Western poets and writers including Jean-Paul Sartre who in 1943 published his famous essay entitled *Being and Nothingness*, reflecting upon the phenomenological consciousness. While Heech can refer to despair and absence of being, the Heech in Tanavoli's works is more nearly synonymous with creativity itself: it is the void filled by the artist's imagination, the nothing that through his carving and shaping becomes something and everything.

Tanavoli's signature Heech carries different meanings and is materialised in different forms and narratives. He has produced works that explore this notion in various sizes and materials, from bronze to fibreglass and also more recently in neon lights and delicate jewelry. Heech can stand alone as a majestic figure resembling the contours of a human body; it can be doubled like two figures embracing each other with love and passion, as is the case of the monumental *Heech Lovers* that is presently offered in this auction. It can also emerge from a cage, sit on a chair, lie beneath a table and in all these instances, it essentially revives simultaneously the core concepts of existence and nothingness while reflecting on the realities of the contemporary society. Heech is abstract, philosophical, spiritual and at the same time sensuous.

The present work entitled the *Heech Lovers*, undeniably a piece of museum quality, is one of his most captivating sculptures ever made. The craftsmanship and dexterity that are reflected through the work reveal the unequalled talent of Tanavoli, confirming his leading and pioneering role in sculpture and philosophy. Made of polished bronze, the *Heech Lovers* stand as a couple delicately embracing, as if to protect each other from the vanities and excesses of the outside world. As it combines both the shape of Heech and the idea of Lovers, the simple abstracted shape of the present sculpture is filled with spirituality and epitomises 'the poetry in bronze' for which Tanavoli is internationally acclaimed. As it stood at the heart of the Heech garden created on the occasion of the celebrated retrospective of the artist at the Davis Museum in 2015, *Heech Lovers* is perhaps one of Tanavoli's most complete and delicate interpretations of the philosophical concept of Heech, around which most of his production was made.

Currently based between Vancouver and Tehran, Parviz Tanavoli is a leading influence to a generation of artists who seek to combine their traditional culture with a sense of modernity. He is the most important and most sought-after living Iranian artist today whose practice spans over six decades while he is still adding to his unique body of works, actively creating in his respective Canadian and Iranian studios. Tanavoli's career and artistic production have been recently celebrated internationally through major exhibitions including his first US retrospective at the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, *The World Goes Pop* at the Tate in London and the ongoing exhibition *Global/Local 1960-2015: Six Artists from Iran* which opened at the Grey Art Gallery at NYU in January 2016.

His works are held in prestigious private and public collections including the British Museum and Tate Modern in London, the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Guggenheim in Abu Dhabi, the National Museum of Qatar, the Museum of Modern Art in Vienna and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.



Parviz Tanavoli with the present work in his foundry, Vancouver 2008.
Courtesy of the artist. Photo: John Gordon.

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTEEMED COLLECTION OF AKBAR AND SOUSAN SEIF NASSERI

'Every single object, painting or sculpture that we acquired throughout the years provided us with a sense of excitement; we fell in love with each one of them and they in return became part of our family.'

(Mr. Akbar Seif Nasser, in an interview with Bibi Naz Zavieh, January 2016).

Christie's is delighted to present four outstanding masterpieces from the Esteemed Private Collection of Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasser, a couple whose admiration for contemporary art is truly inspirational.

Born in Iran, Akbar Seif Nasser spent his childhood in Prague where he completed his secondary education and befriended several painters, film makers and writers including Milan Kundera. In 1956, Akbar Seif Nasser moved to Switzerland to pursue his studies in Political Science at the University of Lausanne, where he would, notably, interact with contemporary artists Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle, before moving back permanently to his native Iran in 1966.

A student and close friend of Marcos Grigorian and Parviz Tanavoli, albeit with a Doctorate in Micro-biology, Sousan Seif Nasser introduced her husband to many artists in Tehran and the couple often attended art openings, visited artists' studios and spent time discussing ideas with the young artists' of their generation, many of whom stand today at the forefront of Modern Iranian Art.

Acquiring works purely for the love and sake of art, Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasser believe that alike their own children, their paintings should pave their own path and thus deserve to be held in other private collections and public institutions, where their aesthetic quality and historical importance could be appreciated by many more.

Dear friends of Jafar Rouhbakhsh, the couple acquired several works of the artist, most of which are amongst his masterpieces. Akbar Seif Nasser spent hours in Rouhbakhsh's studio and often expressed ideas that the artist skillfully and subtly projected onto the surface of his canvases. The present work, a rare example of Rouhbakhsh's early works, was first gifted by the artist to Mr. Khadem and it is only in 2010, that Akbar Seif Nasser rediscovered and acquired this painting.

A quintessential example from his Saqqakhaneh years, the majestic painting by Faramarz Pilaram caught the eye of the couple at Galerie Seyhoun in Tehran, where they acquired the masterpiece. Massoumeh, the founder of her eponymous gallery, was instrumental in shaping Tehran's art scene since the 1960s and she famously supported many young artists of the time, most of whom are considered today as the pioneers of

Modern Iranian Art; Pilaram was one of them and as his work hung on the gallery's walls, it soon became one of the stellar pieces from the private collection of Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasser.

Executed by the Father of Modern Iranian Sculpture, Parviz Tanavoli, Poet and Cage is one of the masterpieces of Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasser's collection. Once in the collection of the architect and decorator Edouard Khachaturian who himself was a close friend of the artist, this captivating ceramic was acquired by the couple in the early 1990s. The present work has been widely illustrated in publications on Modern Iranian Art and is undeniably one of the most outstanding and rarest sculptures to ever appear at an auction.

In 1989, when Koorosh Shishegaran held his first exhibition at the now closed Classic Gallery in Tehran, many discovered for the first time the works of this young talent. The exhibition marked the beginning of his most celebrated series of bold undulating lines and it is then that the couple met him for the first time, discovered his work and immediately fell in love with his innovative style.

Having lived with these works of art for many years, Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasser have entrusted Christie's with the sale of four enchanting works. Each one of them is a testimony to the thriving art scene of Tehran that from the 1960s until today has flourished.



PROPERTY FROM
THE ESTEEMED COLLECTION OF AKBAR AND SOUSAN SEIF NASSERI

*24

PARVIZ TANAVOLI
(IRANIAN, B. 1937)

Poet and Cage

glazed earthenware on Plexiglas base
25⁵/₈ x 17³/₄ x 17³/₄in. (75 x 45 x 45cm.)
Executed in 1966, this work is unique

US\$ 140,000–180,000

AED 510,000–650,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection of Edouard Khachaturian.
Acquired from the above by the present owner *circa* early 1990s.

EXHIBITED:

London, Barbican Centre, *Iranian Contemporary Art: The Curve*, 2001
(illustrated in colour, p. 55).

LITERATURE:

S. B. Sherill (ed.), *Works of Parviz Tanavoli, Ceramics, Parviz Tanavoli*,
Tehran 2010 (illustrated in colour, p. 29).

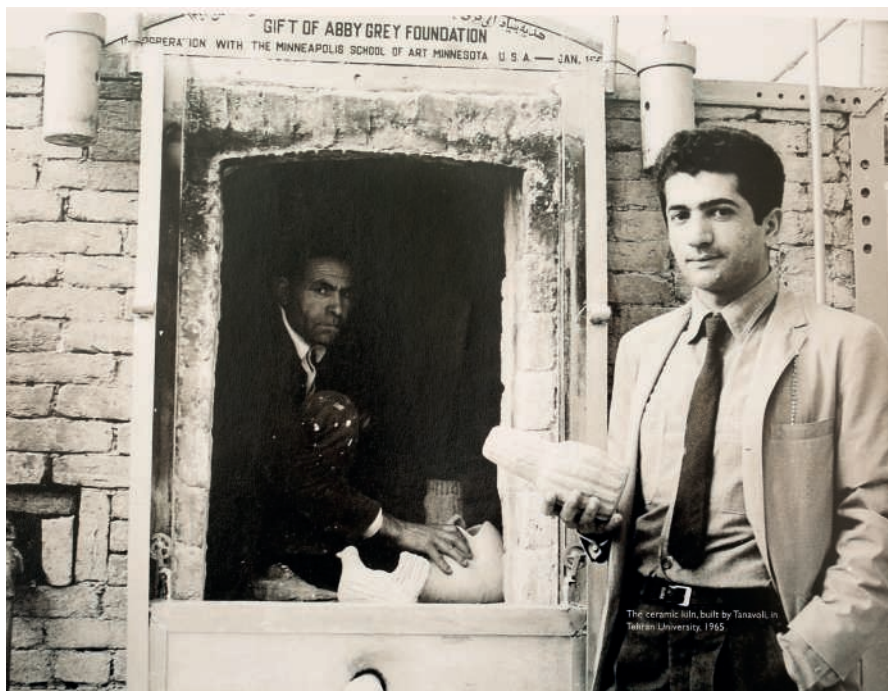
'Although my main work is in bronze and not in ceramics, since my youth I have been attracted to ceramics. At the time, ceramics were seen everywhere. Some were tiles and adorned the exteriors of shrines and mosques as well as the entrances of some of the bazaars. Others were handmade pots. During my childhood, Tehran lacked water pipes and people kept their drinking water in large pots. Every day horse-drawn wagons with water tanks passed by neighborhoods and filled up the women's ceramic pots.'

(The artist quoted in S. B. Sherill (ed.), *Works of Parviz Tanavoli, Ceramics, Parviz Tanavoli*, Tehran 2010, p. 5).



'In his ceramics, their forms and norms have blended together and have reached that duality that is alive but at the same time not of our time. A combination of advanced elements of modern art and elements borrowed from all traditions of Persian art, from ancient artifacts to today's popular expressions, is indeed a characteristic of all of Tanavoli's works.'

(M. Sahabi, "Mysterious Duality", in S. B. Sherill (ed.), *Works of Parviz Tanavoli, Ceramics, Parviz Tanavoli*, Tehran 2010, p. 8.)



The ceramic kiln, built by Tanavoli, in Tehran University, 1965. Courtesy of the artist.

Executed in 1966, *Poet and Cage* is one of the most delicate and most captivating ceramic sculptures ever made by Parviz Tanavoli. Acclaimed for his sculptures, mainly in bronze, Tanavoli developed a passion for ceramic works from a young age, as they were dispersed throughout the urban landscape of his native Iran and in people's homes, as handmade ceramic pots, plates or bowls.

The history of Persian pottery and ceramics goes back to the early Neolithic Age and throughout centuries, it remained one of the most popular arts in Iran. Due to the geographical position of the country, being at the crossroads of ancient civilisations and on important caravan routes,

almost every region of Iran has been involved through history in pottery and ceramic. From simple earthenware to ceramics decorated with geometric designs, artists and craftsmen produced a variety of utensils like piped pots, bowls and jars, but also some primitive earthen statues in the shape of animals and birds, which carried an ornamental value. Some of the most exceptional examples of Persian ceramics are now held at the British Museum and the Hermitage Museum and are widely collected privately.

When Tanavoli returned to Iran after a few years in Italy where he trained under Marino Marini, he did not yet have his own studio and therefore attended

workshops in pottery factories including that of the Bureau of Fine Arts and used their material to make his first ceramic sculptures. A few years later in 1965, Tanavoli settled his own workshop in the north of the capital, where he established his bronze foundry and his ceramic kiln and produced the present work, *Poet and Cage* in 1966. Working mainly with bronze, Tanavoli focused on the art of ceramics for short periods throughout his career. As in his other works, his ceramics reveal the duality that is the core of his signature style, being at crossroads between his Persian heritage, ancient art and rituals and a well-defined contemporary style, whilst its materiality offers a sense of timelessness.

With *Poet and Cage*, Tanavoli recalls his fascination with the figure of the Poet as Persian poetry was to him the purest emanation of the human soul, an art that overflows with emotion and elevates the human spirit. His Poet figure is abstracted, made of geometrical shapes such as cubes and cylinders, some with undecipherable script delicately embellishing their glazed surface and he carries a cage in his chest. The two cages and their grills recall the traditional architecture of Iran and in particular the votive fountains also known as the Saqqakhaneh, which famously left an indelible mark on Tanavoli's style and career since the 1960s. Widespread throughout the streets of Iran, the Saqqakhanehs were folkloric religious structures which provided water for passersby to quench their thirst at no charge. They also provided room for religious and talismanic rituals as many would come and attach different objects, most often locks to the grills of the fountains with hopes of a better future. Throughout his oeuvre and in the present ceramic work, Tanavoli has used the lock; its symbolic significance is linked to belief, rituals and healing and as they are embedded in the sculpture's body, the locks hints at the ambiguities and intricacies of life, elevating the sculpture to a highly spiritual level.

Rooted in Persian folk and culture, *Poet and Cage* epitomises the essence of Tanavoli's artistic practice, characterised by the modern use of traditional techniques and traditional subjects found in Persian poetry. The present work impersonates the Saqqakhaneh style at his perfection; it is one of the most important and most delicate ceramic works ever made by the artist and it is undeniably a rare collector's piece.

Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasserli lived with the present work for many years. As they acquired the work from the well-known architect and decorator Edouard Khachaturian in the early 1990s, *Poet and Cage* has been one of the central pieces from the couple's esteemed collection.



(Alternate view of the present work)

PROPERTY FROM
THE ESTEEMED COLLECTION OF AKBAR AND SOUSAN SEIF NASSERI

*25

KOOROSH SHISHEGARAN
(IRANIAN, B. 1945)

Untitled

signed and dated in Farsi, signed 'SHISHE' (lower left)

oil on canvas

51 x 53in. (128.5 x 134cm.)

Painted in 1986

US\$70,000-90,000

AED260,000-330,000

PROVENANCE:

Classic Gallery, Tehran.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1989.

EXHIBITED:

Tehran, Classic Gallery, *Koorosh Shishegaran*, 1989.

London, Barbican Centre, *Iranian Contemporary Art: The Curve*, 2001

(illustrated in colour, p. 48).

Koorosh Shishegaran's ability to humanise abstraction and create depth in his canvases through colour and brushstrokes makes him one of the most expressive and inspiring artists of Contemporary Iranian art. His paintings are composed of colourful vortices and whirling spirals painted on a minimalistic background. Each twist and spiral is meticulously mapped on Shishegaran's canvas, thus creating a flow of movement along with dimensionality.

The present work by Shishegaran from the esteemed Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasserli collection features complex convolutions in a palette of dark hues. The black and grey tones create a strong play of light and shade while the bold red serves as a sophisticated contrast, rendering the swirls more visible and prominent. Shishegaran's work demonstrates a high level of graphical and technical finesse, which is evocative of the artistry required in calligraphy. The artist's signature style is rooted in his long search within the Iranian visual lexicon.

Lines and particularly the manipulation of their forms is an important feature in his works. They become linear or stripe paintings, creating fluid movements of bold lines on a pure background and often depicting abstract human forms. The curvilinear form and diagonal trajectory of the spirals in

this work creates motion on the canvas. This movement, coupled with the tapered lines, creates depth, texture and an other-worldly appearance.

By presenting lines and form in an abstract way the artist distances himself from the subject of the work and thus avoids imposing any personal impressions on the viewer. Shishegaran has expressed that his work serves as an expression of a new artistic language: *'I have been trying to find a style or language expressive of the modern era. One that can be seen as pure painting yet rooted in my own country's art and culture.'* (The artist quoted on the occasion of his exhibition at Opera Gallery, London 2012).

Shishegaran's fascination with graphic art can be seen in the plain colours and sharp twists found throughout his work. He creates visual energy and invokes the inquisitive mind of the viewer. The result is visual stimulation and dynamism which is purely an optical illusion; in other words, the very essence of seeing without the unnecessary rhetoric. The artist resorts to abstraction in order to avoid making works that are reminiscent of figurative forms. Shishegaran is a proponent of abstract art as it equips the artist with a sense of liberty to look beyond the appearance and present at the subject in a symbolic yet abstracted way.



PROPERTY FROM
THE ESTEEMED COLLECTION OF AKBAR AND SOUSAN SEIF NASSERI

*26

JAFAR ROUHBAKHSH
(IRANIAN, 1940-1996)

Untitled

signed and dated 'Rouhbakhsh 69' (lower left)

oil and sand on canvas

39³/₈ x 39³/₈in. (100 x 100cm.)

Painted in 1969

US\$50,000-70,000

AED190,000-250,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection of Mr. Khadem (a gift from the artist).

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2010.

Jafar Rouhbakhsh produced colourful and intricate canvases that were at once abstract and spiritual such as the present work from the esteemed Private Collection of Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasseri. Rouhbakhsh's professional career began in the years prior to the Iranian Revolution, and the present work from 1969 is one of the artist's compositions from the pre-Revolutionary era. Although Rouhbakhsh's most fruitful artistic period was during the time after the Iranian revolution, particularly the 1990s, his works from the pre-revolutionary era are rare and sought-after, having been held in private collections such as the Seif Nasseri collection for decades and rarely offered in the market.

Like his contemporaries in the Saqqakhaneh School in the 1960s, Rouhbakhsh incorporated decorative elements in his pre-revolutionary works that were thus void of figuration but imbued with expressive colours and abstract Islamic and pre-Islamic motifs. The Saqqakhaneh movement included many of Rouhbakhsh's peers such as Charles-Hossein Zenderoudi, Faramarz Pilaram, Parviz Tanavoli, Massoud Arabshahi and Jazeh Tabatabai amongst others, all whom appear in the present auction. It first emerged in 1962 at the Third Tehran Biennale as a movement that strived to establish a national school of art that synthesised contemporary and traditional styles. Saqqakhaneh artists presented Shiite folk elements in abstracted form, like in Rouhbakhsh's work, to create an artistic dialogue between the past and the present.

Jafar Rouhbakhsh's painting embodies the duality of the literal saqqakhaneh, a public fountain that also served as a site for votive offerings in the Kerbala plain during the 7th century. Not only does the artist's canvas present decorative and abstracted folk motifs, it also possesses a spiritual aura. Sand is mixed with oil paint to give the work a rich and earthy texture. Furthermore, the earthiness of the composition is elevated by the natural browns, olive greens, muted golds and greys, which brings out a sacred facet in the work. The earthy palette and texture of the present work, making it an outstanding example within Rouhbakhsh's oeuvre, evokes the artist's attachment to the land and reflects on the basic principles of the Saqqakhaneh movement, which were an amalgamation of national pride and heritage with Western style.

A young Rouhbakhsh was an apprentice in the studio of prominent Tehran-based painter and calligrapher, Hossein Behzad, under whom he developed a knowledge and appreciation for Iranian abstract art as well as traditional art forms like Persian carpets, tribale rugs, handicrafts and calligraphy. Moving away from the classical and academic style of Behzad, Rouhbakhsh paid careful attention to texture and content, as well as to the colours he selected for each of his works. To Rouhbakhsh, colour to a painting, was like words to poetry. Without colour, there would be no painting, just as how without words, there would be no poetry. In this work, the artist has borrowed colours from nature, thus epitomising the influence nature had on his work. Rouhbakhsh in fact believed in the almost spiritual principle of artists being inspired by Mother Nature.

Rouhbakhsh's core artistic characteristics such as his proclivity towards abstraction and rich natural colours remained a key feature throughout his oeuvre. In his post-revolutionary works from the 1980s and 1990s, however, he joined the school of thought of the second wave of Saqqakhaneh artists who deliberately eliminated the decorative quality in their art. Recognised as one of the most important Modern artists of his time, Rouhbakhsh's enjoyed a long career from the time of his first solo exhibition in 1964 until his death in 1996. During his lifetime, the artist participated in over 40 group and solo exhibitions not only his native Iran but also in Paris where he resided, Madrid, Bern, Geneva and Zurich.

The friendship between Rouhbakhsh and both Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasseri was indubitably very strong and is still cherished today. Mr. Seif Nasseri would spend hours in the artist's studio, discussing ideas and ideals, whilst the artist skilfully transcribed on the surface of his canvases, the sentiments that were shared by the two friends. The present work, a very rare composition with a textual quality that is incomparable to any other, is one of Rouhbakhsh's most exquisite creations.





PROPERTY FROM
THE ESTEEMED COLLECTION OF AKBAR AND SOUSAN SEIF NASSERI

***27**

FARAMARZ PILARAM
(IRANIAN, 1937-1982)

Untitled

indistinctly signed and dated (lower left)

oil, ink and metallic paint on canvas

31½ x 70⅞in. (80 x 180cm.)

Painted *circa* 1970s

US\$180,000-240,000

AED660,000-870,000

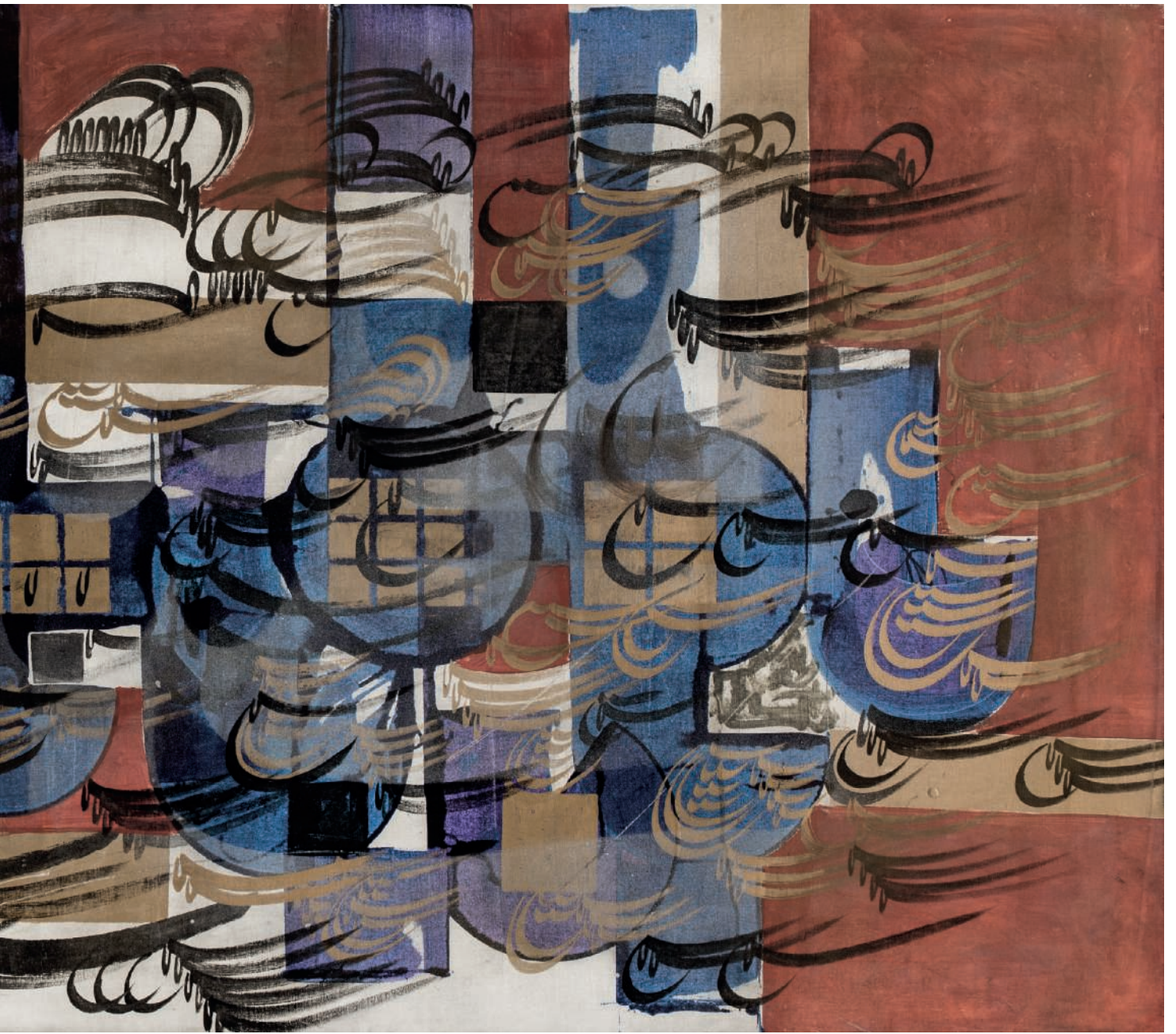
PROVENANCE:

Galerie Seyhoun, Tehran.

Acquired from the above by the present owner *circa* 1985.

EXHIBITED:

Tehran, Galerie Seyhoun, *Group show*, *circa* 1985.





Faramarz Pilaram with Parviz Tanavoli and Abby Grey, in Pilaram's studio, Tehran, 1967. Courtesy of Parviz Tanavoli.

Acclaimed as one of Iran's Modern masters, Faramarz Pilaram is unmatched in his artistic expression and sophisticated reconceptualisation of Persian calligraphy. Starting in the 1960s and continuing through the Iranian Revolution, Pilaram's experimentation with calligraphy is captured in a body of work spanning over two decades. His canvases feature strong but traditional colours and overlapping, repetitive and rotating letters, which render the Persian script indecipherable as a written or spoken language; instead, the enigmatic new script developed by Pilaram creates a new aesthetic language unique to each of the artist's works.

Amongst the pioneers of the Saqqakhaneh movement that arose in the 1960s, Faramarz Pilaram sought to focus on art that would reflect on the rich cultural heritage of his beloved Iran. The Saqqakhaneh School is an association of Iranian artists, including Charles-Hossein Zenderoudi and Parviz Tanavoli, who drew directly from the traditional art forms of Iran as the raw material for their artworks. In the view of the members of the school, elements from their cultural roots had to be linked to modern styles and fused to create a distinctly national artistic expression. Iranian art critic and journalist, Karim Emami was the first to use the term *saqqakhaneh* to describe the works of Iranian artists, alike Pilaram, whose Modern paintings fused calligraphy and structural elements from Shiite art. The word gradually came to be applied to the Modernist works by Iranian artists that incorporated traditional or decorative elements from Iran's historic, religious, folkloric and artistic past.

The term *saqqakhaneh* is derived from a ceremonial public structure, which serves as a

water fountain as well as a votive site. Many saqqakhaneh were constructed as memorials for Shiite martyrs who were denied access to water in the Kerbala plain during the 7th century. Devotees often fasten small locks and pieces of cloth to the lattice grillwork in the exterior part of some saqqakhaneh. Sometimes, small objects with religious significance are placed inside little compartments of public fountains. This dual nature of the saqqakhaneh was embodied in many artworks produced by artists of the eponymous School, including Pilaram.

Pilaram's practice marries the traditional techniques and iconography of Islamic, pre-Islamic, and folk art with the Western techniques that were widely prevalent in pre-revolutionary Iran. The present work from the Esteemed Private Collection of Akbar and Sousan Seif Nasserri is an outstanding amalgamation of the elements Pilaram is celebrated for. In this canvas, the artist has not only used bold and expressive colours, but also a fresh, abstracted script. In 1975, twenty-six year old Pilaram described these idiosyncratic characteristics of his art, which was being shown at the Iran-America Society: *'The combination of calligraphic elements and other forms create a unity in my mind that creates the reality of my paintings... I am searching for ways to promote an authentic Iranian art.'* (The artist quoted in Washington D.C., Iran-America Society, *Faramarz Pilaram*, exh. cat., 1975, unpagd).

In the present composition, the script is composed of gilded golden and black rhythmic waves that add to the dynamic movement created by the blue typographical elements lying directly underneath. Thus, there is a sense of flow and movement conceived by the layering of calligraphic

components that creates a mystical aura. The red background provides an elegant contrast to the blue, gold and black texts, while also adding to the transcendental nature of the piece. Through its decorative as well as spiritual quality, Pilaram's painting embodies the duality celebrated by the Saqqakhaeh movement.

For his calligraphic works, Pilaram turned to Nasta'liq calligraphy, one of the traditional and dominant styles of Persian calligraphy. Additionally, his works build on the traditional model of *Siah Mashgh* or practice sheets for calligraphy upon which Persian script was repeated over and over until it was transcribed perfectly.

Through his active experimentation with traditional calligraphy and mystical motifs, Pilaram is an avant-gardist in the true sense of the word. His art education began in his schooling days in Tehran where he attended the School of Decorative Arts for Boys. After receiving his diploma in 1959, he enrolled in the Faculty of Decorative arts to continue his art education, during which time he also began exhibiting his works. In 1964, Pilaram, along with his contemporaries including Mansour Qandriz and Massoud Arabshahi, helped establish the Talar-e Iran (Iran Gallery). He received a Master's degree in painting and interior design in 1968 and in 1971, he went to France for a year to study lithography and print. A few years later, in 1974, Pilaram along with Marcos Grigorian, Massoud Arabshahi and Sirak Melkonian, amongst others, formed the Goruh-e Naqqashan-e Azad, a group of Iranian Modernists who exhibited together in Tehran and defended a freer form of art and painting.

During his career, Pilaram received several national and International awards including the 1962 Gold Medal at the 3rd Tehran Biennale, the Silver Medal at Venice Biennale that same year, the First Prize from the Ministry of Art and Culture at the 4th Tehran Biennale in 1964, and the First Prize for a Special Stamp issued by UNESCO for the 'World Liberation of Hunger' in 1968. His works have been widely exhibited in Iran and abroad and are held in important private and public collections, including the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art; Tehran Fine Arts Museum; Grey Art Collection at New York University; Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Empress Farah Pahlavi's Private Collection.

As one of his most outstanding and visually captivating compositions from his Saqqakhaneh period, the present work is a rare example that epitomises the essence of Modern Iranian art as it delicately combines the traditional style of Iranian painting with a Modernist and almost Pop touch. As such, the present work, one of Pilaram's most iconic compositions, encapsulates the Saqqakhaneh style at its perfection.



H. H. 1968

PROPERTY FROM
AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTION

*28

MANSOUR QANDRIZ
(IRANIAN, 1935-1965)

Untitled

signed in Farsi (lower left)

oil on canvas

65 x 38⁷/₈in. (165 x 97cm.)

Painted *circa* early 1960s

US\$150,000-200,000

AED550,000-730,000

PROVENANCE:

Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.



Christie's is proud to offer in the present sale an exceptional masterpiece by the Iranian artist Mansour Qandriz. Born in 1935, Qandriz stands at the forefront of Modern Iranian art and is celebrated as one of the most important and highly sought after artists of his time. As the artist died prematurely in a car accident in 1965, he only made a small number of paintings during his lifetime and most of the works from his Saqqakhaneh period are safely kept in private hands and very rarely appear at auction.

Following an academic training in art, Qandriz creates his signature style fusing various inspirations from Chinese paintings to French Impressionism and Islamic arts. In the early 1960s, he joined a group of influential Iranian artists who moved away from pure Modernism that prevailed in the previous decade in an attempt to combine their traditional heritage with Modernity. The neo-traditionalist approach of these artists and intellectuals reflected their quest for a national artistic identity, within the realm of a disrupted social and political environment. When in 1962, the art critic and journalist Karim Emami evoked the term Saqqakhaneh as a reference to the votive fountains found in Tehran's urban environment, he alluded to the works of artists such as Parviz Tanavoli, known as the father and pioneer of the movement, Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, Faramarz Pilaram and Mansour Qandriz. These artists, each in their own way and with their distinctive styles, incorporated Islamic and spiritual motifs as well as references to the Persian folk culture within their abstract compositions. Inspired by the typically Persian motifs and patterns, the tribal art of the Iranian villages that they discovered on rugs and textiles and in the art of metalwork, these artists created a style that until today defines the essence of Iranian Modern art.

Mansour Qandriz stood as one of the leading figures of the Saqqakhaneh School. Through painting, Qandriz delicately and beautifully fused tradition and modernity and fought for the rise and revival of a common pictorial heritage and a strong Persian identity through the arts. Inspired by the geometric patterns that were traditionally used in the Persian handicrafts, he recreated them on the surface of his canvases, combined them in shapes that recalled human bodies and incorporated symbols such as birds, swords, the sun and fish in an attempt to bring to life the heritage that was somewhat forgotten and rejected in his contemporary society.

The present work is an enchanting example from his highly sought after Saqqakhaneh paintings. One sees shapes that recall the ornamental keys and locks that were famously attached to the votive fountains as a gesture for prayer. The subtle colours impart a soothing effect to the overall composition, while the intricate details allude to the Islamic architecture and traditional arts that profoundly inspired Qandriz through his life and art. Somehow depicting a semi-human figure, Qandriz beautifully recreates the personification of his Persian heritage. As one of his most captivating compositions, the present work is undeniably one of the artist's most important masterpieces.





PROPERTY FROM
AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

*29

CHARLES-HOSSEIN ZENDEROUDI
(FRENCH, BORN IN IRAN 1937)

FUJI

signed in Farsi, signed and dated 'Zenderoudi 81' (lower right)
acrylic on canvas
44½ x 63¾in. (113 x 161.5cm.)
Painted in 1981

US\$150,000–200,000
AED550,000–730,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, New York.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

This work is sold with a certificate of authenticity and will be included in the forthcoming Charles-Hossein Zenderoudi *Catalogue raisonné*.

'Ever since I completed the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Tehran in 1957, I wanted to take advantage of the richness of Eastern art and mix it with Western Art to produce a synthesis in works that would be avant-garde.'

(The artist, quoted in L.A. Lawrence, "Letter, Word, Art", in *Saudi Aramco World*, March-April 1997, unpagged).

As the pioneering figurehead of Iranian neo-traditionalism and the founding father of the most influential art movement to have emerged from Iran in the twentieth century, Charles Hossein Zenderoudi is one of Iran's most accomplished Modern Masters whose works continue to captivate many around the world. Drawing on centuries of vibrant and rich cultural traditions, Zenderoudi broke from the traditional boundaries of classic calligraphy and embraced a neo-traditionalist style. Taking its name from the traditional architectural structures that appear throughout Iranian cities housing public drinking

fountains that are traditionally embellished with Persian poetry, popular illuminations and Islamic texts the Saqqakhaneh movement focused on dense talismanic imagery, mixing iconography and freehand script and numerals in condensed compositions that sought to capture the visual intensity of these popular forms of expression in Iran and modernise them.

Settling in Paris from the 1960s, his exposure to and influence by Western art movements as well as the linguistic philosophies of Jean-Michel Foucault and Ferdinand de Saussure allowed him to create a unique sense of dialogue and navigation between Western and Eastern art as a dialogue in an inimitable style. It was at this juncture that Zenderoudi would demonstrate a new interest in the aesthetics that would employ calligraphy to construct vibrant, multi-layered and complex compositions. Zenderoudi offered a new perspective by taking the Farsi word and letter and deconstructing it through emphasis of form over meaning to its aesthetic, structural and foundation to subvert the traditional values, creating repetitive shapes and structures. His intention became to empty words from their literal meaning, by freeing these letters from any sort of linguistic association and reducing them down to repetitive shapes, Zenderoudi imbues his 'writing' - which he prefers to use as a term instead of calligraphy - with a sense of universality giving it a renewed relevance in a contemporary context. It was during this extremely sought after period of experimentation that the artist painted *Tchaar-Bagh*, one of his most important masterpieces that was sold at Christie's in 2008 and holds the world record for the artist at auction.

Christie's is proud to present a striking example entitled *Fuji* from 1981 that is emblematic of Zenderoudi's works from this period. Embracing the exuberance of the vibrancy of his colour palette, it is almost rhythmic in its grace and balance, seemingly measured but spontaneous as the letters and words are depicted in the form of waves that ripple across the canvas. Various sizes and shapes of elongated and compressed letters expand and contract, fragments and hints of words emerge here and there, yet no coherent meaning can be found but still the artist manages to produce a harmonious symphony with a spiritual intensity that is reminiscent of the systematic repetition of letterforms in the mystical practice of Sufism. Meanwhile as several artistic movements emerged in Europe and America, it was the Pop Art movement that particularly caught Zenderoudi's attention. The present work, much like Pop Art, employs the mass use of calligraphy and the written word with an emphasis on the banal and kitsch element of the Iranian culture, exemplified by his use of bright and flashy pink. Removing any sort of context from its Iranian origins, Zenderoudi thus allows his work to maintain a mass international appeal.

From the artist's most sought after period, Zenderoudi's *Fuji* is invigorated with multiple stylistic innovations which unfold in a single canvas. The artist here imposes opposite movements and intertwined graphic spaces with shades and hues of pink that oscillate with a vibrant energy against a black background leaving a peripheral empty space on the canvas that in turn creates one of the most striking pictorial compositions from the artist that has ever come to auction.



Charles-Hossein Zenderoudi, *Tchaar-Bagh*, 1981.
(Christie's Dubai, April 2008; price realised:
US \$1,609,000). © Christie's Images Ltd. 2008
© ADAGP, 2016.



*30

MOHAMMED EHSAI
(IRANIAN, B. 1939)

Untitled

signed and dated in Farsi, signed and dated 'Ehsai 12' (lower right)

oil on canvas

74⁷/₈ x 57in. (190 x 145cm.)

Painted in 2012

US\$200,000–300,000

AED730,000–1,100,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner.

Celebrated for their amalgamation of traditional calligraphic elements with contemporary artistic practices, Mohammed Ehsai's works are true representations of modern Iranian culture and art. They are unique in that they transform the traditional Persian script into pure abstraction. Borrowing from the past, the calligraphy in Ehsai's present work only retains the stylistic and design elements of the calligraphic Persian script, reinventing it as a purely aesthetic form. Each long and delicate brushstroke conveys Ehsai's artistic passion and each letter becomes an individual visual element that comes together as a whole. In this work, the powerful red brushstrokes create a strong composition and are painted over a contrasting black background. By choosing to recreate long sweeping lines of *alifs* (the first letter in the Arabic and Persian alphabet) juxtaposed

against intertwining and illegible letters, Ehsai recreates a mystical trance-like composition. Furthermore, the transcendental facet of the painting is perpetuated by the lyrical curvature of each red letter. A master calligrapher, Ehsai also employs his extensive knowledge of graphic design to create this impressive picture.

Ehsai's body of work is divided into two categories: the 'calligraphy paintings', which are influenced by the traditional writings found in Islamic texts as well as architecture and the 'eternal alphabet' in which free-flowing brushstrokes create a design derived from the repetition of characters. As it draws from traditional forms of Persian scripts and also incorporates the rhythmic repetition of existing and reinvented letters, this powerful red composition integrates both of Ehsai's painting styles.

This work is incontrovertibly a tribute to the ancient art of calligraphy. Since the written word has historically been used as a tool for the documentation and transfer of knowledge, each written piece, before even being read, holds intellectual weight. As such, the presence of written forms and words in an artistic creation, let alone in calligraphic art, places this work in a symbolic order of meaning. In the present work, as the re-invented script is derived from real characters, the intellectual weight is not lost.

Ehsai's contribution to the status of Iranian calligraphy painting is unrivalled and he stands today as one of the leading figures in Modern and

Contemporary Iranian art. Typical of the artist's oeuvre, the notion of the free flowing letter, in vibrant hues, instils an appreciation in the mind of the viewers for the traditional art form revisited in a Modern manner. Given that script has been rendered illegible and the emphasis is on the overarching beauty and curvature of each letter, this work has a secular meaning rather than a religious one. By elongating some letters and shortening others, Ehsai has extracted the stylistic elements of the calligraphy art form, thus taking from the cultural past and producing something new and relevant for the times. Moreover, Ehsai's unique style is considered highly influential amongst the younger generation of contemporary Iranian calligraphers and graphic designers. As is characteristic of the artist's oeuvre, the strong palette in the present lot also suggests a dualistic universe between what is legible and illegible, what is real and what is not and the dualism between the earthly and the spiritual. This striking visual contrast imparts the work with an alluring monumentalism.

In 2008, Christie's sold Ehsai's *He is Merciful* for US\$1,616,000, the world-record price for the Iranian Modernist at auction. Furthermore, the second highest selling work by Ehsai, a contemporary work titled *Banquet*, achieved US\$662,500 at a Christie's auction in October 2010. In light of previous results at auction for comparable works, the present lot stands as one of his best works to appear at auction in recent years.



Mohammed Ehsai, *He Is The Merciful*, 2007.
(Christie's Dubai, April 2008; price realised:
US\$1,161,000). © Christie's Images Ltd. 2008



PROPERTY FROM
A PRIVATE COLLECTION

*31

MARWAN
(SYRIAN, B. 1934)

each: Untitled

- (i) signed and dated 'MARWAN 73' (upper left)
- (ii) signed and dated 'MARWAN 72' (lower right);
- (iii) signed and dated 'marwan 73' (lower right)

(i) oil on canvas

(ii) pencil on paper

(iii) pastel on paper

(i) 35 x 51¹/₈in. (89 x 130cm.)

(ii) 8¹/₄ x 10¹/₈in. (21 x 25.7cm.)

(iii) 19⁵/₈ x 25¹/₂in. (50 x 65cm.)

(i) Painted in 1973

(ii) Executed in 1972

(iii) Executed in 1973

US\$ 100,000–150,000

AED 370,000–550,000

PROVENANCE:

(i) Galerie Michael Hasenclever, Munich.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

(ii) Anon. sale, Galerie Bassenge Berlin, 26 November 2011, lot 8198.

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

(iii) Anon. sale, Galerie Bassenge Berlin, 26 November 2011, lot 8199.

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

Ephemeral and vulnerable in the swift notation of their equally random and careful brushwork, it is with certainty that any work by the pioneer of artistic expression and Arab Modernism Marwan can capture, enchant and captivate its viewer by transporting them on a tender journey into the multi-dimensional realm of the inner psyche. Suffusing his art with a light through a use of rhythmically superimposed layers of transparencies that recall the magic of Oriental cities and tales, to stand in front of a work by Marwan is to partake in an intimate experience that is simultaneously universal and mystic.

Having spent the last six decades in Germany where he currently resides, Marwan's solid inspiration and appreciation for German Post-War art is not a coincidence. Studying with fellow artist Georg Baselitz under the mentorship of artist Hans Trier, a leader in the *Tachisme* movement, Marwan's paintings magnificently succeed in deeply reflecting his own identity as a wanderer between the two worlds - as a German pioneer of European Modernism with a close connection to the cultural legacy and spiritual tradition of the Arab world.

Within the schism of these two opposites, Marwan overcomes a painful longing, hopeful anticipation and human loneliness in his quest to passionately

display and explain his world through his paintings. Restricting himself to few simple and essential themes, most prevalently the head, which has in the coming years and decades become Marwan's almost sole theme, he conceives of the head as a metaphor of his world - as a landscape of the soul and as the great orb of the universe. By reiterating this image over and over, in hundreds of variations, it becomes clear that the capacity for the life of these heads is astounding; they stand for the whole body and thus for the human being in its entirety.

In 1973 Marwan received a scholarship for the Cité des Arts and was able to realise the long life dream of his youth. Since his beginnings as a student of Arabic literature in university, it was Marwan's sole intention to study and live in Paris, which he felt was the epicentre of emerging cultural and philosophical practice. His works from the 1960s in Berlin spoke of an underlying sense of soul searching and attempt to find a reconciliation between his longing for the west and his consequent longing for the Orient. Surrealist yet deeply Expressionist, his work took on a colour palette of dark and sultry tones but in Paris, his encounter with Impressionism imparted an almost jovial undertone to his works; shifting away from darker palettes, Marwan started



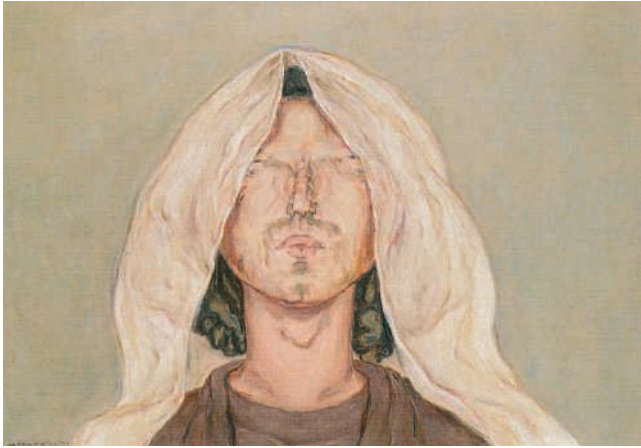
(i)



(ii)



(iii)



Marwan, *The Veil*, 1970-1971.
© The artist.



Marwan, *The Veil*, 1973.
© The artist.

to incorporate silky oranges, violets and emerald green, inspired by the mountains of his beloved Syria. The artist's work from this period took on an enticing sense of rhythm exemplified by his free brushstrokes of pure colour.

Christie's is delighted to offer a seminal example from the artist that reveals Marwan's artistic trajectory that developed from his *Facial Landscapes* of the 1960s to his most celebrated Head series, entitled *The Veil* accompanied by two comprehensive studies showing the inner workings of the Marwan's artistic practice. Following his arrival in Paris, Marwan began a series of paintings entitled *Veil Paintings* in the early 1970s that suggest concealment and revelation that are as a result of his sense of foreignness when he arrived in Berlin and Paris. In not so much an identity crisis, but inability to become fully immersed in either German, Syrian or French identity in

its entirety, this inner schism of the psyche is translated into his expressive and gestural paintings. Bedecked in a light veil, his protagonist, strangely but seductively androgynous, bathed in a soft layering of colours, simultaneously attracts and evades, calling for a dialogue that tackles the notions of concealment and revelation. In this sense it becomes clear that Marwan's overcoming of foreignness is happiness in an unveiling and searching for truth. The veil becomes a metaphor for the barrier that protects his inner identity whilst referencing the veiled women of the Damascus bazaars. Much like these women, Marwan implies that once their true identity is revealed, all notions of perceptions are shed, the question remains what is real and not real; distance is now a veil concealing a mystery one now knows more.

Almost always painting his self, these paintings are self-portraits in the sense that they are psychic profiles of the artist - there is physically little facial resemblance - although each of his paintings look similar when viewed separately. It is not until they are looked at in quick succession of each other that one realises they are in fact different. They are, in turn, the artist's 'inner faces' capturing his mental state at the time he chooses to transfer his emotions onto the canvas. This multiple personality is mirrored in the multi-dimensionality of his paintings, exemplified by the viewer's different experiences and interpretations of the reactions of his faces when viewed from one angle to the next - while simultaneously looking at this one painting, the viewer thus takes on this emotional journey through its shifts of distance and perspective.

In the three example of *Veil Paintings*, Marwan incorporates a flowing brushwork and tender colouration, in which an extraordinary emotional language emerges, at once nuanced, but expressive, pulsating in the ability for these fleshy tones to flow into each other into a consistency that can only reference his beloved landscape. To this end, the *Veil* series coalesce with his *Landscape*

series to form the beginnings of the celebrated *Head* series, such as *Large Head (Turned Towards the Right)*. Although these examples show a strong affiliation for the dark brown colour palette that the artist would use to frame his figures and faces, the complexity behind this composition is exemplified by the artist's technique; he applies layer after layer with great patience and intensity - which acts metaphorically to highlight the multi-layered human psyche. Upon closer view, it becomes apparent that Marwan is starting to incorporate a more vibrant use of fields of colour that is to be exemplified in *The Veil* from 1973. Here one realises that the veil becomes a symbol for shedding the veil of disillusionment, what emerges is a sense of renewal that is heightened with the use of shimmering radiant fields of colour. Through a delicate use of transparency in lightness of touch, Marwan imparts an ethereal quality to these works implying a sense of the spiritual that is instantly recognised. Not all of the works from this series started with this sense of fragility; much like the series the artist had developed in the 1960s *The Veil* shows an artist who is slowly coming to terms with his own identity and revelation of his unique style. His self-portrait which is much clearer and less androgynous than the present lot lacks a sense of transparency but much like his later examples from the series, a renewed person, confident with their sense of self, emerges from beneath the shadows.

With this in mind, we see a gentle smirk across the face in each of the compositions on offer. It is as if the artist reveals a sense of confidence and joy in self-discovery. It is almost as if the figure teases the viewer, enticing them to come closer and search deep into their soul whose eyes burn with desire with a gentility that is tender and endearing. In this context *The Veil* offers an exemplary insight into the inner workings of Marwan's mind and an instrumental comprehension of the development of the artist's visual vocabulary tracing an exact evolution of style that is rare to find at auction and unparalleled in its clarity.



Marwan, *GROSSER KOPF (NACH RECHTS)* (*Large Head (Turned Towards the Right)*), 2013.
(Christie's Dubai, April 2013; price realised: US\$171,750). © Christie's Images Ltd. 2013



SAFWAN DAHOUL

(SYRIAN, B. 1961)

Untitled (Woman Standing in the Rain)

signed in Arabic, signed and dated 'DAHOUL 03' (upper left)

acrylic on canvas

47¼ x 39⅜in. (120 x 100cm.)

Painted in 2003

US\$ 100,000–150,000

AED 370,000–550,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner.

LITERATURE:

Ayyam Gallery (ed.), *Safwan Dahoul*, Damascus/Dubai/Beirut 2009 (illustrated in colour, pp. 20, 36 & 235).

Safwan Dahoul's work exemplifies the legacy of traditional visual arts at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Damascus, his alma mater. After studying there under the mentorship of leading Syrian modernists, he earned a doctorate from the Higher Institute of Plastic Arts in Mons, Belgium. He returned to Damascus after acquiring his degree, greatly impacting a younger

generation of artists when he began teaching at the Faculty of Fine Arts. Not only has he been an instigator of great change in the realms of contemporary Syrian art, but he has also been a harbinger of dynamic acts of expression during a time of great change in his home country.

Focusing on figuration in most of his works, Dahoul relies on his subjects to relay his emotional and psychological states of being, concentrating on the conditions of longing, solitude and estrangement, which he experienced throughout his life. His work is not strictly biographical, yet it contains a great deal of personal pathos. He is able to relay this through his work by rendering a subject with a highly visible sense of isolation during moments of personal, subconscious or external crisis, be it in a moment of personal mourning, loss or - ostensibly - during a regional political crisis.

These ideas of states of being are expressed in the subject's very physical body. Dahoul mostly depicts female subjects, whose faces and bodies are contorted to emphasise the magnitude of their psychological state. In *Untitled (Woman Standing in the Rain)*, Dahoul's iconic female protagonist evolves within a confined environment that denotes a profound psychological confusion. The claustrophobic sentiment provoked by the presence of a blackened window, which seems to close on the woman's figure, is further enhanced by her defeated body language. With arms tightly crossed on her chest and her head bowing down, she huddles underneath an umbrella while her delicate fingers grasp its handle. As Dahoul's heroine seeks to find shelter underneath her protective screen, the impossibility of encountering rain inside the house leads to consider the presence of indomitable forces. Rendered in the artist's habitual greyscale, the highly emotional scene rises in tension as the female's shut eyes, hunched shoulders and bowed head reveal the expectation of imminent danger. Inspired by the artist's quest for a refuge within his own realm of painting, *Untitled (Woman Standing in the Rain)* verbalises the vulnerability of human life in the face of the world's unpredictable violence. (in collaboration with Marina Iordan)



The artist in front of one of his works, 2009.
© Ayyam Gallery.



AYMAN BAALBAKI (LEBANESE, B. 1975)

Untitled

signed in Arabic and dated '15' (lower right)

acrylic on canvas

78¾ x 98¾in. (200 x 250cm.)

Painted in 2015

US\$120,000–150,000

AED440,000–550,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner.

The ever-continuing conflict within the Middle East has plagued the minds of numerous artists, however none tackle it with as much vigour and bursting creative expression as Ayman Baalbaki. Ranging from his subject matter to his complex artistic methodology, Baalbaki has the ability to transform the one-dimensional plane of the canvas into an overwhelmingly turbulent surface of creative dynamism. Born in 1975, the year of the Lebanese Civil War, it was inevitable that the dramatic imagery and strong emotional turmoil would extensively permeate his oeuvre, critically informing the trajectory of his visual language. He uses his powerful feelings as the ammunition to craft beautifully intense works of art, using the subject-matter of war as a vehicle for his artistic expression.

It is with great excitement that Christie's presents a monumental work from Baalbaki's oeuvre, part of a collection entitled *Destruction & Loss*, through which he confidently tackles the ravaging effects of Middle Eastern conflicts. Through tremendous visual complexity, Baalbaki attempts to re-construct the savage ruins of bombed out buildings. By filling the entirety of the picture



Ayman Baalbaki, *Untitled*, 2010. Tate Modern.
© Agial Gallery.

plane, his technical mastery combines a unique formulation of space and dimensionality to breathe new life into the reconstruction of war-plagued structures. Despite the visible violence of the scenes he creates, his approach to painting seems to soften and invigorate the subject, making the scene one of fascination rather than negative feeling. With a comparable work having recently been acquired by the Tate Modern in London for their permanent collection, the skillfulness of such a piece is unprecedented.

By painting with aggression onto his canvases, these visceral explorations stem from the displacement, loss and instability Baalbaki experienced growing up in a war-riddled society. As a painter with the skill to portray both portraits and landscapes with equal creativity and finesse, he ensures that each one of his canvases are unique. Known for two distinct series of works, *Destruction & Loss* - the one from which this present work is taken and the *Moulatham* series which presents veiled war heroes, Baalbaki expresses the true diversity of his creative abilities and proves himself to be a master of the monumental.

In this present work, we see broken buildings depicted in the expressionist style that is known to be his signature. Formulating a practice that is truly his own, the artist revives otherwise desolate and depressing images of the architectural damage of war into tableaux of dynamic structural representation. Painting with conviction, the confidence he possesses in his style is the inherent outcome of his painterly skill. Despite the literal qualities of the displayed scene, Baalbaki's densely packed acrylic canvases do far more than serve a monotonous documentary purpose. On the contrary, the artist uses these structures as the visual apparatus for sharing his personal traumas. The thick application of paint orchestrates a new dimension of dynamism which he achieves

with every brushstroke. Each one contributing to the impasto technique that forms thick layers of paint on his canvases, they help to create a unique surface texture that attempts to mimic the complexity of the devastated environment he is trying to portray.

Fuelled by the personal trauma induced by the war, it is undoubted that Baalbaki's canvases are the result of a deeply intimate moment he shares with his canvases. As a form of emotional release, painting provides the artist with the sense of liberation envied under the societal pressures and restrictions of war. At first glance, the contrast between the sunset-kissed sky seems to bring a sense of lightness to the predominantly dark and solemn scene below, however upon closer investigation, the juxtaposition seems less than obvious. With the unusual traces of pink permeating into the rubble of the damaged structure, there is a visual sense of continuity that has a profound impact on our visual perspective. Translating into a more fluid and less stark visual representation, Baalbaki's attention to detail amongst the myriad of colours and chaos he portrays on his canvases is tremendous. Softening the scene with a rosy pink hue, one sees this less as a scene of violence, but more as one of sadness and loss, eschewing the aggressive for the troubled or wounded.

What further enhances Baalbaki's unusual technique is his fascinating ability to convey a sense of movement on the canvas. Constructing scenes of resounding energy, each stroke is emotionally charged and intricately purposeful, each one armed with a strong sense of conviction. As though we are looking at a photograph, Baalbaki has the ability to capture this moment as if a snapshot in time. With its monumental scale, the work transports the viewer in the action of the deconstruction, consumed by its intricacies and bold subject matter.





*34

AZADE KÖKER
(TURKISH, B. 1949)

Jerusalem

signed 'Köker' (on the reverse)

mixed media on canvas, in two parts

each: 51 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 59in. (130 x 150cm.);

overall: 51 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 118 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (130 x 300cm.)

Executed in 2015

US\$60,000–80,000

AED220,000–290,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner.



The tram way in Jerusalem is considered to be reaching out all the neighborhoods, connecting east of the city to the west; but this is not the case. Every district is confined in itself. People have to develop skills of self-defense. In the districts closed for foreigners, there seems to prevail an air of tension as if it is going to explode any second. The modern centre of the city, the districts of Muslims, Christians and Jews are completely apart from each other. Wailing Wall seems to be the centre of religious tourism. But there are real walls (seen and unseen) that separate districts and citizens. These walls are apparently laden with the anguish of the past; they can be named as the walls of painful memories. The walls of people. Jerusalem depicts a city through human bodies that are stuck between the stones.

(Azade Köker, 2016).

PROPERTY FROM
A PRIVATE COLLECTION, USA

*35

MONIR FARMANFARMAIAN
(IRANIAN, B. 1924)

The Sun Maiden

signed and inscribed in Farsi, signed, dated and inscribed
'MONIR.F.F.74 TEHRAN' (on the reverse)
mirror mosaic, reverse-glass painting, embroidered fabric,
sequins and plaster on board
39½ x 55½in. (100.5 x 140.2cm.)
Executed in 1974

US\$ 180,000–240,000

AED660,000–870,000

PROVENANCE:

Jacques Kaplan/Mario Ravagnan Gallery, New York.
Private Collection.

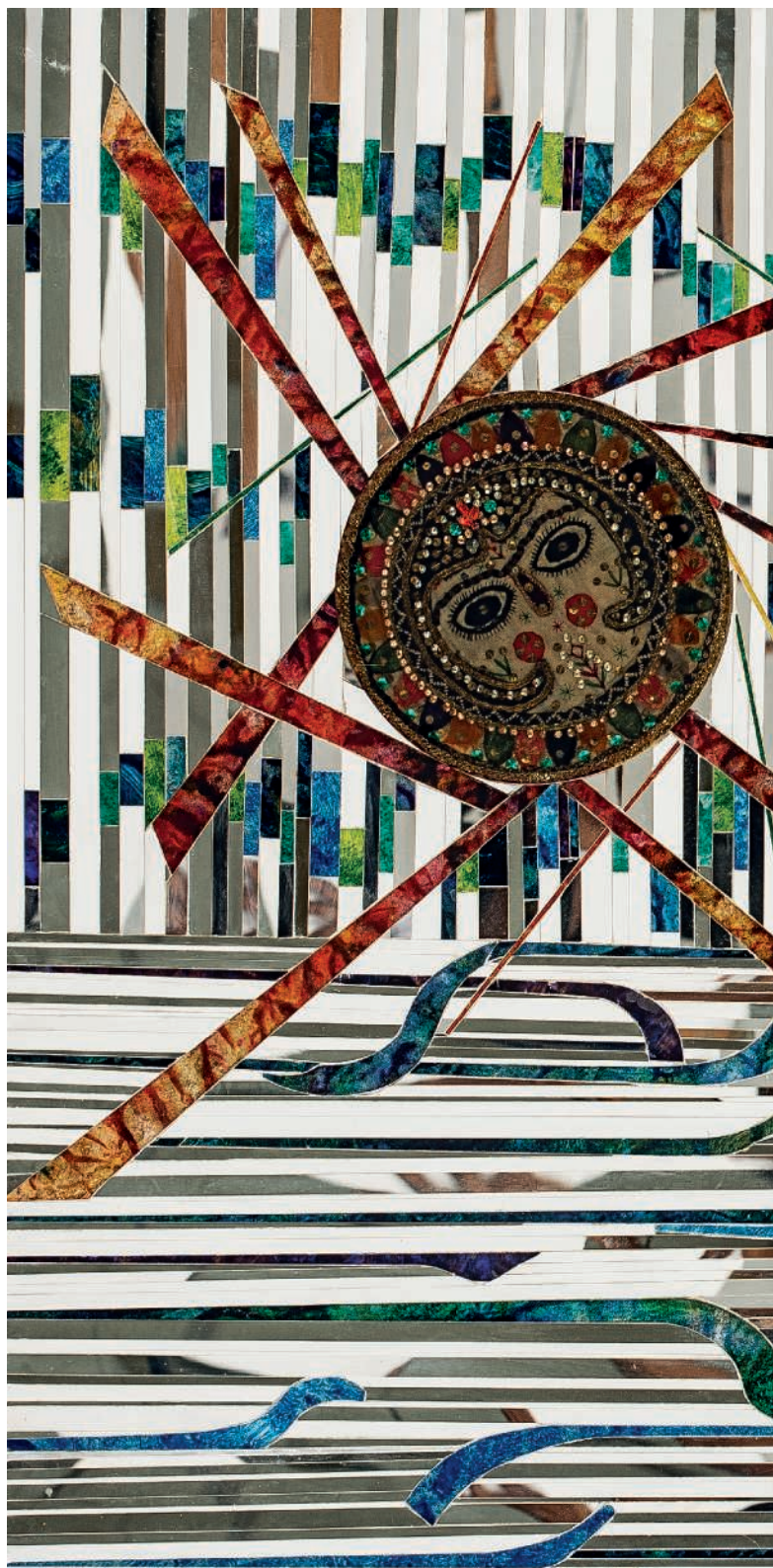
A gift to the present owner's mother in 1975, thence by descent.

EXHIBITED:

New York, Jacques Kaplan/Mario Ravagnan Gallery,
Recent Works by Monir Farmanfarmaian, 1975.

LITERATURE:

R. Issa, *Mosaics of Mirrors Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian*,
Tehran 2006 (illustrated in colour, titled *The Sun Lady*
and incorrectly dated, p. 139).







Farmanfarmaian in front of a commission of mirror panels at a collector's Park Avenue apartment, New York, 1981.
© Monir Farmanfarmaian.

The Sun Maiden is undeniably one of the most captivating works by the internationally acclaimed pioneer Monir Farmanfarmaian whose career spans over 70 years. Executed in 1974 at a time when Monir lived a vibrant life in New York amidst the city's hip and glamorous art circle and befriended artists like Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Joan Mitchell, the present work encapsulates every facet of her admirable artistic identity. Exhibited in her first solo exhibition outside of Iran, this work was one of the star pieces in her New York exhibition at Jacques Kaplan gallery in 1975.

Born in Iran in 1924, Monir dreamt of the Parisian art scene during her teenage years, but as the war started, she was unable to reach the French capital. At the end of the war, in 1945, she boarded an American battleship to California via Mumbai. From California, she soon travelled to New York where she settled for more than a decade. While she attended art classes at Cornell University and at Parsons School of Design to study fashion illustration, her evenings would be spent at the Tenth Street Club where she mingled with contemporary Western artists. In fact, she met Andy Warhol, then a young commercial illustrator and acquired from him a few of his coloured illustrations of shoes in exchange for one of her famous *Mirror Balls*, which he famously kept on his desk in his Maddison Avenue home until his death. In 1957, Monir moved back to Iran and exhibited at the 29th Venice Biennale, winning the gold medal in 1958. She travelled across the country to explore each region's traditions and culture, discovered handicrafts and folk art,

coffeehouse paintings that she collected as well as the fascinating architecture of her homeland. It is in 1966 during a short stay in Shiraz, that her life as an artist changed forever as she entered the 14th century Shah Cheragh shrine and was mesmerised by its endless mirror mosaics. Since, Monir has dedicated her artistic production to recreating the infinite reflections throughout her works, in variations of colour and form.

Monir's works resonate traditional art and reveal her various inspirations, ranging from Islamic geometry and architectural patterns to science, philosophy and spirituality while they remain essentially pop and engaging. *The Sun Maiden* perfectly epitomises the essence of her artistic production as it plays around with mirrors, pop colours and geometric patterns. It skillfully combines mirror and reverse-glass painting in an attempt to refract and reflect light, thus creating kaleidoscopic vibrations that are almost hypnotising and recall the disco nights of New York City the artist experimented in. It also recalls Monir's geometric drawings that she made in the early 1970s often in her living room, before she had her own studio space in the city; these enchanting, colourful and partly abstracted drawings reveal her architectural inspiration and highlight the multidisciplinary quality of her oeuvre.

Fascinated by the Sufi cosmology and the symbolism in geometry, Monir incorporated various shapes and colours - circles, triangles, squares, polygons - in her works, each of these shapes a metaphor for metaphysical values and ideas. In *The Sun Maiden*, the various geometric shapes and colours carry multiple layers of inspiration. Evocative of her glitzy and fashionable lifestyle as a young New Yorker, the present work equally hints at the Persian symbolism that surrounds the Sun known as the ruler of heavens, a symbol that is often combined with that of the Lion in the traditional Iranian iconography.

This auspicious symbol of good fortune rises from the back of a sword-wielding lion of Ali in the Qajar and Pahlavi flags. Highly emblematic, the Lion and the Sun indeed formed the central coat of arms in Iran's national flag from 1846 to 1979; it evoked the nation's ancient and modern traditions and remained the official symbol of the country, until it was forcefully removed from all public spaces in 1979 during the Islamic Revolution in an attempt to wipe out any signs of the old regime, considered by the revolutionary guards as being an oppressive westernising monarchy.

Moreover, *The Sun Maiden*, as the title suggests and as is reflected through the round female face

decorated with sequins and delicate embroidery, refers to the mother figure, known throughout literature and urban legends to be overseeing the Persian life from above. Her benevolent smile and circular face adorns many openings in Iranian art and architecture. Her ancestors are among sun-discs of sun-worshipping Central Asians and its related iconography is present throughout Iranian handicrafts, such as in the renowned Suzani textiles. Her elaborately Persianate form conjures up the goodness of the ultimate Zoroastrian source of all life and light. She is depicted in the opening pages of manuscripts and often above the entrance portals of countless buildings, lovingly rendered in polychrome Qajar tiles.

An example of the symbolic importance of the sun - and in the same way Louis XIV's Sun-King symbolised the court of Versailles with the emblem of the radiating sun - Mohammad Reza Pahlavi identified himself as Aria-Mehr (the Sun of Aria). However, unlike the definitely male 'Le Soleil', *Khorshid Khanom* as she is called in Farsi is positively female. She is often viewed as a personification of Persia, alike a Marianne, personifying Liberty, Justice and Charity.

In an attempt to perhaps fuse her Iranian heritage and her Western style and artistic identity, Monir beautifully combines multiple features of her artistic exploration in the present work. Monumental in size and historically important in light of Monir's celebrated career, *The Sun Maiden* is one of her most important works to ever appear at auction; a beautiful and captivating rediscovery that was held since 1975 in private hands, *The Sun Maiden* is undeniably a collector's piece.

Monir's works have been exhibited extensively in Iran, in the US, in Europe and in the Middle East. Some of her important exhibitions include that at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, at the Leighton House Museum in London, at the Haus der Kunst, Munich and in various editions of the Venice Biennale, respectively in 1958, 1964, 1966 and most recently in 2009. Monir's major commissioned installations include works for the Queensland Art Museum, Australia (2009), the Victoria & Albert Museum's Jameel Collection (2006), the Dag Hammarskjöld building, New York (1981) and the Niyavaran Cultural Centre in Tehran (1977-78). Her works are held in important private and public collections around the world, such as the Metropolitan Museum in New York, Grey Art Gallery at NYU, The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, the British Museum, Tate Modern and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the Guggenheim in Abu Dhabi.



PROPERTY OF
A PRIVATE COLLECTOR

36

FARHAD MOSHIRI
(IRANIAN, B. 1963)

Conference

signed and dated in Farsi, signed, titled and dated
“‘CONFERENCE’ Farhad Moshiri 2008’ (on the reverse)
oil and embroidery on canvas laid down on panel
50 x 78in. (127 x 198.5cm.)
Painted in 2008

US\$ 120,000–180,000

AED 440,000–650,000

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner.

LITERATURE:

R. Janssen, *The Third Line*, Perrotin & T. Ropac (eds.),
Farhad Moshiri, Brussels 2010 (illustrated in colour, pp. 90–91).
D. Nasser-Khadivi, F. Rahim Ismail (eds.), *Farhad Moshiri*, vol. 1,
Milan 2016 (illustrated in colour, pp. 180–181).

An internationally acclaimed Iranian artist of unparalleled creativity, Farhad Moshiri is notorious for crafting the unexpected, he absorbs the creative formula of the cool and kitsch to orchestrate masterful collaborations between high art and popular culture. Through boundless material production, ranging from the traditional to the wildly eccentric, Moshiri graces his canvas with an artistic methodology which is not only vibrant in medium, but also in subject matter. He populates his monumental canvases with shimmering ornaments, vibrantly coloured lacquers and sparkling stones; his artistic endeavors drawing inspiration from text, tradition and consumerism. As a result of his unique visual lexicon, it is undoubted that every work of art produced by Moshiri is truly unique.

Uniquely harmonising Eastern and Western cultural paradoxes, Moshiri reaps the benefits of having a diverse set of artistic influences. With his finger on the pulse of creative energy, each piece of art represents a distinct social message, adding an essential dimension of meaning to his craft. Alongside genius material experimentation, the artist addresses key issues of political inequality and societal consumerism throughout his works. By the marriage of a skilled painterly hand and unbounded creativity, Moshiri constructs some of the most dynamic works of Middle Eastern art,

making him a true pioneer of the contemporary artistic generation. The diversity of his material production began during his education in Fine Arts at CalArts in California, before moving back to Tehran in 1991. He had the ability to experiment with the numerous elements of contemporary artistic production such as video art and installation, alongside the more traditional mediums of drawing and painting. As a master of both, it was not long before his hybrid art forms became the distinguishing feature of his artistic style.

In *Conference*, we are presented with an almost predictable scene of what seems to be an elaborate business meeting. With unopened water bottles and half drunk coffee cups filling the semi-circular table, we are presented this scene as though we ourselves are seated at the table. Transporting us right to the heart of the discussion, we see the suited and silhouetted figures of our colleagues or potential business partners sitting around a table. Hands folded, taking notes or deep in discussion Moshiri ensures that we, the viewer, are immersed into the conversation of the scene. However, it is only a matter of seconds before we are met with the obvious fact that there is something unusual about the scene, the faces of the characters sitting around us have been shielded from our vision wearing masks of sparkling stones.

By removing the identity of the figured men, we are struck by the sense of formality and unusual vulgarity of the scene. Stripped of their identities, these men become faceless crusaders of their empires. Perhaps hinting at the emotionless actions often taken by large-scale consumerist enterprises, Moshiri addresses these issues with bold conviction. These sparkling and delicately studded globes which replace their heads form masks which continue to accentuate elements of their visual expressions. While it seems as though the man on the left is doing the talking, we can see the other men facing in his direction, avidly writing down what is being said.

Through a combination of painting and embroidery, Moshiri shows off his genius ability to amalgamate two juxtaposing techniques to form one unique visual harmony. His skillful hand as a painter is shown by the close reality the artist is able to portray, capturing the scene as a snapshot in time as though it were a documentary photograph. Exacerbating this notion is its almost monochromatic hues, highlighting its appearance perhaps as an image from a newspaper. With an air of comedic value and light-hearted interpretation, Moshiri's technique is truly evocative of the creative energy that has become synonymous to Middle Eastern art.





PROPERTY FROM
A EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

*37

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
(IRANIAN, B. 1978)

Typical Iranian Funeral

signed and titled in Farsi, signed and dated '2008 Rokni haeri'
(on the reverse of the right panel)

oil on canvas; in two parts

each: 78¾ x 118¼in. (200 x 300cm.);

overall: 78¾ x 236¼in. (200 x 600cm.)

Painted in 2008

US\$40,000–60,000

AED150,000–220,000

PROVENANCE:

Wedel Fine Art, London.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2008.

EXHIBITED:

London, Saatchi Gallery, *Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East*, 2009
(illustrated in colour, pp. 50–53).

The Iranian artist Rokni Haerizadeh takes great pride in depicting the scenes that reflect upon memories of his homeland. Born in Tehran at the time of the Islamic Revolution when much of the rituals and customs were banned and forced to alter, the rich cultural landscape and traditions of his native country have not only been of great sentimental value, but also remained a vital source for his creativity. Using it as a pool of abundant inspiration, ceremonies, rituals, customs and landscapes from his hometown serve as the subject matter for his paintings. Having been widely represented through prestigious galleries in both solo and group shows around the world, as well as strongly present through numerous biennales, the artist has become a treasured and sought after artistic observer of his Middle Eastern culture.

What differentiates Haerizadeh's style from the rest of his contemporaries is the unusual modesty of his visual language. The depictions of his figures remain humorous and light, the canvas acting as a platform for the release of his creative energies. Filling the picture plane with curious perspectives and unusual proportions, Haerizadeh transforms the simplicity of figural shapes and paints them with confident artistic direction. These dynamic silhouettes are laced not only with a strong sense of spirit but are instilled with the artist's vibrant energy. With great enthusiasm, Haerizadeh creates a wonderful feeling of freedom and movement across his canvases, transporting the viewer into the heart of the Iranian way of life.



By uniquely observing the traditions of Iran, Haerizadeh makes both provocative and sympathetic portrayals of a society that differs so drastically from the West, yet seem eerily familiar. His ability to step back and appreciate the comedy that exists in the contradictions and flaws of one's own culture in a way that is so visually beautiful must be applauded. In *Typical Iranian Funeral*, Haerizadeh brings to life the polarities that exist not only between East and West but also those which exist within the traditions of Iran itself. Using the rituals of an Iranian funeral as a vehicle for doing so, the artist creates two distinct panels to address these apparent issues. While the panel on the left shows the more intimate of the two traditions, we see individual tables on which are seating the closest friends and families of the deceased as they share a plentiful meal, referring to the reception that often takes place after the burial. Alternatively, the right hand panel conveys a far more public spectacle, that of the actual funeral ceremony. While the bodies of the deceased are displayed to be grieved by mourners and strangers alike, the large-scale impersonality of the event is depicted by the loudspeaker which plays the proclaimed rites near the grave. Haerizadeh's profound ability to liberate the scene from the sense of tragedy that is synonymous to a funeral is truly a masterful feat. Through the satirical comedy he imbues into these

works, his artistic style brings about a true divergence from normative painterly styles. Lifting the emotional weight of the events in favour of a more comedic richness, his artistic style eschews heavily layered paint, abundantly ornamented canvases and geometric forms in favour of a richness which stems from a light-hearted and sensitive approach.

The originality of Haerizadeh's technique harmonises the comedic qualities of satire and cartoon-like silhouettes with the familiarity of the practices native to his hometown. Painting with an energetic expression, his observations have remained with him since his childhood and will continue to inform his artistic lexicon as he progresses through his artistic journey. The present work is undeniably one of Haerizadeh's masterpieces, along with two other monumental diptychs including its sister piece entitled *Typical Iranian Wedding* and *Shomal*, which both stand as the artist's auction records to date. The ensemble that is made of these three monumental paintings led to the artist's international recognition, as they were the star pieces at the much celebrated *Unveiled* exhibition, which showcased the best of Middle Eastern contemporary art at Saatchi in London in 2009.

AFRUZ AMIGHI (IRANIAN, B. 1974)

Nameless

steel, mosquito netting, wenge, invisible thread and ultra-suede
variable dimensions; 168 x 132 x 96in. (427 x 335 x 245cm.)

Executed in 2014

US\$80,000–120,000

AED300,000–440,000

PROVENANCE:

Leila Heller Gallery, New York/Dubai.

Christie's is delighted to present the work of compelling Iranian artist Afruz Amighi. Renowned for the intricacy of her creative process, she masterfully constructs profound installation pieces whose multi-faceted nature play on the brilliance of light and delicate materials such as mosquito netting, wenge, invisible thread and ultra-suede. With an oeuvre unlike that of any other Middle Eastern artist, she is renowned for her incredibly dexterous and delicately intricate works. The delicate craftsmanship that goes into each one of her works of art is displayed by the versatile use of media. Her intricate compositions rely on the visual imagery of Islam. Having been awarded the Jameel Prize in 2009, her installations have become globally respected monuments of creativity. Through a practice which looks to enhance the spirituality and beauty of her cultural heritage, the artist eschews the associated violence of Middle Eastern conflict in favour of beautiful fragility. By tackling this subject matter through the optical intrigue of light and shadow, she transforms one's viewing experience and invites them to interact with the work itself in the physical space that is created. With works of art that are truly unlike that of any other artist, she formulates originality and complexity through the most simple, yet most delicate and almost jewel-like, material elements.

As a native Iranian raised in New York City, Amighi considers herself to be one of the many individuals whose artistic methodology is informed by her hybridised cultural background. With the profound influence of East and West, the dichotomy of her cultural roots caused her to be part of the unique, multi-cultural generation that is becoming ever-prevalent around the world. This cross-cultural dialogue is essential to her artwork, the richness of the Islamic and Persian imagery in conversation with the large-scale contemporaneity that is associated to the installation art of the Western is fascinating. Rooted in geometrical patterns and arabesques, she draws on the decorative imagery and iconography of the Middle East to guide the delicacy of her designs. Her works negate the figural form and representational subject matter

in favour of rich symbolic meaning. Making it a point to not classify her works to a particular stem of meaning, she does not see herself as portraying a radical artistic message, nor does she classify herself into the categories of other Middle Eastern artists who adopted a great deal of war-based imagery into their oeuvre.

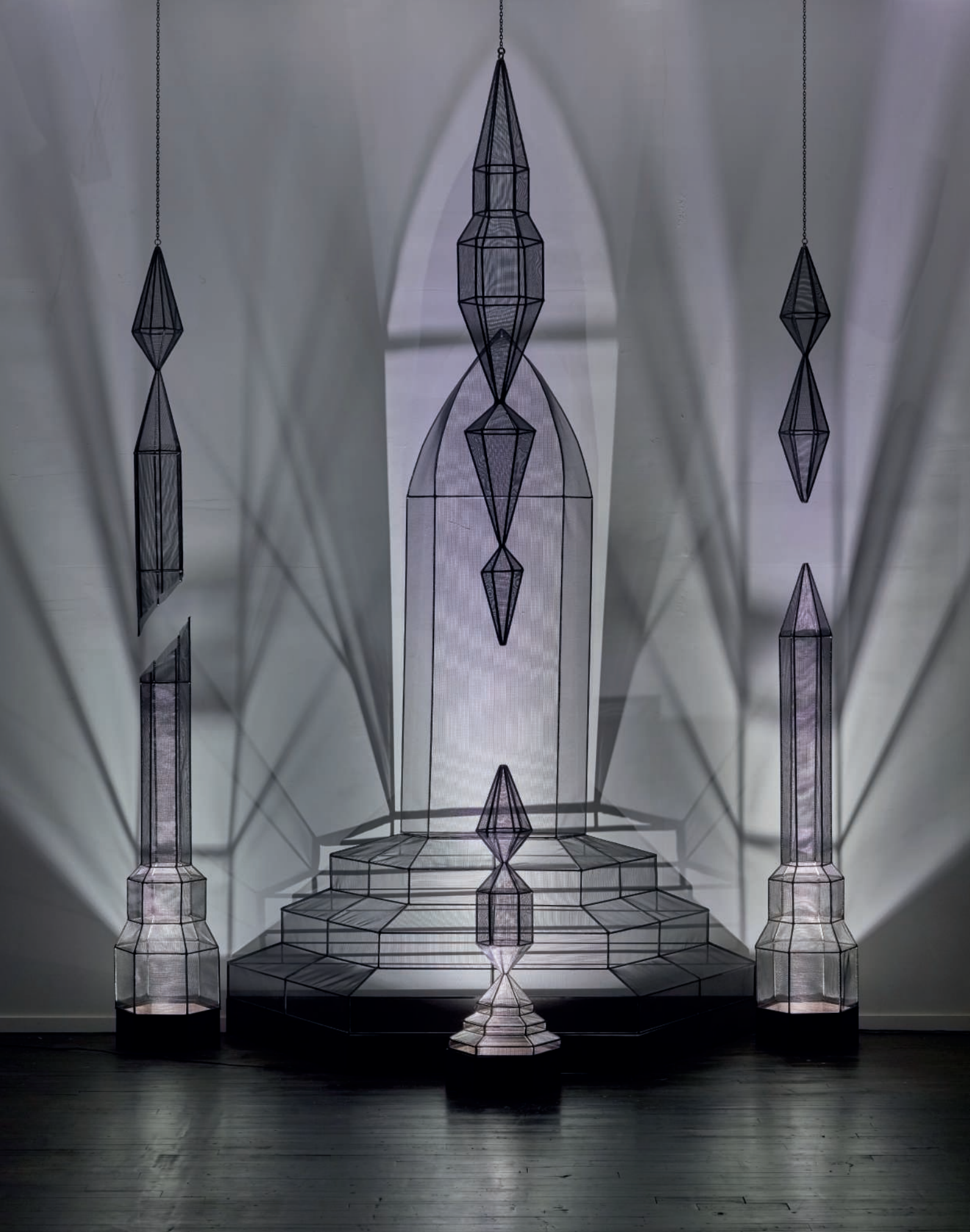
Yielding an irreplaceably singular experience, the multi-faceted nature of her works do not distract from the overall power of the visual phenomena she creates. The work harmonises hanging lantern-like artifacts with erected floor-based pieces at numerous and variable lengths, scales and distances from each other, creating a fascinating visual diversity. The tiered hanging pieces which take the form of both conical and triangular shapes delicately descend from the ceiling with an undeniable weightlessness. As elegant chandeliers, their monochromatic colour exudes a beautiful simplicity. Enhanced by their singular mediums, the ability to see through these beautiful shapes and the transparency effect that is created enhance the inherent fragility of the work.

Armed with a beautiful spirituality, her richly symbolic works draw inspiration from her fascination with Iranian culture. Having seen the extensive and intricate use of decorative glass and mosaic tile in Tehran, she often uses these materials as the foundation for her artistic productions. By placing works facing both upwards and downwards, the sense of space that is created as these works enter the viewer's environment creates a truly overwhelming bodily experience. Being surrounded by these works, they can be interpreted at any angle, providing unique visual perspectives as they enter our physical space. By walking around, inside and out of the installation, the viewer takes part in the installation and becomes an integral part of it. This ability to establish a new viewing experience is paramount for Amighi's work.

Alongside her intricate material production, the visual marvel that is created purely by the

introduction of light into her works creates a melodious result. Adding a new dimensionality to the viewing experience, physical structures are complimented by the dynamism of the interplay of light. While the majority of artist's rely on the literal qualities of their artistic practice to inform their audiences, Amighi relies on more than just the surface texture of her works to craft their desired visual message. The unpredictability of the light and the dance it creates on its surrounding environment adds a beautiful sense of the unknown; it is this very lack of predictability which makes this artwork so unique. Through the masterful creation of individual three-dimensional objects, each element operates as a beautiful piece of art in its own right, while together they create a dazzling installation piece. By the visceral unity of her fine and fragile materials and light, the materials compliment each other to play on our optical perspective. By pushing the boundaries of visual illusions, Amighi's sensitivity to material and pattern separate her from the majority of Middle Eastern artists, placing her at the forefront of the contemporary art.

'I became fascinated with the way in which places of worship had been transformed over time to serve different religions ... I was interested in the traces that each left upon the other and how in the end an 'inbetween' space was created... As I began researching shrines across Europe, I found that most were sites that, like Russian nesting dolls, contained shrines within shrines within shrines, dating back to the Roman era...During the time that I was building the framework for this installation... I witnessed a traumatic incident when coming home from my studio in Brooklyn. Just a few feet away from me I heard a loud crash and then the squeal of tires. I turned and saw a young man lying unconscious in the street. The car that had mowed him down on his bicycle had fled the scene. The young man died later that day at the hospital. I called the piece "Nameless" to honour an overlooked historical period and tendency, as well as a young man whose name I never learned.'
(The artist in conversation about the present work).





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HAYV KAHRAMAN

(IRAQI, B. 1981)

The Interpreter

signed with the artist's monogram (upper left)

oil on wood, in two parts

left: 48 x 48in. (121.9 x 121.9cm.);

right: 48 x 46in. (121.9 x 116.8cm.);

overall: 48 x 94in. (121.9 x 238.7cm.)

Painted in 2016

US\$60,000-80,000

AED220,000-290,000



The work of contemporary Iraqi artist Hayv Kahraman encompasses sculpture, drawing and painting with her central themes relating to gender and feminism as well as diaspora-related issues and the effects herewith on her. Equally inspired by Arabic calligraphy, Persian miniatures, Japanese woodblock tradition, Renaissance painting and Art Nouveau, the work of Iraqi-born Kahraman transcends geographical boundaries to tackle universal issues that are deeply-rooted in her personal experiences.

The Iraqi artist moved to Sweden with her family as a young girl and from there to California. The combination of defining origin, art history references and feminist matters are at the core of her oeuvre. Kahraman explores the body as a cultural construct and rethinks the bond between body and space. The many female figures populating her works identify her dedication to examining gender inequalities within her own cultural origin such as the subservience of women to men, as well as society's high demands of attaining a particular physical ideal. War and honour killings also come into

play in her work. She confronts both local and globally derived issues about women through the use of colour, pattern and figuration. Her figures are delicate in appearance and comical at times in the exaggeration of their bouffant hairstyles. Her highly polished painting technique set on wood or fabric juxtapose with the painted patterns on the garments of her figures, hence creating a sense of both space and spatial illusion whereby the deeper questions at hand can be examined. *The Interpreter* exemplifies Kahraman's dedication to these various themes through the mirroring of a female subject and the details of her dress and through her physical interaction with her reflection, delineated by a dark black line at the centre. Containing negative space and a lack of decorative detail, spatial and figural illusion references a duality of contexts, yet it might also suggest a duality inherent in the same figure. Moreover, it alludes to the duality of personalities a woman must contain so as to be able to navigate the many difficulties of daily life, 'interpreting' moments and situations for herself by reacting to things physically as well as emotionally in the best possible manner.

*40

HADIEH SHAFIE
(IRANIAN, B. 1969)

Dipped in Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue and Phthalo Green

signed twice (on the reverse)

ink, acrylic and paper with printed and handwritten Farsi text 'Eshgh' (Love/Passion)

40 x 60in. (101.6 x 152.4cm.)

Executed in 2015–2016

US\$60,000–80,000

AED220,000–290,000

PROVENANCE:

Leila Heller Gallery, New York/Dubai.

The work of Hadieh Shafie is bold, commanding, playful and full of secrets. Paper is her medium, gesture her tool, colour her muse and *eshgh*—the Persian word for romantic love—her subversive, hidden content. Her influences include the sixteenth-century Sufi poet Rumi, the effects of the 1979 Iranian revolution (particularly the suppression of reading material), high-modernist American colour field painting and the mobile body of performance art, which she explored as a graduate student after earning a degree in fine art at New York's Pratt Institute.

In *Dipped in Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue and Phthalo Green*, the colours are modified to precision. In other words, the title specifies the exact chemical and mineral compound that the scrolls were dipped in: ultramarine and phthalo. Yet this is a ruse, because deep inside inscribed in Shafie's handwriting within the spools, is the word *eshgh*, repeated again and again on each strip like a trauma. The artist works with commercially cut white paper whose edges she paints by hand; each page measures one by eleven inches. She then glues these pages, which are joined into spools, to a flat surface and assembles them like a jigsaw puzzle, holding them together with pH-neutral bookbinding glue. Shafie contains her works within frames of varying design, in this case rectangle. While such a shape recalls psychedelic, post minimal op art, the bands of colour, which are arranged by size and complexly combined, spread out into meticulous circles that mesmerise and feed the eye with the brilliance of ritual patterns.

Dipped in Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue and Phthalo Green is hardly a work of Greenbergian high modernism—although it grabs from that tradition and vocabulary—but rather an ingenious piece of visual art that reinvents and alludes to a library, bookcase, or magical storehouse of sacred ancient texts while invoking the rich history of romantic love in Persian culture and the repressive climate of revolutionary Tehran. An homage to Shafie's love of colour field painting and the pure pleasure of form, *Dipped in Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue and Phthalo Green* defies genre; it is and is not a painting. It is a love story both physically present and impossible to comprehend.

Hadieh Shafie's works have been included in exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad, including the Jameel Prize traveling exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, the Cantor Centre for Visual Arts at Stanford University and the San Antonio Museum of Art. Her work is in numerous public collections worldwide such as the Metropolitan Museum, NY; the Brooklyn Museum, NY; the British Museum, London; the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the Salsali Private Museum, Dubai.

(Text by Thyrsa Nichols Goodeve)





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The USA is also currently requiring all imports of property made of or containing wildlife material to be accompanied by a scientific confirmation of species and in some cases an additional confirmation of age. We have not obtained such confirmations prior to sale (unless specifically indicated) and buyers will be responsible for the costs of any such additional confirmations or opinions required for their proposed import into the USA.

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All items of post-1950 furniture included in this sale are items either not originally supplied for use in a private home or now offered solely as works of art. These items may not comply with the provisions of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989 and 1993, the "Regulations"). Accordingly, these items should not be used as furniture in your home in their current condition. If you do intend to use such items for this purpose, you must first ensure that they are reupholstered, restuffed and/or recovered (as appropriate) in order that they comply with the provisions of the Regulations.

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Terms used in this catalogue have the meanings ascribed to them below. Please note that all statements in this catalogue as to authorship are made subject to the provisions of the Conditions of Sale and Limited Warranty. Buyers are advised to inspect the property themselves. Written condition reports are usually available on request.

Name(s) or Recognised Designation of an Artist without any Qualification

In Christie's opinion a work by the artist.

*"Attributed to ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion probably a work by the artist in whole or in part.

*"Studio of ..."/"Workshop of ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion a work executed in the studio or workshop of the artist, possibly under his supervision.

*"Circle of ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion a work of the period of the artist and showing his influence.

*"Follower of ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion a work executed in the artist's style but not necessarily by a pupil.

*"Manner of ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion a work executed in the artist's style but of a later date.

*"After ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion a copy (of any date) of a work of the artist.

"Signed ..."/"Dated ..."/
"Inscribed ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion the work has been signed/dated/inscribed by the artist.

"With signature ..."/"With date ..."/
"With inscription ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion the signature/date/inscription appears to be by a hand other than that of the artist.

The date given for Old Master, Modern and Contemporary Prints is the date (or approximate date when prefixed with 'circa') on which the matrix was worked and not necessarily the date when the impression was printed or published.

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- For other business structures such as trusts, offshore companies or partnerships, please contact Christie's Credit Department at +971(0)4 425 5647 for advice on the information you should supply.
- A financial reference in the form of a recent bank statement or a reference from your bank. Christie's can supply a form of wording for the bank reference if necessary.

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Prospective buyers should register for a numbered bidding paddle at least 30 minutes before the auction.

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Telephone bids will be accepted for lots with low-end estimates of US\$1,500 and above, where arrangements are made no later than 24 hours prior to the sale and only if the capacity of our pool of staff telephone bidders allows. Arrangements to bid in languages other than English must be made well in advance of the sale date. Telephone bids may be recorded. By bidding on the telephone, prospective purchasers consent to the recording of their conversations. Christie's offers all absentee and telephone bidding services as a convenience to our clients, but will not be responsible for errors or failures to execute bids.

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For AED (Please use 3.674 as conversion rate to convert USD into AED)

Christie's Ltd.
AE340330000019100094264
a/c: 019100094264
SWIFT CODE: BOMLAEAD
Mashreq Bank
P.O. Box 1250
Dubai - UAE

Payment Instructions - Bank Transfer- USD account
Christie's Ltd.

AE860330000019100094298
a/c: 019100094298
SWIFT CODE: BOMLAEAD
Mashreq Bank
P.O. Box 1250
Dubai - UAE

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PO BOX 506685 - Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel:
+971 4 425 5647 Fax: +971 4 425 5639

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★

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Contact: Shanti Veigas
Tel: +971 (0)4 425 5647
Mobile: +971 (0)50 553 9243
Fax: +971 (0)4 425 5639
Email: sveigas@christies.com

Collection and deliveries will commence by appointment as of Sunday 20 March 2016.
Office Hours: 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

We regret that Christie's staff cannot accommodate requests to roll canvases sold on stretchers.

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Tel: +971 (0)4 375 9005
Mobile: +971 (0)50 553 9243
Fax: +971 (0)4 425 5639
Email: sveigas@christies.com

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Office Hours: 9.00 am - 5.00 pm.
Access to G4Si warehouse is through Gate 3 of the Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ).

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STORAGE AND COLLECTION

STORAGE AND COLLECTION

Please note that only gatepass lots can be collected on Sunday 20 March 2016 by appointment from the G4Si warehouse, Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZA), Unit 19. All import lots (*) can be collected/delivered from Monday 21 March 2016, subject to customs approval.

CONTACT: SHANTI VEIGAS

TEL: +971 (0)4 425 5674

MOBILE: +971 (0)50 553 9243

FAX: +971 (0)4 425 5639

EMAIL: SVEIGAS@CHRISTIES.COM

Office Hours: 9.00 am - 5.00 pm.

Access to G4Si warehouse is through Gate No.3 of the Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ)

COLLECTION

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Method	Where	Charges Due	Packing as required/Costs
On-site Delivery (till one hour after the sale)	At Jumeirah Emirates Towers	5% duty on low estimate Customs documentation fee AED 350 per invoice Handling fee AED 150 per lot Art Handler(s): 150 AED per art handler	Bubble Wrap: Free at client's own risk Soft wrap (Cardboard Jacket, Acid Free Paper Blanket): depending on size, ranging from min AED 160-300 AED
Collection of Lots (By appointment)	G4S C19, G4S- Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZA)	5% duty on low estimate Customs documentation fee AED 350 per invoice Handling fee AED 150 per lot Art Handler(s): 150 AED per art handler	Bubble Wrap: Free at client's own risk Soft wrap (Cardboard Jacket, Acid Free Paper Blanket): depending on size, ranging from min AED 160-300
Local Deliveries (With Fine Art Cool Truck, soft wrapping and accompanied by a fine art handlers)	UAE • Within Dubai-415 • To Abu Dhabi • To Sharjah/Ajman • To Other Emirates	5% duty on low estimate Customs documentation fee AED 350 per invoice Handling fee AED 150 per lot plus Transit Insurance, if desired Art Handler(s): 150 AED per art handler To Abu Dhabi AED 1250 To Sharjah AED 950 To Ajman AED 1250 To other Emirates AED 1500	Same as above for Bubble and Soft wrap Wooden crates (Artworks wrapped in soft wrap and placed inside the crates): depending on size
International Deliveries (based on confirmed shipping instructions from buyers)	Within GCC Countries Outside GCC Countries	5% duty on low estimate Customs documentation fee AED 350 per invoice Handling fee AED 150 per lot 415 Airfreight depending on weight and destination Insurance coverage, if desired Same as above but UAE duty exempt	Wooden crates packing is mandatory (Artworks wrapped in soft wrap and placed inside the crates): Same as above

Important Information

- All sold lots are stored at Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZA) and delivery or pick-ups can only be effected by appointment through Christie's shipper, G4Si, office hours as from 9am to 5pm, Saturday through Thursday.
- All lots will be **stored free of charge for 35 days** from the auction date at the shipper's warehouse at Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZA).
- **After 35 days** from the date of the auction, lots shall be subject to a **daily storage charge of US\$ 4.50 per lot plus an administrative fee of US\$ 45 payable to Christie's.**
- As set out in the Conditions of Sale, **risk and responsibility** for the sold lots (including frames or glass where relevant) **passes to the buyer at the expiration of seven calendar days** from the date of the sale or on collection by the buyer if earlier. Buyers are reminded that it is their responsibility to arrange adequate insurance for purchased lots.
- Lots sold at auction may be subject to import restrictions/taxes of foreign countries. It is the buyer's sole responsibility to obtain any relevant import license into the buyer's own country of residence and settle any taxes and destination clearance charges due.
- Shipments can only be made once full payment of all shipping charges is received by shipper, payments can be made by Visa and MasterCard.

CONDITIONS OF SALE

These Conditions of Sale and the Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice set out the terms governing the legal relationship of Christie's and the seller with the buyer. You should read them carefully before bidding.

1. CHRISTIE'S AS AGENT

Except as otherwise stated Christie's acts as agent for the seller. The contract for the sale of the property is therefore made between the seller and the buyer.

2. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTIONS AND CONDITION

Lots are sold as described and otherwise in the condition they are in at the time of the sale, on the following basis.

(a) Condition

The nature of the lots sold in our auctions is such that they will rarely be in perfect condition, and are likely, due to their nature and age, to show signs of wear and tear, damage, other imperfections, restoration or repair. Any reference to a lot in a catalogue entry will not amount to a full description of condition. Condition reports are usually available on request, and will supplement the catalogue description. In describing lots, our staff assess the condition in a manner appropriate to the estimated value of the item and the nature of the auction in which it is included. Any statement as to the physical nature or condition of a lot, in a catalogue, condition report or otherwise, is given honestly and with appropriate care. However, Christie's staff are not professional restorers or trained conservators and accordingly any such statement will not be exhaustive. We therefore recommend that you always view property personally, and, particularly in the case of any items of significant value, that you instruct your own restorer or other professional adviser to report to you in advance of bidding.

(b) Cataloguing Practice

Our cataloguing practice is explained in the Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice, which appear after the catalogue entries.

(c) Attribution etc

Any statements made by Christie's about any lot, whether orally or in writing, concerning attribution to, for example, an artist, school, or country of origin, or history or provenance, or any date or period, are expressions of our opinion or belief. Our opinions and beliefs have been formed honestly and in accordance with the standard of care reasonably to be expected of an auction house of Christie's standing, due regard having been had to the estimated value of the item and the nature of the auction in which it is included. It must be clearly understood, however, that, due to the nature of the auction process, we are unable to carry out exhaustive research of the kind undertaken by professional historians and scholars, and also that, as research develops and scholarship and expertise evolve, opinions on these matters may change. We therefore recommend that, particularly in the case of any item of significant value, you seek advice on such matters from your own professional advisers.

(d) Estimates

Estimates of the selling price should not be relied on as a statement that this is the price at which the item will sell or its value for any other purpose.

(e) Fitness for Purpose

Lots sold are enormously varied in terms of age, category and condition, and may be purchased for a variety of purposes. Unless otherwise specifically agreed, no promise is made that a lot is fit for any particular purpose.

3. AT THE SALE

(a) Refusal of admission

Christie's has the right, at our complete discretion, to refuse admission to the premises or participation in any auction and to reject any bid.

(b) Registration before bidding

Prospective buyers must complete and sign a registration form with his or her name and permanent address, and provide identification before bidding. We may require the production of bank details from which payment will be made or other financial references.

(c) Bidding as principal

When making a bid, a bidder is accepting personal liability to pay the purchase price, including the buyer's premium and any applicable taxes, plus all other applicable charges, unless it has been explicitly agreed in writing with Christie's before the commencement of the sale that the bidder is acting as agent on behalf of an identified third party acceptable to Christie's, and that Christie's will only look to the principal for payment.

(d) Absentee bids

We will use reasonable efforts to carry out written bids delivered to us prior to the sale for the convenience of clients who are not present at the auction in person, by an agent or by telephone. Bids must be placed in the currency of the place of the sale. Please refer to the catalogue for the Absentee Bids Form. If we receive written bids on a particular lot for identical amounts, and at the auction these are the highest bids on the lot, it will be sold to the person whose written bid was received and accepted first. Execution of written bids is a free service undertaken subject to other commitments at the time of the sale and provided that we have exercised reasonable care in the handling of written bids, the volume of goods is such that we cannot accept liability in any individual instance for failing to execute a written bid or for errors and omissions in connection with it arising from circumstances beyond our reasonable control.

(e) Telephone bids

If a prospective buyer makes arrangements with us prior to the commencement of the sale we will use reasonable efforts to contact them to enable them to participate in the bidding by telephone but we do not accept liability for failure to do so or for errors and omissions in connection with telephone bidding arising from circumstances beyond our reasonable control.

(f) Currency converter

At some auctions a currency converter may be operated. Errors may occur in the operation of the currency converter. Where these arise from circumstances beyond our reasonable control we do not accept liability to bidders who follow the currency converter rather than the actual bidding in the saleroom.

(g) Video or digital images

At some auctions there may be a video or digital screen. Errors may occur in its operation and in the quality of the image. We do not accept liability for such errors where they arise for reasons beyond our reasonable control.

(h) Reserves

Unless otherwise indicated, all lots are offered subject to a reserve, which is the confidential minimum price below which the lot will not be sold. The reserve will not exceed the low estimate printed in the catalogue. Lots that are not subject to a reserve are highlighted with red titles in this sale. The auctioneer may open the bidding on any lot below the reserve by placing a bid on behalf of the seller. The auctioneer may continue to bid on behalf of the seller up to the amount of the reserve, either by placing consecutive bids or by placing bids in response to other bidders.

(i) Auctioneer's discretion

The auctioneer has the right to exercise reasonable discretion in refusing any bid, advancing the bidding in such a manner as he may decide, withdrawing or dividing any lot, combining any two or more lots and, in the case of error or dispute, and whether during or after the sale, determining the successful bidder, continuing the bidding, cancelling the sale or reoffering and reselling the item in dispute. If any dispute arises after the sale, then, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary the sale record maintained by the auctioneer will be conclusive.

(j) Successful bid and passing of risk

Subject to the auctioneer's reasonable discretion, the highest bidder accepted by the auctioneer will be the buyer and the striking of his hammer marks the acceptance of the highest bid and the conclusion of a contract for sale between the seller and the buyer. Risk and responsibility for the lot (including frames or glass where relevant) passes to the buyer at the expiration of seven calendar days from the date of the sale or on collection by the buyer if earlier.

4. AFTER THE SALE

(a) Buyer's premium

Christie's charges a premium to the buyer on the final bid price of each lot sold at the following rates: 2.5% of the final bid price of each lot up to and including US\$100,000, 20% of the final bid price of each lot above US\$100,000 and up to and including US\$2,000,000 and 12% of the excess of the hammer price above US\$2,000,000. For all lots, taxes are payable on the premium at the applicable rate.

(b) Payment and ownership

The buyer must pay the full amount due (comprising the hammer price, buyer's premium and any applicable taxes) immediately after the sale.

The buyer will not acquire title to the lot until all amounts due to us from the buyer have been received by us in good cleared funds even in circumstances where we have released the lot to the buyer.

(c) Collection of purchases

We shall be entitled to retain items sold until all amounts due to us, or to Christie's International plc, or to any of its affiliates, subsidiaries or parent companies worldwide, have been received in full in good cleared funds or until the buyer has performed any other outstanding obligations as we, in our sole discretion, shall require, including, for the avoidance of doubt, competing any anti-money laundering or anti-terrorism financing checks we may require to our satisfaction. In the event a buyer fails to complete any anti-money laundering or anti-terrorism financing checks to our satisfaction, Christie's shall be entitled to cancel the sale and to take any other actions that are required or permitted under applicable law. Subject to this, the buyer shall collect purchased lots within two calendar days from the sale unless otherwise agreed between us and the buyer.

(d) Packing, handling and shipping

Although we shall use reasonable efforts to take care when handling, packing and shipping a purchased lot and in selecting third parties for these purposes, we are not responsible for the acts or omissions of any such third parties. Similarly, where we suggest other handlers, packers or carriers if so requested, we are not responsible to any person to whom we have made a recommendation for the acts or omissions of the third party concerned.

(e) Remedies for non payment

If the buyer fails to make payment in full in good cleared funds within 7 days after the sale, we shall have the right to exercise a number of legal rights and remedies. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) to hold the defaulting buyer liable for the total amount due and to commence legal proceedings for its recovery together with interest, legal fees and costs to the fullest extent permitted under applicable law;
- (ii) to cancel the sale;
- (iii) to resell the property publicly or privately on such terms as we shall think fit;
- (iv) to pay the seller an amount up to the net proceeds payable in respect of the amount bid by the defaulting buyer;
- (v) to set off against any amounts which we, or Christie's International plc, or any of its affiliates, subsidiaries or parent companies worldwide, may owe the buyer in any other transactions, the outstanding amount remaining unpaid by the buyer;
- (vi) where several amounts are owed by the buyer to us, or to Christie's International plc, or to any of its affiliates, subsidiaries or parent companies worldwide, in respect of different transactions, to apply any amount paid to discharge any amount owed in respect of any particular transaction, whether or not the buyer so directs;
- (vii) to reject at any future auction any bids made by or on behalf of the buyer or to obtain a deposit from the buyer before accepting any bids;
- (viii) to exercise all the rights and remedies of a person holding security over any property in our possession owned by the buyer, whether by way of pledge, security interest or in any other way, to the fullest extent permitted by the law of the place where such property is located. The buyer will be deemed to have granted such security to us and we

may retain such property as collateral security for such buyer's obligations to us;

- (ix) to take such other action as we deem necessary or appropriate.

If we resell the property under paragraph (iv) above, the defaulting buyer shall be liable for payment of any deficiency between the total amount originally due to us and the price obtained upon resale as well as for all reasonable costs, expenses, damages, legal fees and commissions and premiums of whatever kind associated with both sales or otherwise arising from the default. If we pay any amount to the seller under paragraph (v) above, the buyer acknowledges that Christie's shall have all of the rights of the seller, however arising, to pursue the buyer for such amount.

(f) Selling Property at Christie's

In addition to expenses such as transport, all consignors pay a commission according to a fixed scale of charges based upon the value of the property sold by the consignor at Christie's in a calendar year. Commissions are charged on a sale by sale basis.

5. LIMITED WARRANTY

In addition to Christie's liability to buyers set out in clause 2 of these Conditions, but subject to the terms and conditions of this paragraph, Christie's warrants for a period of five years from the date of the sale that any property described in headings printed in UPPER CASE TYPE (i.e. headings having all capital-letter type) in this catalogue (as such description may be amended by any saleroom notice or announcement) which is stated without qualification to be the work of a named author or authorship, is authentic and not a forgery. The term "author" or "authorship" refers to the creator of the property or to the period, culture, source or origin, as the case may be, with which the creation of such property is identified in the UPPER CASE description of the property in this catalogue. Only UPPER CASE TYPE headings of lots in this catalogue indicate what is being warranted by Christie's. Christie's warranty does not apply to supplemental material which appears below the UPPER CASE TYPE headings of each lot and Christie's is not responsible for any errors or omissions in such material. The terms used in the headings are further explained in Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice. The warranty does not apply to any heading which is stated to represent a qualified opinion. The warranty is subject to the following:

- (i) It does not apply where (a) the catalogue description or saleroom notice corresponded to the generally accepted opinion of scholars or experts at the date of the sale or fairly indicated that there was a conflict of opinions; or (b) correct identification of a lot can be demonstrated only by means of either a scientific process not generally accepted for use until after publication of the catalogue or a process which at the date of publication of the catalogue was unreasonably expensive or impractical or likely to have caused damage to the property.
- (ii) The benefits of the warranty are not assignable and shall apply only to the original buyer of the lot as shown on the invoice originally issued by Christie's when the lot was sold at auction.

- (iii) The original buyer must have remained the owner of the lot without disposing of any interest in it to any third party.
- (iv) The buyer's sole and exclusive remedy against Christie's and the seller, in place of any other remedy which might be available, is the cancellation of the sale and the refund of the original purchase price paid for the lot. Neither Christie's nor the seller will be liable for any special, incidental or consequential damages including, without limitation, loss of profits nor for interest.
- (v) The buyer must give written notice of claim to us within five years from the date of the auction. It is Christie's general policy, and Christie's shall have the right, to require the buyer to obtain the written opinions of two recognised experts in the field, mutually acceptable to Christie's and the buyer, before Christie's decides whether or not to cancel the sale under the warranty.
- (vi) The buyer must return the lot to the Christie's saleroom at which it was purchased in the same condition as at the time of the sale.

6. COPYRIGHT

The copyright in all images, illustrations and written material produced by or for Christie's relating to a lot including the contents of this catalogue, is and shall remain at all times the property of Christie's and shall not be used by the buyer, nor by anyone else, without our prior written consent. Christie's and the seller make no representation or warranty that the buyer of a property will acquire any copyright or other reproduction rights in it.

7. SEVERABILITY

If any part of these Conditions of Sale is found by any court to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, that part shall be discounted and the rest of the conditions shall continue to be valid to the fullest extent permitted by law.

8. LAW AND JURISDICTION

Any dispute arising out of or in connection with these Conditions of Sale, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, shall at Christie's sole option: (i) be subject to the non exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of the Dubai International Financial Centre ("DIFC") and the Buyer irrevocably submits to the jurisdiction of the DIFC Courts and waives any objection it may have to disputes arising out of or in connection with this contract being heard in the DIFC Courts on the grounds that it is an inconvenient forum (forum non conveniens); or, at Christie's sole option (ii) be referred to arbitration under the Arbitration Rules of the DIFC-LCIA Arbitration Centre, which Rules are deemed to be incorporated by reference into this clause. The seat, or legal place, of arbitration shall be the DIFC. The language to be used in the arbitration shall be English. The governing law of the contract shall be the substantive law of England and Wales.

[Please note an Arabic version of the Conditions of Sale is available upon request].

WORLDWIDE SALEROOMS AND OFFICES

ARGENTINA

BUENOS AIRES

+54 11 43 93 42 22
Cristina Carlisle

AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY

+61 (0)2 9326 1422
Ronan Sulich

AUSTRIA

VIENNA

+43 (0)1 533 881214
Angela Baillou

BELGIUM

BRUSSELS

+32 (0)2 512 88 30
Roland de Lathuy

BERMUDA

BERMUDA

+1 401 849 9222
Betsy Ray

BRAZIL

RIO DE JANEIRO

+5521 2225 6553
Candida Sodre

SÃO PAULO

+5511 3061 2576
Nathalie Lenci

CANADA

TORONTO

+1 416 960 2063
Brett Sherlock

CHILE

SANTIAGO

+56 2 2 2631642
Denise Ratinoff
de Lira

COLOMBIA

BOGOTA

+571 635 54 00
Juanita Madrinan

DENMARK

COPENHAGEN

+45 3962 2377
Birgitta Hillingsø
(Consultant)
+45 2612 0092
Rikke Juel Brandt
(Consultant)

FINLAND AND THE BALTIC STATES

HELSINKI

+358 40 5837945
Barbro Schauman
(Consultant)

FRANCE

BRITTANY AND THE LOIRE VALLEY

+33 (0)6 09 44 90 78
Virginie Gregory
(Consultant)

GREATER EASTERN FRANCE

+33 (0)6 07 16 34 25
Jean-Louis Janin
Daviet (Consultant)

NORD-PAS DE CALAIS

+33 (0)6 09 63 21 02
Jean-Louis Brémilts
(Consultant)

•PARIS

+33 (0)1 40 76 85 85
Poitou-Charente
Aquitaine

+33 (0)5 56 81 65 47
Marie-Cécile Moueix

PROVENCE - ALPES CÔTE D'AZUR

+33 (0)6 71 99 97 67
Fabienne Albertini-
Cohen

RHÔNE ALPES

+33 (0)6 61 81 82 53
Dominique Pierron
(Consultant)

GERMANY

DÜSSELDORF

+49 (0)21 14 91 59 352
Arno Verkade

FRANKFURT

+49 (0)173 317 3975
Anja Schaller
(Consultant)

HAMBURG

+49 (0)40 27 94 073
Christiane Gräfin
zu Rantzau

MUNICH

+49 (0)89 24 20 96 80
Marie Christine
Gräfin Huyn

STUTTGART

+49 (0)71 12 26 96 99
Eva Susanne
Schweizer

INDIA

•MUMBAI

+91 (22) 2280 7905
Sonal Singh

DELHI

+91 (011) 6609 1170
Sanjay Sharma

INDONESIA

JAKARTA

+62 (0)21 7278 6268
Charmie Hamami

ISRAEL

TEL AVIV

+972 (0)3 695 0695
Roni Gilat-Baharaff

ITALY

•MILAN

+39 02 303 2831

ROME

+39 06 686 3333
Marina Cicogna

JAPAN

TOKYO

+81 (0)3 6267 1766
Chie Banta

MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR

+60 3 6207 9230
Lim Meng Hong

MEXICO

MEXICO CITY

+52 55 5281 5546
Gabriela Lobo

MONACO

+377 97 97 11 00
Nancy Dotta

THE NETHERLANDS

•AMSTERDAM

+31 (0)20 57 55 255

NORWAY

OSLO

+47 975 800 78
Katinka Traaseth
(Consultant)

PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA

BEIJING

+86 (0)10 8572 7900
Jinqing Cai

•HONG KONG

+852 2760 1766

•SHANGHAI

+86 (0)21 6355 1766
Gwenn Delamaire

PORTUGAL

LISBON

+351 919 317 233
Mafalda Pereira
Coutinho
(Consultant)

• DENOTES SALEROOM

ENQUIRIES?— Call the Saleroom or Office

EMAIL— info@christies.com

02/09/15

RUSSIA**MOSCOW**

+7 495 937 6364
+44 20 7389 2318
Katya Vinokurova

SINGAPORE**SINGAPORE**

+65 6735 1766
Wen Li Tang

SOUTH AFRICA**CAPE TOWN**

+27 (21) 761 2676
Juliet Lomborg
(Independent
Consultant)

**DURBAN &
JOHANNESBURG**

+27 (31) 207 8247
Gillian Scott-Berning
(Independent
Consultant)

WESTERN CAPE

+27 (44) 533 5178
Annabelle
Conyngham
(Independent
Consultant)

SOUTH KOREA**SEOUL**

+82 2 720 5266
Hye-Kyung Bae

SPAIN**BARCELONA**

+34 (0)93 487 8259
Carmen Schjaer

MADRID

+34 (0)91 532 6626
Juan Varez
Dalia Padilla

SWEDEN**STOCKHOLM**

+46 (0)70 5368 166
Marie Boettiger
Kleman (Consultant)
+46 (0)70 9369 201
Louise Dyhlén
(Consultant)

SWITZERLAND**•GENEVA**

+41 (0)22 319 1766
Eveline de Proyart

•ZURICH

+41 (0)44 268 1010
Dr. Bertold Mueller

TAIWAN**TAIPEI**

+886 2 2736 3356
Ada Ong

THAILAND**BANGKOK**

+66 (0)2 652 1097
Yaovanee Nirandara
Punchalee Phenjati

TURKEY**ISTANBUL**

+90 (532) 558 7514
Eda Kehale Argün
(Consultant)

UNITED ARAB**EMIRATES****•DUBAI**

+971 (0)4 425 5647

UNITED KINGDOM**•LONDON,
KING STREET**

+44 (0)20 7839 9060

**•LONDON,
SOUTH KENSINGTON**

+44 (0)20 7930 6074

**NORTH AND
NORTHEAST**

+44 (0)20 3219 6010
Thomas Scott

**NORTHWEST
AND WALES**

+44 (0)20 7752 3033
Jane Blood

SOUTH

+44 (0)1730 814 300
Mark Wrey

SCOTLAND

+44 (0)131 225 4756
Bernard Williams
Robert Lagneau
David Bowes-Lyon
(Consultant)

ISLE OF MAN

+44 (0)20 7389 2032

CHANNEL ISLANDS

+44 (0)1534 485 988
Melissa Bonn
(Consultant)

IRELAND

+353 (0)59 86 24996
Christine Ryall
(Consultant)

UNITED STATES**BOSTON**

+1 617 536 6000
Elizabeth M. Chapin

CHICAGO

+1 312 787 2765
Lisa Cavanaugh

DALLAS

+1 214 599 0735
Caperia Ryan

HOUSTON

+1 713 802 0191
Jessica Phifer

LOS ANGELES

+1 310 385 2600

MIAMI

+1 305 445 1487
Jessica Katz

NEWPORT

+1 401 849 9222
Betsy D. Ray

•NEW YORK

+1 212 636 2000

PALM BEACH

+1 561 833 6952
Maura Smith

PHILADELPHIA

+1 610 520 1590
Christie Lezano

SAN FRANCISCO

+1 415 982 0982
Ellanor Notides

Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of Ahmed Yacoubi Ben Driss El Yacoubi



"The Goat's Bones", oil on linen, 20" x 30", 1973. Courtesy of The Barjeel Foundation.

Carol Cannon is compiling records pertaining to all of Ahmed Yacoubi's work for a comprehensive *catalogue raisonné*. Owners of the works by the artist are kindly invited to contact Ms. Cannon in order to have the work documented in this critical publication.

This project can only be effectively realised through the generous cooperation of friends, collectors, galleries, or museums who own or have owned drawings or paintings by the artist. Photographs and writings involving Ahmed Yacoubi are also requested. Any assistance with this on-going project is greatly appreciated.

Email: info@ahmedyacoubi.com or by letter: 32-45 37th Street, Astoria, NY 11103, USA

Tel: 00 1 602-481-9240

ABSENTEE BIDS FORM

CHRISTIE'S DUBAI

DUBAI: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART NOW AND TEN

WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH 2016 AT 7.00 PM
CODE NAME: NOW AND TEN
SALE NUMBER: 1241

SALE ADDRESS (13-17 MARCH 2016)
 Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Godolphin Ballroom

Invoices cannot be changed after they have been printed.

BID ONLINE FOR THIS SALE AT CHRISTIES.COM

BIDDING INCREMENTS

Bidding generally opens below the low estimate and advances in increments of up to 10%, subject to the auctioneer's discretion. Absentee bids that do not conform to the increments set below may be lowered to the next bidding interval.

US\$50 to US\$1,000	by US\$50s
US\$1,000 to US\$2,000	by US\$100s
US\$2,000 to US\$3,000	by US\$200s
US\$3,000 to US\$5,000	by US\$200, 500, 800 (ie: US\$4,200, 4,500, 4,800)
US\$5,000 to US\$10,000	by US\$500s
US\$10,000 to US\$20,000	by US\$1,000s
US\$20,000 to US\$30,000	by US\$2,000s
US\$30,000 to US\$50,000	by US\$2,000, 5,000, 8,000 (ie: US\$32,000, 35,000, 38,000)
US\$50,000 to US\$100,000	by US\$5,000s
US\$100,000 to US\$200,000	by US\$10,000s
above US\$200,000	at auctioneer's discretion

The auctioneer may vary the increments during the course of the auction at his or her own discretion.

Auction Results: +44 (0)20 7839 9060

Please also refer to the information contained in Buying at Christie's.

I request Christie's to bid on the following lots up to the maximum price I have indicated for each lot. I understand that if my bid is successful, the purchase price will be the sum of my final bid plus a buyer's premium of 25% of the final bid price of each lot up to and including US\$100,000, 20% of the excess of the hammer price above US\$100,000 and up to and including US\$2,000,000 and 12% of the excess of the hammer price above US\$2,000,000, together with any VAT chargeable on the final bid and the buyer's premium. VAT is chargeable on the purchase price of daggered (†) lots, and for buyers outside the EU on (α) lots, at the standard rate. VAT is chargeable on the purchase price of starred (*) lots at the reduced rate. I understand that Christie's provides the service of executing absentee bids for the convenience of clients and that Christie's is not responsible for failing to execute bids or for errors relating to execution of bids. On my behalf, Christie's will try to purchase these lots for the lowest possible price, taking into account the reserve and other bids. Absentee bids submitted on "no reserve" lots will, in the absence of a higher bid, be executed at approximately 50% of the low pre-sale estimate or at the amount of the bid if it is less than 50% of the low pre-sale estimate.

If identical absentee bids are received for the same lot, the written bid received first by Christie's will take precedence. Please contact the Bid Department at least 24 hours in advance of the sale to make arrangements for telephone bidding. All bids are subject to the terms of the Conditions of Sale and Limited Warranty printed in each Christie's catalogue.

Absentee bids must be placed in US Dollars and received at least 24 hours before the auction begins.

Christie's will confirm all bids received by fax by return fax. If you have not received confirmation within one business day, please contact the Bid Department. Tel: +44 (0)20 7389 2658 Fax: +44 (0)20 7930 8870 on-line www.christies.com

From 13-17 March 2016, please contact the Bids Department on Tel: +971 (0)4 330 3462 Tel: +971 (0)4 330 3463 Fax: +971 (0)4 330 0739

1241

Client Number (if applicable) _____ Sale Number _____

Billing Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Evening Telephone _____

Fax (Important) _____ Email _____

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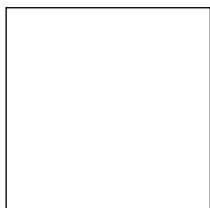
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