



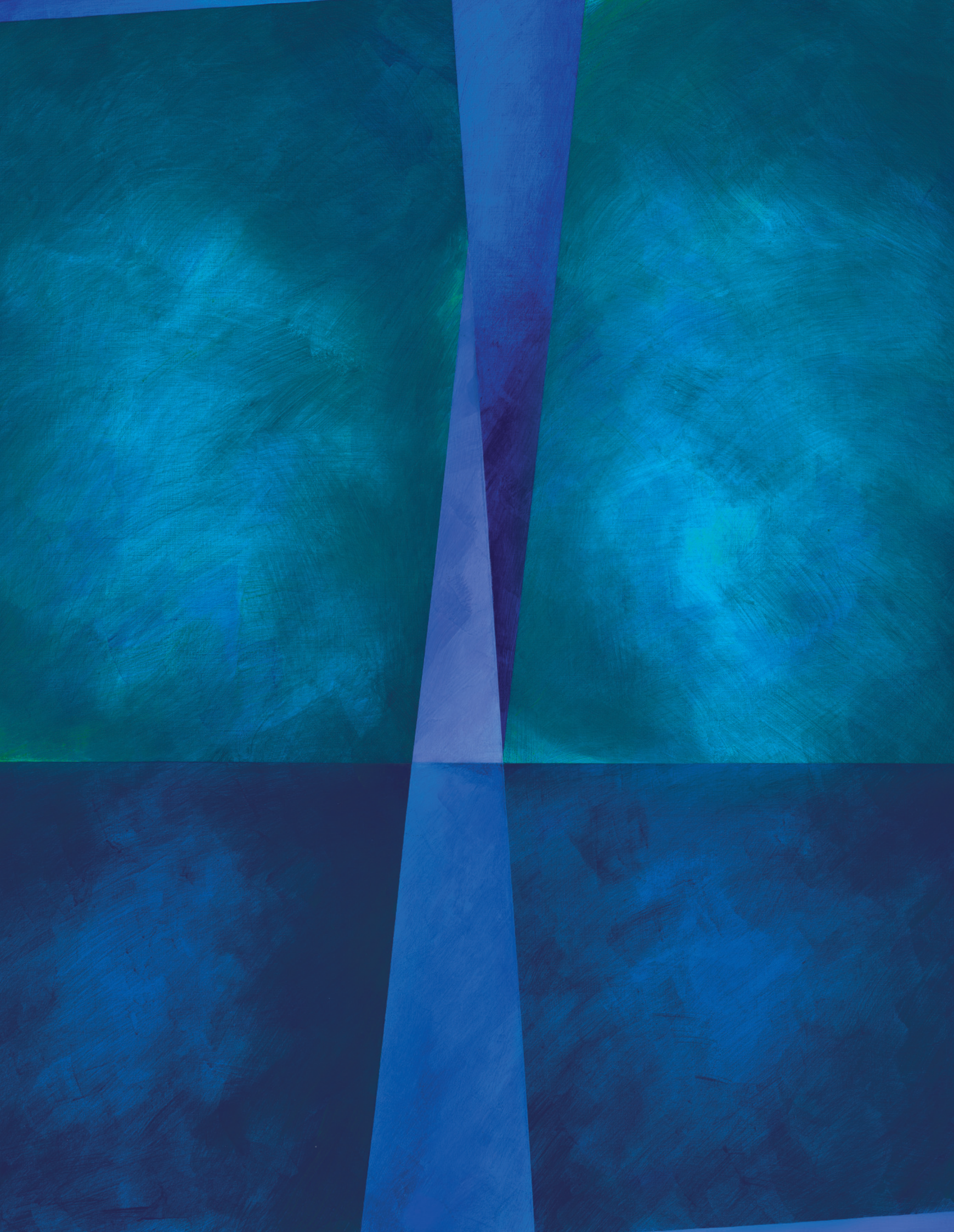
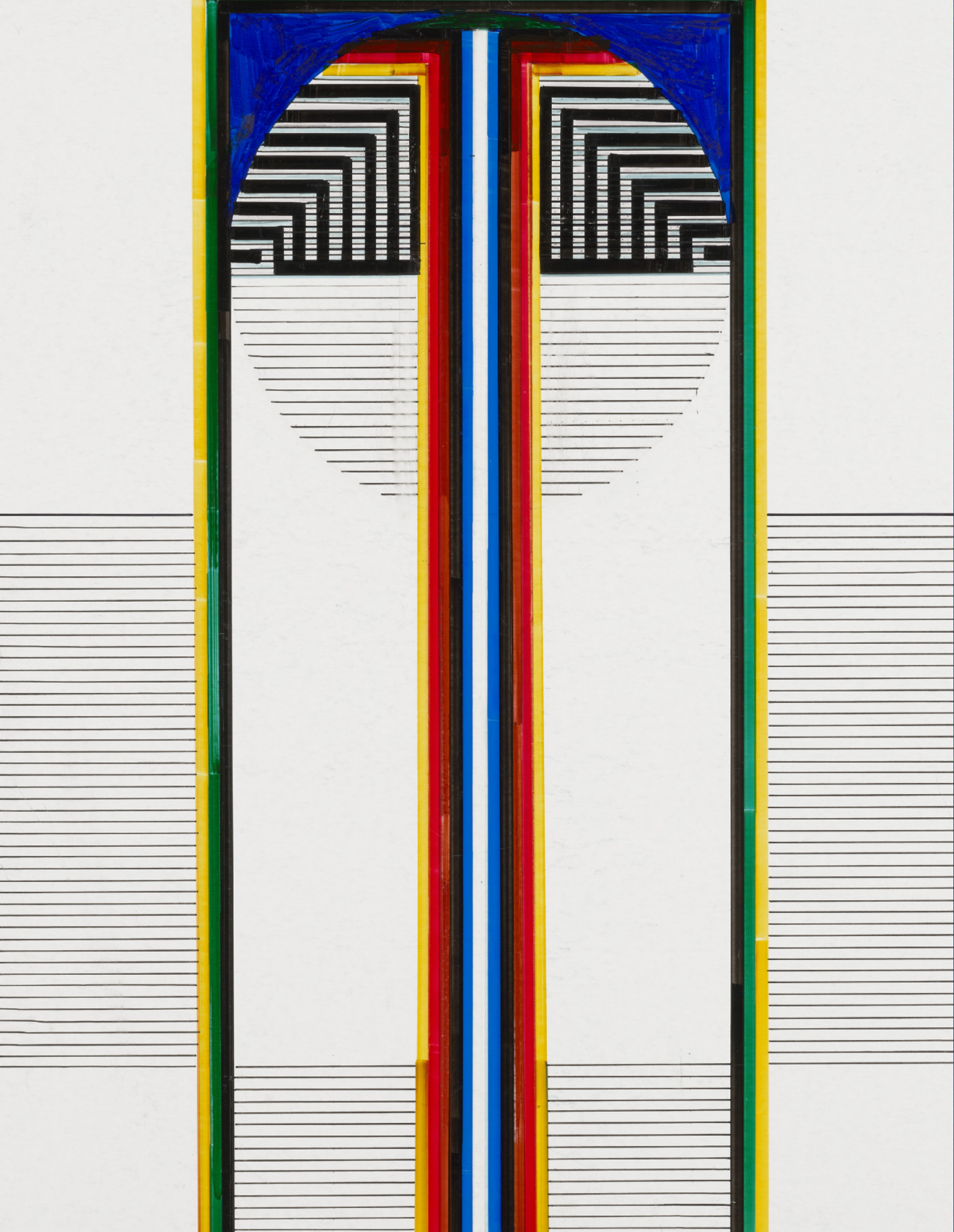
MARHALA مرحلة

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DALLOUL COLLECTION

CHRISTIE'S









1978



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## MARHALA: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DALLOUL COLLECTION

Thursday 9 November 2023 at 3.00 pm  
8 King Street, St. James's

### VIEWING

1 November	10.00am-5.00pm
2-3 November	9.00am-5.00pm
4-5 November	12.00pm-5.00pm
6 November	9.00am-5.00pm
7-8 November	9.00am-4.00pm
9 November	9.00am-12.00pm

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"My late father and mother always had a strong sense of culture. They began collecting art in the early 70's, buying art they loved, made by artists they got to know intimately well, most of whom shared aesthetic, ethical, philosophical, and political views with them. My parents considered artists the keepers of truth and archivists of history."

- DR BASEL DALLOUL



Photograph of Saeda Dalloul and her two sons (Dr. Basel Dalloul on the right). Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).



Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul. Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).

"Marhala" is an Arabic term that signifies a phase within a journey, often highlighting a specific period in a sequence or process. This term is emblematic of a new chapter in the history of the prestigious Dalloul Collection and simultaneously marks a distinct trajectory in the collecting practices of Arab art, celebrated through this exceptional auction featuring 48 artworks from the collection. Initially curated by Dr Ramzi and Saeda Al Hussein Dalloul, the Dalloul Collection has acquired a new direction under the stewardship of Dr Basel Dalloul. He has redefined its strategy, enriching the collection with important acquisitions, including exciting contemporary works as well as iconic pieces of Arab art.

This remarkable collection finds its home in Beirut, the heartland of the Dalloul family. Throughout his extensive international career, the late Dr Ramzi Dalloul, a Palestinian-born collector, developed a profound affinity for Arab culture, particularly its intricate artistic expressions. His art journey began with the acquisition of his first piece in the 1970s in Baghdad. Over the next five decades, he alongside his late wife Saeda and their son Dr Basel Dalloul carefully expanded the collection, merging personal taste with a discerning appreciation for Arab artistry.

Living in various cities across the United States as well Paris, London, and Beirut allowed Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul to cultivate connections with both Arab artists in the region and those living in the diaspora. Whether from galleries, auctions, or from artists directly, their acquisitions invariably added value to their growing collection. Dr Ramzi, with a keen eye for Arab art, often commissioned artworks from leading artists, highlighting his deep cultural affinity for the region. Today, his legacy of curating one of the most significant private collections of Arab art stands in esteemed company alongside pioneering collector Sheikh Hassan Al Thani of Qatar and the younger Emirati collector Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi.

Following the passing of Dr Ramzi Dalloul in 2021, Dr Basel Dalloul, who was already steering the collection, embarked on a transformative journey. Fuelled by his personal collector's sensibilities, he is making substantial investments in contemporary artists from the region and is re-evaluating acquisition strategies



Dr Basel Dalloul in front of Ayman Baalbaki's *Untitled 2009*. Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).

"For me, collecting art is not about quantity but about quality. When I say quality, I mean in so many ways not necessarily artistic qualities or skills but historical significance - a form of rich documentation."

- DR RAMZI DALLOUL

to ensure the most comprehensive representation of Arab art within the collection. The collection today, spanning the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, offers the public an immersive journey through Arab history, showcasing the evolution of art movements in the region. It paints a rich and comprehensive portrait of artists from various corners of the Arab world, with a distinct emphasis on the Levant, specifically Lebanon and Palestine—the very roots of the Dalloul family. Notably, the collection shines for its recognition of prominent female artists and the inclusion of representatives from various religious and ethnic minorities.

The evening auction stands out as a monumental event in the Arab art world. The sale is led by Mahmoud Saïd's *Fille à l'imprimé (Girl in a printed dress)*- an iconic masterpiece previously held in the collection of Hussein Pasha Sirry and exhibited four times during Saïd's lifetime. The selection includes exceptional works by modern giants such as Kadhim Hayder's abstract composition, Dia Azzawi's *Summeria Face*- one of the highlights of the recent exhibition *Beirut and the Golden Sixties*-, a distinctive Mohamed Melehi painting from the 1980s, a mystifying *Marionette* by Marwan and a mesmerizing geometric work from the 70s by Palestinian artist Samia Halaby. The auction also includes names that have defined the Lebanese modern art landscape with incredible works by the inimitable Etel Adnan, Helen Khal, Paul Guiragossian, Shafic Abboud and Chaouki Choukini. The contemporary section it is led by the luminaries Ahmed Mater and Ayman Baalbaki, who are pushing the scene to new horizons.



Neon work by Ayman Baalbaki at the entrance of Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut. Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).

This auction is a celebration that underscores the Dalloul family's dedication to elevating and shaping the Arab arts and identity, and an homage to the ongoing legacy of the family and their contribution to the region's art scene. It is also a tribute to the determination of Dr. Basel Dalloul in his own, *marhala*, to expend and emphasise the magnificence of his family collection and Christie's is honoured to embark on this journey in partnership with him.



1

HELEN KHAL  
(1923, ALLENTOWN - 2009, AJALTOUN)

*Untitled*

signed, inscribed and dated 'Helen Khal 1970' (on the reverse)  
oil on canvas  
39 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (100.1 x 100.4cm.)  
Painted in 1970

£25,000-35,000

US\$31,000-43,000

€29,000-40,000

PROVENANCE:

Mona Iskandar, Lebanon (acquired directly from  
the artist).

Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 21 October 2014, lot 52.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.

Thence by descent to the present owner.



# HELEN KHAL



Painted in 1970, Helen Khal's *Untitled* is an outstandingly elegant and delicate piece from the artist's abstract oeuvre. Vertically aligned rectangular forms with sweeping contrasts and modulations of colour, composition, and scale emphasises the artist's pursuit of finding an oasis of order in her life. Following an exceptionally meticulous process, Khal imbues life onto the surface by methodically building her forms from numerous layers of thinned oil paint, bringing forth the silken textures of carefully applied subtle brushstrokes. Portraying through her canvas the assessment of depth and balance in the colour fields, she gives the surface an animated feeling of existentialism. In consideration of the references from colour theory, the dominant presence of the gradations of red and hints of yellow, orange, pink, and white in this artwork becomes an emotive signifier of optimism, strength, passion, courage, and confidence. It is likely that Helen Khal chose these shades as the primary palette for this painting because these elements represented the core aspects of existence she yearned to find through her practice.

Born in 1923, Khal pursued a multifaceted career as a painter, art critic, and educator. She initially aspired to become a writer. However her life took a different turn when, at the age of twenty-two, she battled tuberculosis, spending six months bedridden in a sanatorium. During this period, she discovered her passion for drawing and painting, and after recovering from the illness, she joined weekly afternoon classes at the Baum Art School in Allentown. Subsequently, travelling to Lebanon for the first time, Khal embarked on her formal art education. Dedicating herself to the study of painting, she enrolled at the Academie Libanaise Des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) in Beirut from 1946 to 1948 to study under the supervision of celebrated Lebanese painter Cesar Gemayel. Khal founded Lebanon's first art gallery, Gallery One, while significantly contributing to the evolution of Lebanese art movements by teaching for nearly three decades at the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University. Her artistic endeavours, commencing in the early 1960s, garnered attention both domestically and internationally. As a revered critic and writer, her notable publications include 'The Woman Artist in Lebanon' (1987). Khal worked between the United States and Lebanon until she permanently moved to Beirut in 1963, where she lived until her death in 2009.

Image courtesy of MACAM.



2

IBRAHIM EL-SALAHİ  
(B. 1930, OMDURMAN)

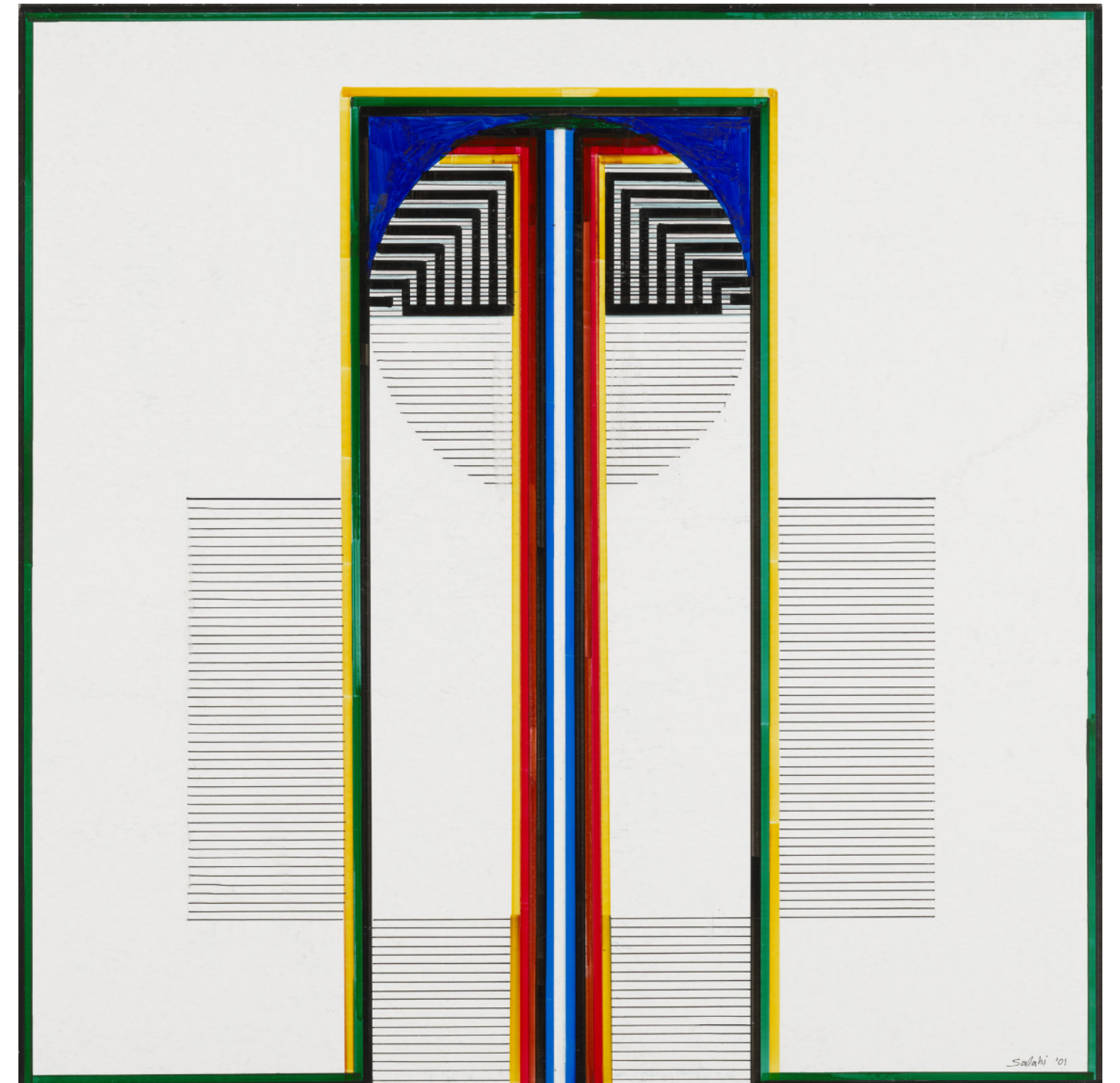
*Palm Tree*

signed and dated 'Salahi '01' (lower right)  
coloured ink on Bristol board  
24 x 24in. (61 x 60.9cm.)  
Executed in 2001

£30,000-50,000  
US\$37,000-61,000  
€35,000-58,000

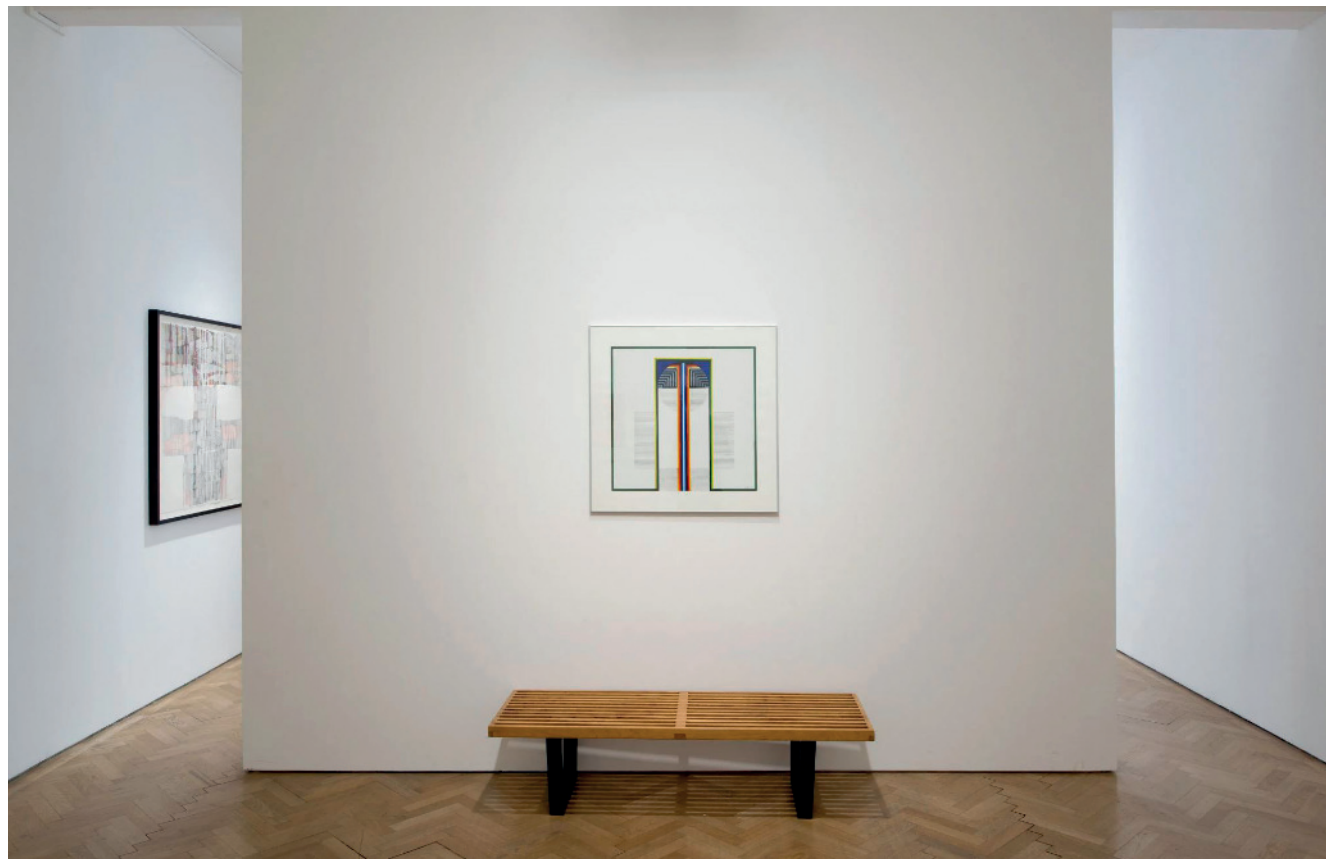
PROVENANCE:  
Vigo Gallery, London.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2014).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:  
Sharjah, Sharjah Art Museum, *Ibrahim El-Salahi: A  
Visionary Modernist*, 2012-2013. This exhibition later  
travelled to Doha, Katara Arts Center and London,  
Tate Modern. London.  
London, Vigo Gallery, *Ibrahim El-Salahi, The Tree*,  
2014.





# IBRAHIM EL-SALAH



Executed in 2001, *Palm Tree* is an iconic work from Ibrahim El-Salahi's *The Tree* series, an exceptional oeuvre of geometrically complex and spiritually captivating paintings inspired by the artist's fascination for the Haraz tree growing on the banks of the Nile in Sudan. The seemingly simple composition embodies elaborate layers of symbolism: juxtaposition of the bodily and the divine, Islamic tradition and transcendence, and the overarching effort of decolonisation through abstraction. El-Salahi comments on his specific choice of subject: 'The idea came to me about this tree called Haraz. It's a huge tree with a very soft pulp and there are legends around it. They say that Haraz tree fought against the rain. Because during the rain season and flooding of the Nile, it is completely dry, with dry leaves. Then during the droughts, it comes out with blooms and with fruit and everything. This is a definitive statement. Like saying "I am me! I am an individual! I do not follow what everyone is doing! When everyone is going to be green let them be green, I am not." It's individuality. I love that very much.' (S. M. Hassan, *Ibrahim El-Salahi: A Visionary Modernist*, London 2013, p. 66).

The abstract way in which the tree is rendered, metaphorically links earth and heaven, the bodily and the divine, the creator and the creation. Through the use of the ruler, El-Salahi negates gesture – the artist's body is no longer felt, but an abstracted spiritual body, a transcended Divine presence. By transcending the earthly presence, *The Tree* series embodies the artist's

particular effort in integrating Islamic, African, Arab and Western artistic traditions and identities. Finally, through abstraction, El-Salahi reformulates native systems of communication and modernist artistic abstraction with direct stakes in the processes of decolonisation, whether cultural or de facto. With its elegant fine lines and vibrant colours, *Palm Tree* is a particularly outstanding canvas from the series. The work has been exhibited at Vigo Gallery in London as part of the *Ibrahim El-Salahi: The Tree* show in 2014.

Born in Sudan in 1930, El-Salahi is one of the most important living African artists and a key figure in the development of African Modernism today. After graduating from the Slade School in London, on his return to Sudan in 1957, he established a new visual vocabulary, which arose from his own pioneering integration of Sudanese, Islamic, African, Arab and Western artistic traditions. Tate Modern's 2013 retrospective of El-Salahi's work was historically the Museum's first exhibition dedicated to Africa Modernism. His work is included in the permanent collections of important international museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago; The National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; The British Museum, London; Tate Modern, London; The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Newark Museum; Sharjah Art Foundation; The National Gallery, Berlin. He currently lives and works in Oxford, England.

Installation View, *Ibrahim El-Salahi, The Tree*, 2014, Vigo Gallery, London.  
Image courtesy Vigo Gallery and the Artist.



3

AHMED MATER  
(B. 1979, TABUK)

*Human Highway (Mina)*  
(Desert of Pharan series)

Laserchrome print on KODAK real photopaper  
image: 47¼ x 71in. (120 x 180.5cm.)  
framed: 56¾ x 80¾ x 2½in. (144.3 x 205 x 6.3cm.)  
Executed in 2012, this work is number three  
from an edition of five

£20,000-30,000  
US\$25,000-37,000  
€24,000-35,000

PROVENANCE:  
Athr Gallery, Jeddah.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2016).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:  
Yogyakarta, Biennale Jogja XII Equator #2, *Human Highway*, 2013 (another version exhibited).

LITERATURE:  
C. David (ed.), *Ahmed Mater: Desert of Pharan, Unofficial Histories behind the Mass Expansion of Mecca*, Oslo 2016, p. 622 (another version illustrated in colour, pp. 484-485).



# AHMED MATER

Executed in 2012, *Human Highway* and *Human Highway (Mina)* from the iconic *Desert of Pharan* series are Ahmed Mater's testament documenting the rapid development of Mecca, a place in a state of constant metamorphosis. Mater captures the aerial view of the sacred *Stoning of the Jamarat*, referred also as the *Stoning of the Devil*, a rite carried out by Hajj pilgrims whereby small pebbles are thrown at the three Jamarat stone structures in Mina. The pebbles used in the stoning are traditionally gathered at Muzdalifah on the night before the first throwing and carried back to Mina through a long walk across the Jamarat bridge. This specific moment is captured from two different angles in these photographs. The zoomed-out shots pixelate the individuality of the pilgrims creating an anonymous river of people flowing through the stream led by a shared mission. *Human Highway* recalls one of Mater's most iconic works: *Magnetism* (2009), an extraordinary installation, shown at the 2009 Venice Biennale, consisting of a black square magnet surrounded by iron filings. The tiny black shards are in thrall to the magnet's pull highlighting the spiritual forces that uphold the human faith.

The *Desert of Paran* series is named after the ancient denomination for Mecca as written in the Old Testament. The project maps the tension between public and private space capturing the shifting urban environment of the city as well as the lives lived amid the tumult. While Mecca is home to more than a million residents, it is being transformed to adapt to the geopolitical, technological, environmental, and religious context in which it exists. *Human Highway* captures these ongoing mutations of the relationship between the land and its inhabitants, including for example the numerous expansion projects of the Jamarat bridge. This body of work asks: Is public space in the Islamic city becoming a luxury item? Is the courtyard becoming a commercial?

The series, including the work *Human Highway* has been featured in an extensive number of important museum solo and group exhibitions internationally. These include *Common Grounds* held in 2015 at the Museum Villa Stuck in Munich which marked

Mater's first debut in Germany. A year later, the major show *Symbolic Cities: The work of Ahmed Mater* at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, presented itself as the first major solo exhibition by a Saudi Arabian artist in the United States. In 2017, the work was included in the show *Epicenter X* held at the Arab American National Museum exploring contemporary Saudi culture by promoting meaningful dialogue between Saudi artists and U.S. audiences. In the same year, The Brooklyn Museum presented *Ahmed Mater: Mecca Journeys*, an unprecedented look into the changes unfolding in Mecca. The series was later featured in the show *Desert to Delta* at the Art Museum of University of Memphis in Tennessee and *Drum roll, please* at the King Abdullah Economic City in Saudi Arabia, a major solo exhibition exploring the archiving and documentation of Saudi Arabia's contemporary history.

Born in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia in 1979, Mater is recognised as one of the most esteemed cultural voices documenting and scrutinising the realities of contemporary Saudi Arabia today. While training as a medical student at King Saud University, Abha College of Medicine, he began experimenting using discarded X-rays from the local hospital to make art. In 1999, Mater embarks his artistic journey joining the Al-Meftaha Arts Village, under the patronage of HRH Prince Khalid Al-Faisal. There he began to entwine expressive and politically engaged artistic aims with the scientific objectives of his medical training. His practice spans film, sculpture, photography, and performance, evoking pertinent questions about the paradoxes of faith, science and community in a rapidly changing world. As the co-founder of the Edge of Arabia collective, he has been socially engaged connecting a new generation of Saudi artists with international audiences, including overseeing the first Saudi National Pavilion at the Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale. His work is part of major international collections including The British Museum, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and Centre Pompidou, Paris. He currently lives and works in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Ahmed Mater in his Studio, Riyadh.  
Image courtesy of Athr Gallery, Jeddah.





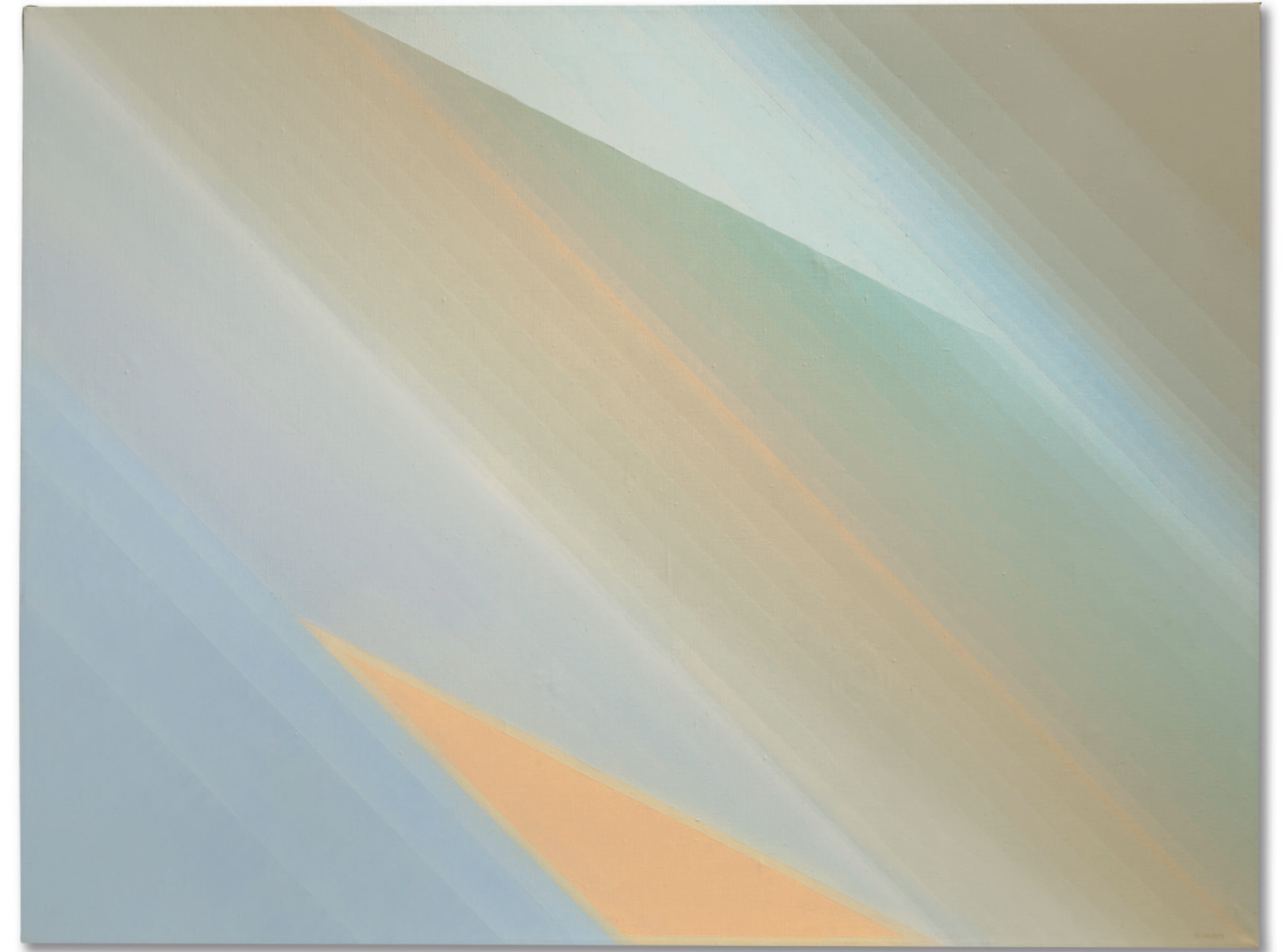
4 SAMIA HALABY  
(B. 1936, JERUSALEM)

*Return (No. 323)*

signed 'S. HALABY' (lower right); signed, titled, inscribed and dated 'SAMIA A. HALABY No. 323 "RETURN" 1978' (on the reverse); signed, titled, inscribed and dated "'RETURN" no. 323 1978 Samia A. Halab' (on the stretcher)  
oil on canvas  
36¼ x 48in. (91.6 x 122.4cm.)  
Painted in 1978

£70,000-100,000  
US\$86,000-120,000  
€81,000-120,000

PROVENANCE:  
Private Collection, Houston.  
Anon. sale, Bonhams London, 20 April 2015, lot 59.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.





# SAMIA HALABY

One of the most significant artists to emerge in the modern and contemporary Arab art scene, Samia Halaby's body of work demonstrates a sustained engagement with abstraction. Her experimental practice not only adds a rich layer to the history of modern Arab art, but also necessitates an expansion of the narratives of international modernism.

*Return (No. 323)* by Samia Halaby is part of her Diagonal Flight series which she produced from 1974 to 1979. This series followed her three dimensional geometric abstraction work where she explored the representation of depth and geometry through shading, light and colour. While that series was more concerned with the exploration of the edge to represent an object, Halaby's Diagonal Flight series explored the representation of infinity, distance and time. By creating multiple parallel diagonal lines that run from one edge of the canvas to another, Halaby evokes an idea of 'flight' through movement, which as a result, signifies the passage of time.

Unlike most of the works in the series, the movement of some of the lines in *Return* is disrupted through a diagonal cut. Halaby employs a similar disruption in one other work in the series titled *Time Delay* where she shifts the colour of the lines to beautifully explore a visual notion of a missed lapse in time. In *Return*, however, the cut acts as a complete disruption to the movement of the lines, creating a missing triangular area from the sequence. This same triangular area 'returns' or reappears from another edge having been mirrored or transformed. The title of the piece as well as the visual representation of this obstacle and the tenacity of the lines, begs the question of what social and political notion Samia is trying to portray through this work as a Palestinian living in the diaspora.

To the Arab world, Samia Halaby is a trailblazer of abstraction. Born in Jerusalem in 1936 and raised in different places across the United States, Halaby embarked on her professional journey immediately after obtaining her MFA in Painting from Indiana University in 1963. Between the 1960s and the late 1980s, Halaby taught at various universities in the United States. For a period of ten years, she held the distinction of being the first female associate professor at Yale University's School of Art. In 1964, while serving as a faculty at the Kansas City Art Institute, Halaby received a research grant that allowed her to travel to the Eastern Mediterranean, during which she delved into the world of geometric abstraction present in the Islamic architecture of the region. By conducting experiments with various surface media that marked the beginning of a lifelong exploration into the principles of abstract art, she sought to understand the essence of reality and its enactment in material form. Heavily influenced by the abstract movements of cubism and futurism, Halaby is motivated by the belief that innovative approaches to painting create the potential for reconfiguring perceptions, not only in the realm of aesthetics but also as significant contributions to technological and social progress.

Samia Halaby's works are part of numerous institutional collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art (New York and Abu Dhabi); Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Detroit Institute of Art; Cleveland Museum of Art; Institut du monde arabe; and The British Museum, London.

Samia Halaby in her Studio, New York, 2022.  
Image courtesy of RM.





5

KAMAL BOULLATA  
(1942, JERUSALEM - 2019, BERLIN)

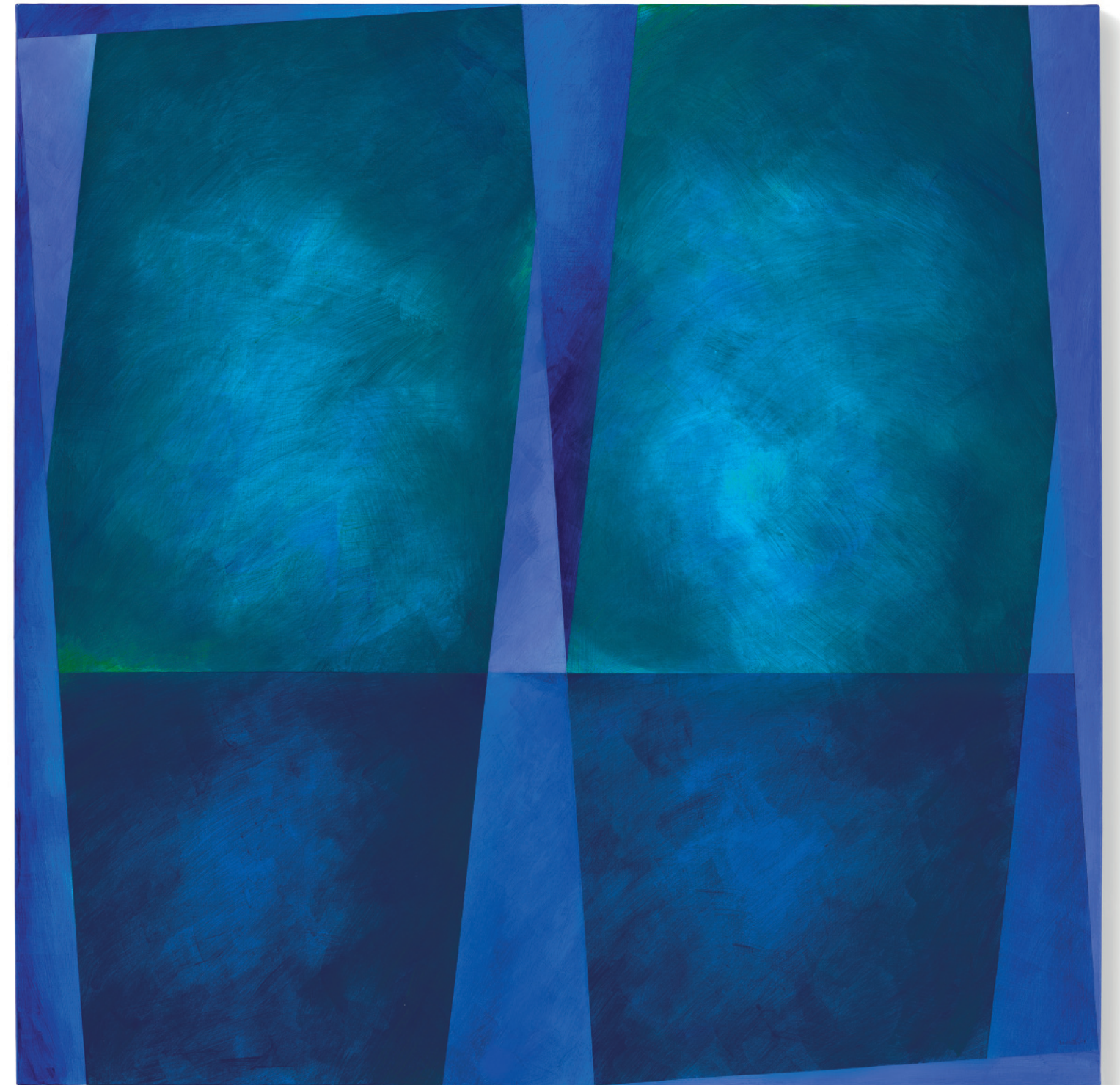
*Nocturne II*

signed and dated 'boullata.01' (lower right); signed and dated again  
'boullata 2001' (on the reverse)  
acrylic on canvas  
51¼ x 51¼in. (130.1 x 130.1cm.)  
Painted in 2001

£20,000-30,000  
US\$25,000-37,000  
€24,000-35,000

PROVENANCE:  
ARTSPACE, Dubai.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2014).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:  
K. Boullata, *Palestinian Art from 1850 to the present*,  
London 2009 (illustrated in colour, p. 327).



# KAMAL BOULLATA



Kamal Boullata, *Nocturne III*, 2001.  
Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).

Painted in 2001, *Nocturne II* is a representative work of Kamal Boullata's harmonious and rhythmical geometric oeuvre. He has described the manual exercise of creating these canvases as a process that swings from the mechanical to the organic: he begins with a pencil, compass, and ruler to create a mathematical rendering, and once a pattern forms in his work, it becomes a skeleton ready to receive colour as flesh. Across the painted surface, visible brushstrokes in varying tones of blue are set against harsh dividing lines which separate planes of colour. Like a prism,

the effect is at once grounded and transcendent, evoking light and weightlessness even in the face of visible structure. Boullata comments: 'As soon as they dry, colours should feel as fresh as spring water and as clear as glass. Once I begin to sense that I could almost plunge through the painting's surface as in a pool or a mirror, I realise that the work is finished. Days or weeks later, when I look back with surprise at what was actually accomplished before my eyes, I cannot help but wonder what images that particular surface reflects from my memory.' (K. Boullata, *Palestinian Art 1850-2005*, London 2009, p. 334).

The co-existence of symmetry and asymmetry within the same canvas evokes a sense of harmony and balance. Like a window, enclosed within a square, *Nocturne II* opens up an illusionary, layered, and abstract colourfield. Boullata comments: 'The linear rhythms of geometric words ultimately began to challenge me with questions of symmetry. Words based on the square totally disappeared, and the square itself became not only the subject of my work but also the vehicle by which I began to explore the illusions of symmetry.' (K. Boullata, *Palestinian Art 1850-2005*, London 2009, p. 330). *Nocturne II* is part of a larger series of three paintings including *Nocturne I* and *Nocturne III*, the latter being in the collection of the Dalloul Art Foundation collection.

Born in Jerusalem in 1942 and graduating from the Academia di Belle Arti in Rome and the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design in Washington, D.C. with a Fulbright Senior Scholarships, Boullata established himself as one of the most acclaimed artists of his generation. After his extended residency between the USA and France he moved to Berlin where he was elected in 2012-13, as fellow of the Institute of Advanced Study. His works have been featured in a number of significant exhibitions at leading international museums, such as The British Museum, London; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah and Institut du monde arabe, Paris.



6 YVETTE ACHKAR  
(B. 1928, SAO PAULO)

*Sables mouvants (Quick sands)*

signed in 'Y. ACHKAR.' (lower right); signed and dated 'Yvette Achkar 2009' (on the reverse)  
oil on canvas  
55½ x 41¾in. (140 x 105.1cm.)  
Painted in 2009

£25,000-35,000  
US\$31,000-43,000  
€29,000-40,000

PROVENANCE:  
Galerie Janine Rubeiz, Beirut.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2014).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:  
Beirut, Galerie Janine Rubeiz, *Yvette Achkar*, 2009.



# YVETTE ACHKAR



Image courtesy of of Galerie Janine Rubeiz.  
Image courtesy of Galerie Janine Rubeiz, Beirut.

Painted in 2009, *Sables mouvants (Quick sands)* demonstrates Yvette Achkar's remarkable command of brushwork, infusing each stroke with a harmonious blend of motion and musicality. Titled *Quick sands* when translated into English, the composition's centre mimics the appearance of unstable terrain. Achkar then introduces splinter-like brushstrokes in sporadic marks of pink, white, darker teal, orange, and black, disrupting the fluidity of the paint beneath. In the background, a warmer palette emerges, comprising a fusion of rich reds, purples, and pinks. This juxtaposition creates a dynamic contrast with the central form, boldly asserting itself in the foreground, resulting in Achkar's mesmerising abstract composition. Despite the apparent spontaneity of Achkar's abstract paintings, her creative process commences long before her brush touches the canvas. She dedicates hours to contemplative reflection upon the canvas, envisioning the boundless possibilities it offers. With purpose and mindful meditation, she meticulously selects her colours and forms. Her process yields abstract compositions that resonate with a profound sense of vastness, exuding an undeniable depth of spirituality and emotion.

Born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1928, Achkar's formative years were spent in Beirut, Lebanon. Originally aspiring to become a pianist, her dreams were redirected when the Lebanese National Conservatory rejected her application, setting her on a new path towards visual art. In 1947, she embarked on a transformative five-year artistic journey at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts under the guidance of Italian painter Fernando Manetti. Achkar initially began as a figurative painter, but soon ventured into uncharted artistic territories, particularly gravitating toward Abstract Expressionism, before joining a group of like-minded young artists who shared a commitment to pushing the boundaries of conventional art and embracing a more liberated mode of expression. Upon graduating, Achkar received a scholarship from the French government, leading her to Paris for further artistic development. In 1988, Achkar returned to Lebanon with a well-defined visual language characterised by bold colors and striking yet delicate lines. Her artwork became a powerful medium for expressing her emotions and inner self. Achkar's exhibition history spans over six decades and she has taken part in prestigious Biennales in Paris in 1959 and 1962, Alexandria in 1967, and Baghdad in 1984. Her work has been exhibited globally in institutions like the Sharjah Art Museum in 2016, and the Surssock Museum in Beirut in 2019.







7 MOHAMED MELEHI  
(1936, ASILAH - 2020,  
BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT)

*Untitled*

signed in Arabic; signed and dated 'MELEHI 82' (on the reverse)  
cellulose paint on wood  
58 7/8 x 78 1/2 in. (149.5 x 119.5 cm.)  
Executed in 1982

£70,000-100,000  
US\$87,000-120,000  
€81,000-120,000

PROVENANCE:

Mr Stelio Scamanga, France (acquired directly  
from the artist).  
Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2013).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.





# MOHAMED MELEHI

Executed in 1982, *Untitled* is a striking work from Mohamed Melehi's iconic geometric 'wave' oeuvre. Informed by the Moroccan heritage and cosmic geometries found in Amazigh textiles together with the shift from Abstract Expressionism to Pop art and Minimalism in the 1960s, the work juxtaposes tradition and transformation through the use of his distinctive curves and a vibrant purple, yellow, and red colour palette rendered using industrial paint. At the heart of Melehi's artworks are his philosophical convictions. He stated 'Art is not a precious object - that it is an idea, a philosophy... I look at it [the 1960s and 80s] as the golden age in the outcome of our struggle for independence... I want to give you a sense of what was going on at the time, with a general will for change and not just [a will] to paint beautiful paintings'. (M. Gronlund, 'Shapes Of Things: Remembering Mohamed Melehi', 18 October 2021).

Born in Morocco in 1936, Melehi's early interest in art was nurtured while growing up in a socially diverse environment in the port town of Asilah. After completing his primary studies in Tetouan, he sought further education, first in Seville and Madrid from 1955 and then in Rome from 1957. It was in Rome that he achieved the distinction of being the first African-Arab artist to exhibit at the pioneering gallery Topazia Alliata, noted for its display of avant-garde art. Melehi's explorations of transnational abstraction led

to his appointment as an assistant professor at the Minneapolis Institute of Art in 1962. He subsequently relocated to New York to study on a Rockefeller scholarship at Columbia University and gained recognition from being part of the 1963 *Hard Edge and Geometric Painting and Sculpture* group show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, featuring alongside Piet Mondrian. In 1964, Melehi returned to Morocco at the invitation of Farid Belkahlia, who appointed him a professor at The Casablanca Art School. There, he played a pivotal role in establishing a pioneering postcolonial arts platform alongside fellow artists Mohamed Ataallah, Farid Belkahlia, Mohammed Chabâa, Mostafa Hafid, and Mohamed Hamidi, which came to fruition with the groundbreaking *Présence Plastique* street exhibition in 1969. The Casablanca Art School became a hub for experimentation, lively political discourse, and enthusiastic exchange, marking a significant departure in the evolution of Moroccan Modernism from the conventional European perspective on the country's art scene. His works are part of important international institutions worldwide such as Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. In 2017, he was honoured with the retrospective exhibition at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha and most recently he has been featured in the show *The Casablanca Art School* at Tate St Ives in 2023-2024.

Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).





8

ETEL ADNAN  
(1925, BEIRUT - 2021, PARIS)

*Al-Tayyeb Salih, Daw al-Bayt*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated in Arabic (on the label on the back cover); signed, titled, inscribed and dated again in Arabic (on the first spread of the leporello); titled and inscribed (on the reverse of the 24th and 25th sheets)  
watercolour, ink and felt-tip pen on Japanese paper, in 26 parts, in leporello book  
cover: 5 7/8 x 3 1/2 in. (15 x 9 cm.)  
each sheet: 5 7/8 x 3 1/2 in. (14.9 x 8.9 cm.)  
Executed in 2011

£40,000-60,000  
US\$50,000-74,000  
€47,000-69,000

PROVENANCE:  
Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2013).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

This work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from Galerie Claude Lemand.



# ETEL ADNAN



Etel Adnan, 2004.  
Photo: © Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo / Alamy Stock Photo.

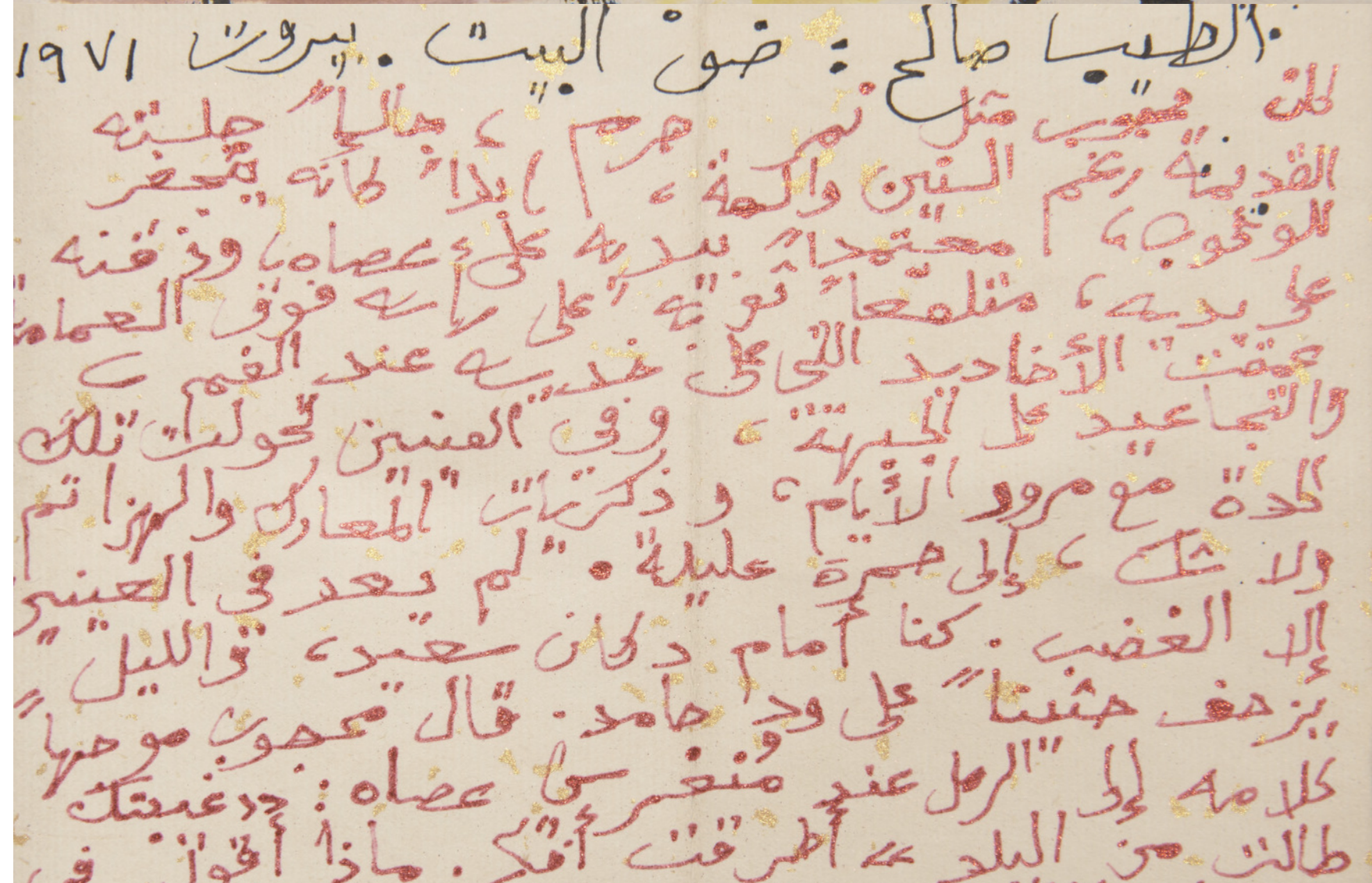
'This sense of reading 'scrolls' brought to my mind poetry and literature. I felt that kinship between script and the horizontality of the paper. I suddenly saw that I was going to write poetry on these papers and paint watercolours with the sentences, verses, or words. I opened up to myself, with exhilaration, a new artistic world whose possibilities I was going to explore by the very acts of painting.' - (V. Porter, *Artists Making Books, Poetry to Politics*, London 2023, p. 76).

Etel Adnan, a polymath celebrated for her art, literature, teachings and poetry weaves a world where drawings and words seamlessly intertwine, crafting a comprehensive narrative within the pages of her leporellos. In this 2011 leporello, Adnan's genius shines again as she brings to life the prose of the Sudanese author Al-Tayyeb Salih with her watercolour and ink illustrations. Adnan begins the leporello, which is read from right to left, with the opening passage of *Daw al-Bayt* written by Al-Tayyeb Salih in Beirut in 1971. The passage describes the return of the narrator to the Sudanese village of Wad Hamid, meeting the other elders in the village and reminiscing on the changes that have happened. The passage ends with an exchange on the prolonged absence of the narrator whereby one of the elderlies says: 'Your absence from the country has been too long.' To this, the narrator thinks, "Yes, its been years." Following this opening, Adnan fills the rest of the pages with her watercolour and black ink illustrations continuing uninterrupted a flow of scenes and images as if narrating the rest of the story or the memories of the elders to us through her brushstrokes. Her drawings lead the viewer through a captivating dance of colour, line, and imagery, lending each page an ethereal quality. Within these pages, Adnan expertly weaves together

outdoor and indoor spaces, seamlessly transitioning from towering trees and blooming flowers to commonplace objects found inside a home.

Adnan was introduced to the art of the leporellos by Rick Barton in California during the sixties. She would import these accordion-style books from Japan, keeping their original fabric covers intact, with the exception of the title and date that she typically added on a label on the cover. She would then dedicate her exploration and creations to the blank pages inside the leporello, filling them with either illustrations and words or just illustrations.

Adnan later became known for her signature leporellos, a style that allowed her to brilliantly bring forth all of her dimensions to us revealing the depth and brilliance of her mind. It also allowed her to reject writing in the French language, a language she associated with her colonisers. Thus, Etel would turn towards painting as a form of 'writing.' She describes this in her 1989 essay titled 'To Write in a Foreign Language' where she says: 'I didn't need to write in French anymore, I was painting in Arabic.' As such, in her leporellos, Etel would turn towards Arabic writers and poets that shared her social and political beliefs. She would then respond and intervene with her own 'words' created through the visual marks and illustrations she produced on the blank pages. Her exploration extended into deep spiritual and philosophical dimensions, frequently engaging with writers and poets like Al-Tayyeb Salih, as referenced in the present work. For Adnan, each of her leporello creation was a spiritual quest and an act of cultural resistance through the fusion of imagery and text.





9

## MARWAN

(1934, DAMASCUS - 2016, BERLIN)

### *Kopf links gedreht (Head turned left)*

signed and dated 'marwan 72' (lower right)  
watercolour and graphite on paper  
24¾ x 32½in. (62.8 x 82.6cm.)  
Executed in 1972

£18,000-25,000  
US\$23,000-31,000  
€21,000-29,000

PROVENANCE:  
Emanuel von Baeyer, London.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2016).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.



# MARWAN

Executed in 1972, *Kopf links gedreht (Head turned left)* is an early example from Marwan's iconic *Head* series. The work captures a dynamic portrait of a head seemingly caught in motion, brimming with emotion as it swiftly moves towards the viewer's gaze. Saturated, colourful lines delicately accentuate the contours of the head, dancing against a warm backdrop of reds, pinks, and oranges, expertly guiding the viewer's gaze toward the composition's forefront. His choice of a muted, earthy watercolour palette, reminiscent of natural flesh tones, immediately establishes a deep human connection with the artwork, hinting at profound psychological depths. In a deliberate technique, he leaves specific portions of the painting surface blank, incorporating subtle watercolour washes to enhance the prominence of the linework and, thus, allowing the head to emerge. Amidst the palpable energy coursing through the composition, the head exudes a steadfast presence, encouraging contemplation of the intricate complexities of the human soul concealed beneath the paper surface.

Marwan employs expressive brushstrokes to explore the emotional depth of the human visage. Akin to other works in the artist's *Head* series, the present work transcends conventional portraiture boundaries, serving as a metaphysical gateway to universal facets of the human condition - loneliness, introspection, and existential contemplation. As an immigrant himself, moving from Damascus to Berlin in the late 1950s, Marwan drew inspiration from his own experiences as an outsider navigating life in a foreign European land. He explored the human form, specifically the human head, capturing the distinctive expressions of individuals on their quest for belonging and wholeness amidst unfamiliar terrain. *Kopf links gedreht* can be considered one of the very first experimentations with heads which throughout the 1980s, underwent a remarkable evolution, pushing the boundaries of his artistry. Blurring the line between abstraction and figuration further, he boldly embraced larger canvases, crafting compositions that were intimate, close-up, and subtly distorted. Usually adorned with thick layers of oil paint, Marwan began to explore the human head as a landscape upon which to excavate and express the complexities of the soul.

Born in Damascus in 1934, Marwan moved to Germany in 1957 where he began studying painting at the Hochschule der Bildende Künste in Berlin under the supervision of the German artist Hann Trier. Immersed in Western art movements of his era, Marwan found inspiration in German Informel, American Abstract Expressionism, and French Tachisme. This marked a significant departure from his earlier style, reminiscent of French Impressionism, highlighting his growing commitment to the boundless manipulation of colour and form. Within the post-war German art scene, Marwan forged close bonds with fellow Berlin-based artists like Georg Baselitz with whom he shared a studio and Eugen Schönebeck. These relationships played a pivotal role in his contribution to the emergence of German Neo-Expressionism. Marwan's work is part of several important institutions worldwide such as the Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Tate Modern, London; The British Museum, London and the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.





10

SHAKER HASSAN AL SAID  
(1925, SAMAWAH - 2004, BAGHDAD)

*Untitled*

signed and dated in Arabic (lower right)  
oil on canvas laid on board  
20½ x 16¾in. (52.1 x 41.6cm.)  
Executed in 1954

£30,000-50,000  
US\$37,000-62,000  
€35,000-58,000

PROVENANCE:

Abbas Al Azzawi, Amman.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Baquba, *Mohammed Ghani Hikmat and Shaker  
Hassan Al Said*, 1962.

LITERATURE:

C. Dagher, *Shakir Hassan Al Said: The One and Art*,  
Paris 2021, no. 52 (illustrated in colour, p. 77).



# SHAKER HASSAN AL SAID



Joint exhibition with Mohammed Ghani Hikmat in Baqubah, Iraq, 1962.  
Image courtesy of Mohammad Ghani Hikmat Archives



Painted in 1954, *Untitled* is an exceptional example from Shaker Hassan Al Said's early oeuvre. Informed by a semantic affinity with avant-garde art movements of Expressionism and Cubism, the work blends figurative and abstract elements. This work is an intimate depiction of a female's profile in a classical, musing pose with non-naturalistic colour and features. The figure divides the composition into multi-faceted vibrant backgrounds formed by mixing patterns with schematic lines and edged and rounded shapes. The painting typifies Al Said's 1950s style, inclined towards the classicising tendency of European Cubism. In flattening space and expression, he creates curvilinear and rectilinear geometry, combining colour, form, and texture, giving the painting a sculpted look. The modernist style of this painting is firmly rooted in Iraqi source material and heritage. In the arrangement of the painting with the woman harmoniously positioned against a background devoid of depth, Al-Said evokes the grandeur of palace reliefs from the Neo-Assyrian Empire. His figure alludes to Sumerian votive statues, characterised by their expansive almond-shaped eyes, robust shoulders, and petite and pointed nose. This work has been exhibited in the group show *Mohammed Ghani Hikmat and Shaker Hassan Al Said* in 1962 in Baquba.

Born in Samawah, Iraq, in 1925, Al Said, after receiving a degree in social science, studied painting at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad under the guidance of Jewad Selim. Together with Selim and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, he co-founded the Baghdad

Group for Modern Art in 1951 before travelling to study art history and painting in Paris at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts from 1955 to 1959. Al Said was a prolific and influential artist who played a significant role in shaping the discourse of modern Iraqi art. In 1971, he co-founded the One Dimension Group, a collective that explored the boundary between the material world and the divine, where self-dissolution resulted from transcendence. Being aware of the methodology of Structuralism and Deconstruction, Al Said's artistic vision was deeply influenced by the existentialist treatise of Jean-Paul Sartre and Friedrich Nietzsche and the Sufi philosophy of eternity called *al-Azal*. He pushed the boundaries of traditional Iraqi art by experimenting with techniques that went beyond pictorial depiction, incorporating blot patterns into his works. A writer and visionary, Al Said wrote manifestos for both the Baghdad and the One Dimension Group. These manifestoes urged Arab artists to break away from the prevailing European artistic models, striving instead toward firmly grounding modern art in their local context. It marked a significant reorientation, coinciding with radical political changes and the rise of Arab nationalism. Al Said authored several books on modern art in Iraq and contributed numerous articles to Arabic journals and newspapers while teaching art history in Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Today, he is considered one of the pioneers of modern art in Iraq, with his influence spanning as an artist, writer, educator and theoretician of Arab art.





11

## MAHMOUD SAÏD

(1897, ALEXANDRIA - 1964, ALEXANDRIA)

### *Fille à l'imprimé (Girl in a printed dress)*

signed and dated 'M. SAÏD 1938' (lower right); signed, titled and dated 'MAHMOUD SAÏD FELLAHA AU VOILE NOIRE [crossed out] FILLE A L'IMPRIMÉ 1938 (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

31 7/8 x 21 7/8 in. (81.5 x 55.7 cm.)

Painted in 1938

£350,000-550,000

US\$430,000-680,000

€410,000-640,000

#### PROVENANCE:

Hussein Pasha Sirry Collection, Cairo (by 1951).

Nazli Fayed (acquired from the above circa 1960).

Private Collection (thence by descent from the above).

May Zeid and Adel Youssry Khedr Collection, Cairo.

Anon. sale, Bonhams London, 18 April 2018, lot 8.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.

Thence by descent to the present owner.

#### EXHIBITED:

Cairo, Palais des Beaux-Arts, XIX<sup>ème</sup> Salon du Caire, Société des Amis de l'Art sous le patronage de S.M. Le Roi, 1939 (titled *La fellaha au voile noir*).

Guézireh, Grand Palace of the Royal Society of Agriculture, *Rétrospective des oeuvres de Mahmoud Saïd, 1921-1951*, no. 6, 1951.

Alexandria, 1960, no. 29 (titled *Fille à la robe imprimée*).

Alexandria, Musée des Beaux-Arts and Centre Culturel, *Exposition rétrospective des oeuvres du peintre lauréat Mahmoud Saïd 1897-1964*, 1964, no. 94 (illustrated, unpaginated; titled *Nabawia à l'imprimé*; dated 1939).

#### LITERATURE:

A. Rassem, 'Mahmoud Bey Saïd' in *Majallat al-Imrah*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1940. (illustrated, p. 134).

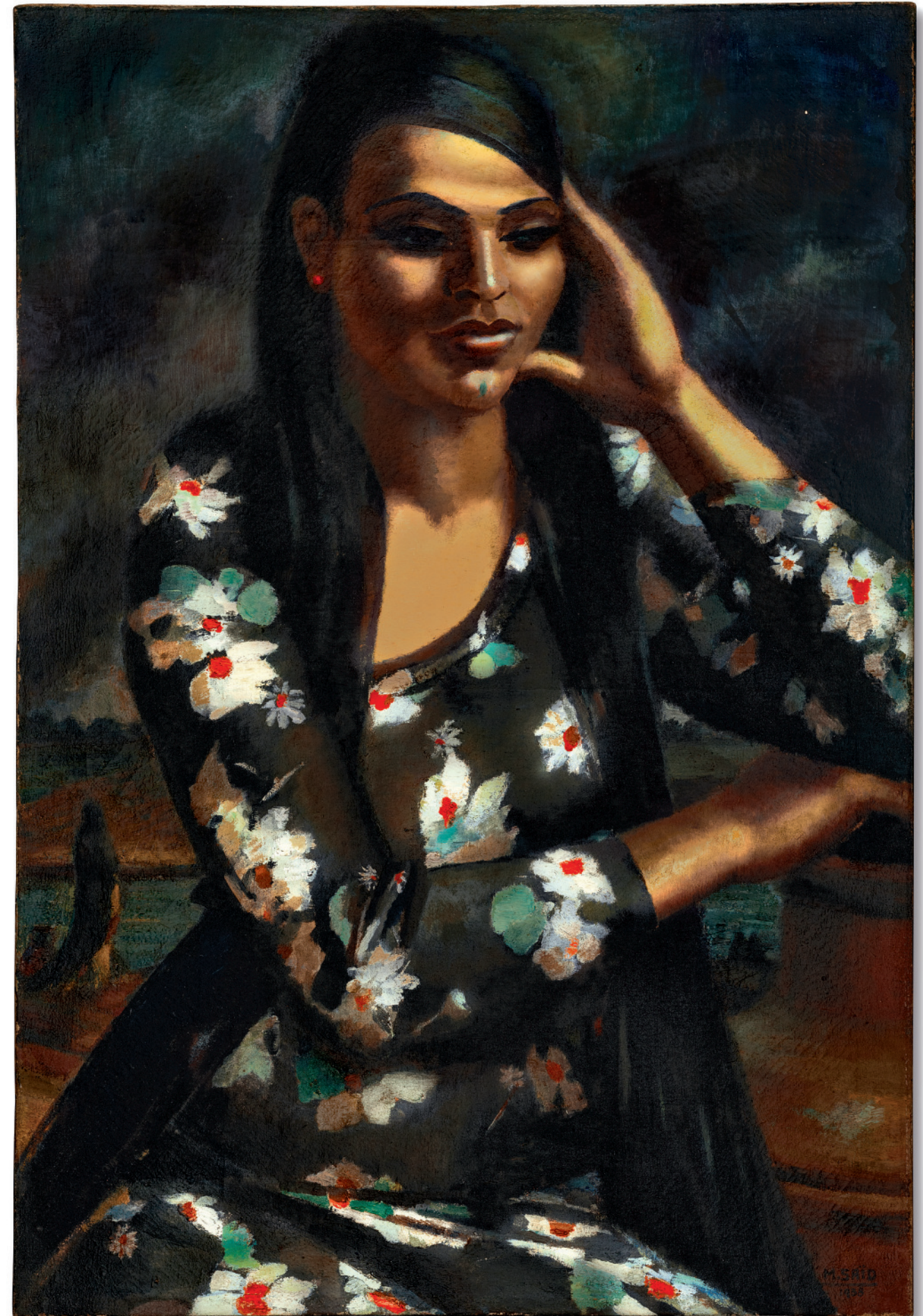
E. Dawastashy, *Mahmoud Saïd: Memorial Book on the Pioneer of Contemporary Egyptian Painting - On the 100th Anniversary of his Birth*, Cairo 1997, no. 130 and 154 (illustrated pp. 130 and 302, dated 1942 under no. 154).

S. El Bissy, 'The Women of Mahmoud Saïd', in *Nefse El-Donya Magazine*, 14 March 2004, no. 735 (illustrated, p. 80).

R. O. Al-Shafei, *The Artist Mahmoud Saïd: An Artistic and Analytical Study*, University of Alexandria, Faculty of Fine Arts (MA Thesis), Alexandria 2012, no. 123.

V. D. Hess, H. Rashwan, *Mahmoud Saïd Catalogue Raisonné Volume 1. Paintings*, Milan 2015, no. P201, p. 399.

J. Hight, 'Modernism Awakening', in *AramcoWorld*, vol. 70, no. 2, March/April 2019, pp. 23, 27 (illustrated in colour, p. 22).



# MAHMOUD SAÏD



Mahmoud Saïd.  
Copyright Hesham Salama & Mahmoud Saïd Estate.



Mahmoud Saïd, *La Fellaha au voile noir*, 1939.  
Private Collection.  
© Hesham Salama & Mahmoud Saïd Estate.

'Mahmoud Saïd has created for Egypt an imagery comparable to that which Goya created for Spain, Degas for the world of ballet, Toulouse-Lautrec for the underworld and Seurat for the circus-ring. Something that reveals and interprets the strength and poetry of Egyptian life as it has not been revealed in any modern day, something which breathes the very spirit of the Egyptian people' are the words of Mahmoud Saïd's friend from the Mixed Courts, Jasper Y. Brinton, that perfectly sum up *Fille à l'imprimé* depicted by the great Alexandrian pioneer (J. Y. Brinton, 'Women of Egypt by Mahmoud Saïd Bey', in Unknown periodical, New York, July 1937). Brinton wrote an article about women in Saïd's paintings in 1937 – of which the above is an extract – a year before *Fille à l'imprimé* was painted, on the occasion of an exhibition held at the Studio Guild on 5th Avenue in New York, one of the two known Mahmoud Saïd solo shows hosted in America. By then, in 1938, Mahmoud Saïd was at the peak of his career, both professionally and artistically. From a legal perspective, he was appointed Deputy District Prosecutor of the Courts in November 1937 until October 1938. With regards to his artistic career, Saïd had recently completed *La ville* (1937), arguably the most important and ambitious painting of his oeuvre, that today majestically greets visitors at the Museum of Modern Art in Cairo in the entrance hall. That same masterpiece – commissioned by Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil – had also just triumphed in the Egyptian Pavilion of the *Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne*, held in Paris from 25 May to 25 November 1937. He was already widely acclaimed by the Egyptian public, and the government made its first purchase of a Mahmoud Saïd painting – *L'Apôtre* (1924) – in 1929. Following his success in both New York and Paris in 1936-37, Saïd's international recognition flourished, as he was invited to participate to the prestigious *XXI International Art Biennial* held in Venice from June to September 1938, where he exhibited nine masterpieces: the princess-like *La fille en rose* (1929), *Femme aux gargoulettes* (1930),





A. Rassem, 'Mahmoud Bey Saïd' in *Majallat al-Imrah*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1940. (illustrated, p.134)

*L'invitation au voyage* (1932), *La pêche miraculeuse* (1933), *Les chadoufs* (1934), *les Belles de Bahari* (1935), *Nadia à la robe rose* (1937), *Portrait de Madame Fausta Cialente* (1938) and *La famille or Promenade* (1938).

*La Fille à l'imprimé* follows in that vein of masterpieces, in which Saïd explores one of his all-time favorite subjects, that of a woman - an Egyptian peasant woman or *fellaha* - wearing a flower-patterned dress and a black veil that covers her hair. This very painting was the one praised by art critic Jean Moscatelli in his review of the *XIX Salon du Caire*, where it was exhibited in May 1939. Moscatelli writes, 'it is *La Fellaha au voile noir* [La Fille à l'imprimé] that stands out as a masterpiece and the most beautiful painting of the Salon. In addition to the face's expression which is so *mahmoudsaïdian*, there is a pictorial area in the flowery and transparent black dress that emanates such a profound seductiveness that one cannot escape...' (J. Moscatelli, 'Le XIXème Salon du Caire', in *Images*, Cairo, 20 May 1939). The model in *La Fille à l'imprimé* may not be identified - as she is neither Hagner, Hamida nor Nabawiya, three of Saïd's regular models - but she definitely stands out in his oeuvre by her simple elegance, her contemplative yet seductive gaze, and her sharp Egyptian features, that resemble to some extent to that of Ancient Egyptian representations of Akhenaton's queen, the legendary Nefertiti. With his ingenious play on light and his unparalleled mastering of colour, Saïd depicts the young woman with her sun-kissed skin glowing amidst her black clothes and the dark background. In that way, Saïd draws the viewer's attention straight to his sitter's face, characterised by her dark almond-shaped eyes, her voluptuous lips and her almost sculptural facial

features. Her face emanates such sensuality and emotion, 'such a profound seductiveness that one cannot escape' - as pointed out by Moscatelli - that she appears like a '*femme fatale*'. At the same time, the traditional pose that Saïd opted for her, with her hand holding her face, resonates melancholy and contemplation, inviting the viewer to delve deep in her thoughts. From that perspective, this portrait bears witness to Saïd's fascination with Flemish and Italian Primitives, praising their ability to depict what he called 'the penetrating humanity' of sitters whilst at the same time producing simplified and beautifully harmonised compositions. As in several other portraits of women, Saïd uses the clever device of the sitter's earring - often just a coloured stud or a simple pearl - to capture a glimpse of light that directs the beholder's eye to the sitter's face in *La Fille à l'imprimé*.

With regards to the title of the work, that Saïd seems to have initially titled *Fellaha au voile noir* on the reverse before realising it would be the title of a completely other painting dated 1939 (Mahmoud Saïd Catalogue Raisonné: P 207; Private Collection). Consequently, he neatly crossed out this preliminary title and replaced it with *La Fille à l'imprimé*, also on the reverse, revealing how meticulous Saïd was with his own titles, being a lawyer and prosecutor at the Mixed Tribunals. Mahmoud Saïd strived to differentiate each female portrait or female nude by a wide variety of descriptive titles, yet paradoxically he intentionally subdued his model's individuality by omitting their names, of which *La Fille à l'imprimé* is an example, or sometimes preserving only their first names. The conventional reason for having this apparently distant relationship with the sitter is a reminder of the social hierarchy; yet in reality, Saïd creates a deeply-rooted and almost spiritual bond with his models by grasping the essence of their identity rather than limiting himself to their personal or physical appearance. His models embody the true Egyptian identity and the beauty of a changing nation that Saïd sought for, and in some ways reminisced about. There is no doubt that *La Fille à l'Imprimé* is someone who '*breathes the very spirit of the Egyptian people*' (Brinton, 1937), which Saïd succeeded in capturing in this outstanding portrait. She incarnates the Egyptian female beauty, celebrated throughout Saïd's oeuvre, but at the same time, Saïd reminds the viewer of the young woman's duties, as she leans her elbow on a large amphora that she probably fills up with water and empties several times a day. The female figure by the river in the background on the left also hints to the sitter's daily tedious task. Saïd plays on the contrast between the *fellaha's* elegance, seductiveness and immaculate gold skin and her identity as a rural, hard-working girl, therefore immortalising female Egyptian beauty regardless of her social background. In a recently re-discovered painting by Saïd, *Hanem* (1951) (sold at Christie's London, 25 October 2017, lot 11; price realised: £ 320,000), Saïd sought to depict a similar type of young girl, but this time she is dressed up with what appears to be Western-style clothes and she sits stiffly on a green couch. In *La Fille à l'imprimé*, the woman is portrayed in her environment, with the Nile River flowing behind her and a stormy sky looming above her, and she wears a tight flowery dress, the textile of which is neither local nor Western. Saïd captures her during her pause at work, and intentionally suspends time with that mystical light falling upon her face, eternalising that cherished moment of rest, peace and quiet, during which the young girl could temporarily escape her pre-destined life as a *fellaha*.





12

PAUL GUIRAGOSSIAN  
(1926, JERUSALEM - 1993, BEIRUT)

*La Lecture (The Reading)*

signed 'Paul. G.' (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
39½ x 31⅞ in. (100.2 x 81cm.)  
Painted in 1973

£45,000-65,000  
US\$55,000-79,000  
€52,000-75,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Paris (acquired directly from the artist).  
Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 21 October 2014, lot 39.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Beirut, Studio 27 Gallery, *Paul Guiragossian*, 1973.

LITERATURE:

S. Bardaouil, *Paul Guiragossian: Displacing Modernity*, Milan 2018, p. 247, no. 23 (illustrated in colour, p. 246).

The work is accompanied by a certificate of authentication from the Paul Guiragossian Foundation.



# PAUL GUIRAGOSSIAN

Painted in 1973, *La Lecture* (The Reading) is a remarkable composition showcasing Paul Guiragossian's signature style. The work depicts two women and a child gathering around a central female figure to intently listen to her reading of a book. The painting emanates dynamism through its bold and spontaneous brushwork. Warm yellow tones complemented by green and white strokes grace the composition, distinguishing limbs and cloaks in a pleasantly meticulous and abstract manner. With recurring patterns of broad sweeps of deep blue and green in the background, the delineating effect gives the painting its spatial perspective. The gathering of the women conveys a sense of mutuality and motherhood that arises from the communicative imparting of knowledge, care, and hopefulness.

Drawing on an array of influences from naturalism, modernism, as well as figurative abstraction, Guiragossian developed a distinct approach that is instinctively recognisable of his stylistic practice. Acutely conscious of the physical and psychological impact of exile and displacement, his journey as a refugee contributed to his nuanced understanding of the human body. The subjects in Guiragossian's compositions, often rendered as stretched-out forms, gathered closely, some hunched or crouched, occupy the space without overflowing its boundaries. This sense of unity often seems precarious, yet it also holds a kind of enchantment, perhaps offering protection against the spectre of loss. As a suggestive way to comprehend Arab intellectual thought, Guiragossian's paintings are characterised by an experimental approach, eschewing rigid forms that lead to the essence of intended expression, alongside an elegant use of modular configurations drawn from the traditions of post-impressionist painters, such as Van Gogh, who Guiragossian idolised and sought inspiration from. His body of work encompasses portrayals of himself, his family members,

and individuals he admired. He also created fully abstracted forms, where figures manifest as colour stripes, similar to fresco compositions seen at sites along the Silk Road. His paintings exude spontaneous energy, reflecting his inner compulsion to articulate and release his struggles onto the canvas. Through his artistry, Guiragossian endeavoured to capture the complexities of the human experience, encompassing its formidable challenges and moments of profound beauty. With acute sensitivity, he created compositions that transcended mere aesthetic allure, resonating with a sentiment universally shared by humanity.

Born in 1925 in Jerusalem to a family affected by the Armenian genocide, he experienced exile in both his heritage and fate while his family resettled in Beirut from Palestine in 1947. Guiragossian demonstrated exceptional adaptability, making Lebanon his home, mastering multiple languages, and passionately advocating for both Armenian and Arab causes, all while embracing European customs, ideas, and artistic styles with his multilayered brush strokes. In 1956, Guiragossian won the top prize in a painting competition, earning him a scholarship from the Italian Government to study at the Academia di Belle Arti di Firenze. In 1962, he secured another scholarship from the French Government to paint at Les Ateliers Des Maîtres De L'École De Paris. By the mid-1960s, Guiragossian became one of Lebanon's most acclaimed artists. In 1989, he travelled to Paris to exhibit at UNESCO and stayed there until 1991, creating some of his largest artworks. His works are part of the prestigious international public and private collections, including The British Museum, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Institut du monde arabe, Paris; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; Salama Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, Abu Dhabi, among others.



Installation View, *Paul Guiragossian*, Studio 27 Gallery, Beirut, 1973.  
Image courtesy of the Paul Guiragossian Foundation, Beirut.



13

## AHMED MATER

(B. 1979, TABUK)

### *Human Highway (Desert of Pharan series)*

Laserchrome print on KODAK real photo paper  
image: 47¼ x 71in. (120 x 180.5cm.)  
framed: 56¼ x 80¼ x 2½in. (144.3 x 205 x 6.3cm.)  
Executed in 2012, this work is number three  
from an edition of five

£20,000-30,000  
US\$25,000-37,000  
€24,000-35,000

#### PROVENANCE:

Athr Gallery, Jeddah.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2016).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

#### EXHIBITED:

Kochi, First Kochi-Muziris Biennale, 2012.  
Munich, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, *Common  
Grounds*, 2015, p. 16 (another version exhibited,  
illustrated in colour, pp. 126-127).  
Washington, Smithsonian Institution, *Symbolic  
Cities: The work of Ahmed Mater*, 2016 (another  
version exhibited; illustrated in colour, p. 6).  
Detroit, Arab American National Museum,  
*Epicenter X*, 2017 (another version exhibited).  
New York, Brooklyn Museum, *Ahmed Mater:  
Mecca Journeys*, 2017-2018 (another version  
exhibited).  
San Gimignano, Galleria Continua, *Mitochondria:  
Powerhouse*, 2017-2018 (another version exhibited).

Tennessee, Art Museum of University of Memphis,  
*Desert to Delta*, 2017-2018 (another version  
exhibited).  
Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah Economic City, *Drum  
roll, please*, 2018 (another version exhibited).  
Paris, Galleria Continua, *Stand in The Pathway and  
See*, 2018-2019 (another version exhibited).

#### LITERATURE:

C. David (ed.), *Ahmed Mater: Desert of Pharan,  
Unofficial Histories behind the Mass Expansion  
of Mecca*, Oslo 2016, p. 622 (another version  
illustrated in colour, p. 486).







14

KADHIM HAYDAR  
(1932, BAGHDAD - 1985, BAGHDAD)

*Untitled*

signed in Arabic (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
29 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 40in. (76 x 101.5cm.)  
Painted *circa* 1970

£50,000-70,000  
US\$62,000-86,000  
€58,000-81,000

PROVENANCE:  
Saad Shaker Collection (a gift from the artist),  
thence by descent.  
Abbas Al-Azzawi, Amman.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:  
Makou Magazine, issue 3, 2023 (illustrated in  
colour, p. 85).





# KADHIM HAYDAR

Kadhim Haydar is considered one of the most influential artists of the modern Iraqi movement. Born in Baghdad in 1932, Haydar studied literature at the Higher Institute of Teachers and simultaneously received a degree from the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad. He graduated from both institutes in 1957 and later went on to study theatre design, lithography and painting at the College of Art in London. Upon returning to Baghdad, Haydar started teaching at the Institute of Fine Arts.

From a very early stage Haydar's unique perspective and understanding of life had shown through his drawings and paintings. He would later combine his multiple interests and studies to intimately depict the worlds and struggles of contemporary humans. Haydar's genius lies in his unique outlook on life which he masterfully portrays using tools from his multidisciplinary background while continuously evolving his style and technique.

Haydar's body of work from the 1950s to the 1980s exemplifies the boldness of his themes and techniques, and his continuously changing style. It also highlights his commitment to the everyday struggles of the man. During the 1950s, Haydar's work was more figurative, focusing on the urban labourer as a hero. He then became well known for the Epic of the Martyr series which he produced and exhibited in Baghdad in the 1960s. This series of

around thirty-two paintings draws on the public mourning rituals of Baghdad that commemorate the death of Imam Hussein. Through his metaphorical compositions, Haydar narrates the story of an unknown martyr. His works following this series become increasingly abstract without straying away from the theme of human struggles. His final works which Haydar produces during the 1980s focus on the struggles of his own body and illness. The same illness he later passes away from.

This work from the Dalloul collection, is a remarkable example of Haydar's oeuvre that marks his style following the Epic of the Martyr series. Haydar sets the scene by painting a dark interior cube using green and blue. He then forms an abstract composition in the centre that is alive and dynamic. Within the organic boundaries of the central composition, this indistinctive body starts pulling away from the walls of the interior cube, fighting to open up the space to bring in light and colour. Haydar's brilliance here lies in formation of the central abstract composition which while it does not refer back to any species, cannot be thought of as being inanimate either. Through the opening that the body forms, Haydar provides us with a glimpse of what life looks like beyond walls. He is thus referring to ideas of freedom and human struggles through an abstract composition of a fight between a body and its surroundings.



15

MOHAMMED KACIMI  
(1942, MEKNES - 2003, RABAT)

*Untitled*

signed in Arabic, signed 'KACIMI' (lower left)  
acrylic on canvas  
37 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 41 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (95 x 105cm.)  
Painted in 1978

£30,000-50,000  
US\$37,000-62,000  
€35,000-58,000

PROVENANCE:  
Art Holding Morocco, Casablanca.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2014).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:  
B. Al-Maghrib, *Mohammed Kacimi, L'art comme geste extreme*, Rabat 2014, p. 69.  
N. Descendre, *Mohammed Kacimi: Catalogue Raisonné*, Tome I, Rabat 2017, no. 207 (studio shot illustrated, p. 30; illustrated in colour, p. 66).







# MOHAMMED KACIMI

Born in 1942 in Meknes, Morocco, Mohammed Kacimi was one of the most important artists in the Maghreb and the larger Arab region. An intellectual, a writer, a nomad and a humanist, Mohammed Kacimi brought all of these angles together in his pursuit of a type of truth in his artistic production. He constantly reinvented himself and his art as he continued to come across new revelations while traversing different disciplines.

Essentially a self-taught artist from an early stage, Kacimi studied Arabic literature at the University of Fes. While he always had artistic tendencies, it was his meeting with Jilali Gharbaoui that jumpstarted his artistic career and encouraged him to travel the world, fueling his curiosity and wonder. By then Kacimi was already surrounded by intellectuals and was aware of other artists in the Arab World such as Jewad Selim, Ismail Fattah and Ahmed Cherkaoui. But during his tour of Europe from 1964 to 1968, Kacimi became exposed to Afro Basaldella, Nicolas de Staël, Georges Rouault, Hans Hartung, Maurice Estève, Henri Atlan, Georges Mathieu, Serge Poliakoff, Jean Bazaine, Bram van Velde; but also Cy Twombly, Mark Rothko, Gérard Ernest Schneider. This awareness and knowledge of both the West and the East, coupled with his beliefs about humanity and his curiosity about the world became grounds to explore abstraction as a tool of liberation and

allowed him to depict the world in a manner that infused all of his beliefs and interests, knowledge and imagination. He did not subscribe to a particular school of thought or form, instead he sought a particular formal and aesthetic freedom that allowed him to present the truth of his world.

This composition is part of the Dalloul Collection and was created in 1974, a time where Kacimi was deeply immersed in this exploration of abstraction and the formulation of a new language. The work is emblematic of his style at that time: with bold geometric gestural lines and earthy tones, a composition that exits the boundaries of the canvas, only to appear from another edge to wrap around itself. Here, we see Kacimi's iconic depiction of the limb that recurs in most of his paintings during this time and we meet Kacimi as a nomad. With the light earthy tones and deep red, Kacimi invites us to explore the lands that he sees and meet the mystical creatures that he knows. He fuels our curiosity to see what he saw and builds a world through his assertive brushstrokes that we wish we knew. In all of Kacimi's work it is his humanism coupled with his intellectual curiosity, vast knowledge and imagination of the world and his dedication to the pursuit of a 'truth' which makes him one of the most important artists of his time.

Mohammed Kacimi. © Archives Kacimi



16

ADAM HENEIN  
(1929, CAIRO - 2020, CAIRO)

*Le Saint Esprit, El Roh El Kodouss*  
(*The Holy Spirit*)

signed in Arabic (lower left), dated '2015' (lower right)  
egg tempera on papyrus  
35¼ x 23¾in. (89.6 x 60.3cm.)  
Executed in 2015

£7,000-10,000  
US\$8,600-12,000  
€8,100-12,000

PROVENANCE:

Art Talks, Cairo.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2016).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Cairo, ArtTalks, *The Sweetest Heaven: Adam Henein & Bahaa Amer*, 2016, p. 12 (illustrated in colour, p. 11).



# ADAM HENEIN



Courtesy of Contemporary Art Gallery.  
Image courtesy of Karim Francis Gallery, Cairo.

Executed in 2015, *Le Saint Esprit/El Roh El Kodouss*, meaning *The Holy Spirit*, is an exceptionally unique work rendered using the ancient technique of mixing natural pigments with gum arabic and lime on papyrus. The application of pigment on this support yields a distinct impression, as the surface material undergoes cracking and swelling in response to humidity exposure on fibre. This provides the painting a coarse and textured look reminiscent of a fresco. The abstract rendering of the painting comprising elementary geometric forms and contrasting tones representing elements of Pharaonic monuments that were crucial in contributing to Henein's artistic inspiration. This work is a testament to Henein's ecstatic passion, ingenuity, and mastery for conciliating the fields of sculpture and painting in creating a modernist art that arises from a celebration of quintessentially universal and antiquarian patrimony.

Growing up into a family of metalworkers from Asyut in Egypt, Henein graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Cairo in 1953, specialising in sculpture making. With a curiosity to explore, analyse, and dissect the wonders of Mother Nature, he chose art-making as a means to break free from the concerns of everyday life, seeking solace in a parallel universe. Henein used sculpture as his principal medium to decipher the mysteries of ancient Egyptian art. Conversely, he believed painting to serve as a conduit for narrating the tales of nature and its interconnection with humanity.



Installation View, *The Sweetest Heaven: Adam Henein & Bahaa Amer*, ArtTalks, Cairo, 2016.  
Image courtesy of ArtTalks, Cairo.



17

INJI EFFLATOUN  
(1924, CAIRO - 1989, CAIRO)

*Banana Tree*

signed and dated 'I. Efflatoun 67' (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
27 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 19 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (69.5 x 49.8cm).  
Painted in 1967

£15,000-20,000  
US\$19,000-25,000  
€18,000-23,000

PROVENANCE:  
Safarkhan Gallery, Cairo.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2013).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.



# INJI EFFLATOUN

Occupying a distinct and enduring place within the annals of Egyptian Modernism and the nation's social history, Inji Efflatoun, was a painter, feminist, and dedicated political activist. Born into an aristocratic Egyptian family in 1924, Efflatoun's heart beat passionately for the lives of the working class, channeling their narratives and hardships into her art and activism. In 1942, Efflatoun joined the Communist Youth Party, eventually founding the League of University and Institutes' Young Women three years later. Her unwavering commitment to Communism became the catalyst for her nearly four-year-long imprisonment in 1959 during Gamal Abdel Nasser's presidency. Upon her release in 1963, she underwent a profound metamorphosis in her artistic expression, transitioning from stark social realism to vibrant depictions of everyday life and the beauty of nature, which mirrored her newfound personal and creative freedom.

The present work emerges as a hidden treasure within Efflatoun's post-incarceration works spanning from 1963 to 1973. This period is characterised by an explosion of light, colour, and

dynamic movements. Painted in 1967, Efflatoun skillfully captures a lush harvest scene from her beloved countryside village of Kafr Shokr, renowned for its rich and diverse vegetation. At its core are the banana trees, recurring motifs thoughtfully employed by Efflatoun, symbolising the connection between nature and humanity. In her own words, she describes trees as 'reminiscent of people—enduring symbols of our shared dreams and struggles' (M. Ayad, 'Overlooked No More: Inji Efflatoun, Egyptian Artist of the People', in *The New York Times*, 29 April 2021). The canvas bursts forth with a bold palette, radiating a kaleidoscope of colours pulsating with life, vividly portraying the verdant landscape. Delicate white lines elegantly trace the contours of the banana leaves, gracefully enveloping the entire canvas in a captivating dance of hues and forms. Remaining steadfast in her distinctive style, Efflatoun deliberately leaves blank spaces around various elements on the canvas, infusing an ethereal sense of lightness and movement that animates her composition, almost as though the artwork itself were a living entity, gently swaying in the breeze.



Image © Hesham Salama & Safarkhan Gallery, Cairo.



18

ABD AL-HADI EL-GAZZAR  
(1925, ALEXANDRIA - 1966, CAIRO)

*Untitled*

signed 'Elgazzar' (lower left)  
pen and India ink on paper  
13 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 9 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (34,5 x 25cm.)  
Executed in the late 1950s

£6,000-8,000  
US\$7,400-9,800  
€7,000-9,200

PROVENANCE:

Boutros Boutros Ghali, Cairo (acquired directly  
from the artist).  
Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 30 October 2014, lot  
230.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:

A. Roussillon, C. Roussillon, *Abdel Hadi Al-Gazzar  
1925/1966*. Cairo 1990 (illustrated, p. 56).  
V. Didier, Dr. H. Rashwan, *Abd El-Hady El-Gazzar:  
The Complete Works*, vol. II, *Drawings*, Paris 2023,  
no. D 212 (illustrated in colour p. 173).





# ABD AL-HADI EL-GAZZAR

'I may forget details and paintings, but when I think of Abd al-Hadi El-Gazzar, an artist of my generation, something awakens within my soul. We can forget many painters: but Mahmoud Saïd, Ragheb Ayad, followed by El-Gazzar, are hard to delete from the memory or mind. I mention El-Gazzar specifically with Mahmoud Saïd and Ragheb Ayad because the relationship linking them is like that of two shores connected by a bridge that guarantees continuity. El-Gazzar learned from the same folk environment that Ragheb Ayad, who pursued his artistic training in Italy, had drawn on before him. El-Gazzar also learned from Mahmoud Saïd's magical envisionings. Inspired by these two artists, from others he also borrowed certain bittersweet elements. He stood alongside members of the Contemporary Art Group to lift the lantern of contemporaneity and originality in the footsteps of pioneering art masters, and, like them, El-Gazzar made of contemporaneity something Egyptian, giving us Egyptian contemporary art. In the works of great writers such as Naguib Mahfouz (1911–2006), Youssef Al-Sharouni (1924–2017), and Yahia Haqqi (1905–97), we may detect the echoes of El-Gazzar's character; they, like him, also sought inspiration from folk environments and folk characters.

El-Gazzar rejected fakeness in art, believing that artists must interact with the social environments within which their art may flourish. He refused to adulate or glorify any superficial and

deceptive beauty. If the characters in society were different, if they were sick or disformed, then their artistic representation had to reflect the same. El-Gazzar did not depend on his academic abilities. As he mastered his artistic tools, he intentionally altered the forms in a way that allowed him to use composition to convey the truth. Consequently, his forms were in harmony with their essential meaning. To achieve such artistic honesty, he could therefore not produce beautiful polished forms to embody a reality that was ugly and rotten. The images we see in El-Gazzar's paintings are not neat and decorative, but rather rough, primitive, and dense. Despite this, his paintings are infused with a life that is lacking from the works of contemporary artists who are focused on make-up and masks, making the beauty of such paintings both fake and cheap. The beauty in El-Gazzar's paintings reflects honesty, loyalty, and candor, and for this reason his paintings have resonated through time, as opposed to the paintings of those who have degraded beauty and cheapened their art by making it a vehicle for social hypocrisy.' (N. Attiya, 'Between Confrontation and Depression', in V. Didier & Dr. H. Rashwan, *Abd El-Hady EL-Gazzar: The Complete Works*, vol. II, *Drawings*, Paris, 2023, pp. 19-20; translated from Arabic into English by Suzy Beltagy).

Abd Al-Hadi El-Gazzar with his painting *The Green Man* (1951) in his Studio, 1950s.  
© Hesham Salama and the Abd Al-Hadi El-Gazzar Estate.



19

HAMED NADA  
(1924, CAIRO - 1990, CAIRO)

*Untitled (Dance near the Pyramids)*

signed and dated in Arabic, signed 'H.Nada' (lower left)  
acrylic and graphite on canvas board  
24 x 20in. (61 x 50.9cm.)  
Executed in 1987

£30,000-50,000  
US\$37,000-62,000  
€35,000-58,000

PROVENANCE:  
Safarkhan Art Gallery, Cairo.  
Private Collection, Europe (acquired from the  
above in 1987).  
Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.







Hamed Nada, *The Key*, 1981.  
Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).

# HAMED NADA

A preeminent artist of modern Egypt, Hamed Nada masterfully navigated themes of symbolism, daily life, and the profound spiritual beliefs of Egypt through vivid and imaginative representations. Born in 1924 in Cairo's Al-Qa'la district, Nada was the progeny of a religious sheikh and grew up amidst the historic ambiance of the Sayyida Zeinab neighborhood. The grandeur of Mamluk and Ottoman monuments marked his childhood, while the vibrant energy of Cairo's markets, enriched with puppet shows and iconic Moulids, deeply influenced his artistic spirit. His artistic journey included learning mural painting at Madrid's Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in 1960 and obtaining his degree in 1951 from Cairo's Faculty of Fine Arts under mentors like Ahmed Sabry and Youssef Kamel. Before these formal studies, his artistic and philosophical perspectives were shaped under the guidance of artist-educator Hussein Youssef Amin, near the iconic pyramids, a recurring motif in Nada's works, including the highlighted canvas.

*Untitled (Dance near the Pyramids)* showcases Nada's distinctive style with stylised human-animal hybrids and avian figures set against architectural elements. Dominant figures come alive under the watchful gaze of a radiant sun and pyramid. The composition

gives life to the canvas, emphasising the depicted woman astride a harness-free horse, reminiscent of the Giza plateau. Adhering to a pre-Islamic style, the painting's design is akin to a structured grid. The lively figures, reminiscent of West African art, also evoke the complexity of hieroglyphics. Nada's works blur boundaries, with lines—both curved and linear—merging text and imagery, as evident in the arched colonnades of this piece.

A cornerstone in the Group of Contemporary Art (Jama'at al-Fann al-Mu'asir), Nada, alongside peers like Hussein Youssef Amin, Abd al-Hadi al-Gazzar, Samir Rafi, and Mahmoud Khalil, was a trailblazer in Egyptian modern art. Their combined ethos, as captured in their 1948 manifesto, suggested a shift from classical art's natural beautification to a more introspective, philosophical direction. Nada's artwork paints a tapestry of tales, weaving in stories, shared beliefs, and the enigmatic djinn realm. Through his brushstrokes, societal challenges emerge, emphasizing human grit and endurance. Nada's symbolism epitomizes his profound bond with Egyptian folklore, deftly juxtaposing mysticism, mythology, and the dynamic pulse of everyday Egyptian intimate, public, and hidden life in his vibrant canvases.



20

RAMSES YOUNAN  
(1913, MINIYEH - 1966, CAIRO)

*Untitled (abstract series)*

signed with artist's initials and dated 'RY 64' (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
38 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (97.5 x 130.2cm.)  
Painted in 1964

£30,000-50,000  
US\$37,000-61,000  
€35,000-58,000

PROVENANCE:  
The artist's family.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2017).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.





# RAMSES YOUNAN



Ramses Younan, *Inspiration from the sea*, 1963.  
Tate, London.  
© Tate.

Painted in 1964, Ramses Younan's *Untitled* is a striking work from the artist's *abstract series* in which forms dissolve and merge imbued with warm colours reminiscent of Egyptian landscapes. Starting from an initial improvisation, he would develop and refine the surface of his paintings to produce complex abstract compositions. Enhanced by the transparency of thinned oil paint, Younan highlights the tactile nature and painterly quality of the medium through gestural brushwork and rough edges.

A prominent figure in twentieth-century modernism, Ramses Younan, a painter, writer, and political activist, was born in Miniyeh, Egypt. In 1938, he became one of the co-signatories of the manifesto 'Long Live Degenerate Art', endorsed by thirty-seven artists and intellectuals, predominantly from Cairo. That same year, Younan, along with poet and journalist Georges Henein, founded the Art and Liberty Group, a collective of intellectuals and artists primarily aligned with Surrealism. The group maintained strong connections with their international counterparts, including figures like American photographer Lee Miller and French writer André Breton. This cross-cultural exchange played a pivotal role in introducing Surrealism to Egyptian art history, ultimately paving the way for the development of Egyptian Surrealism. This sought to break free from the established styles of artists like Salvador Dalí and René Magritte, emphasising the necessity of a Surrealist expression that allowed for radical and subconscious dreaming, characterising moral and social revolution.



21

MARWAN  
(1934, DAMASCUS - 2016, BERLIN)

*Marionette*

signed and dated 'Marwan Marz Juni 2014' (on the reverse)  
oil on canvas  
63¾ x 76¾in. (162 x 195cm.)  
Painted in 2014

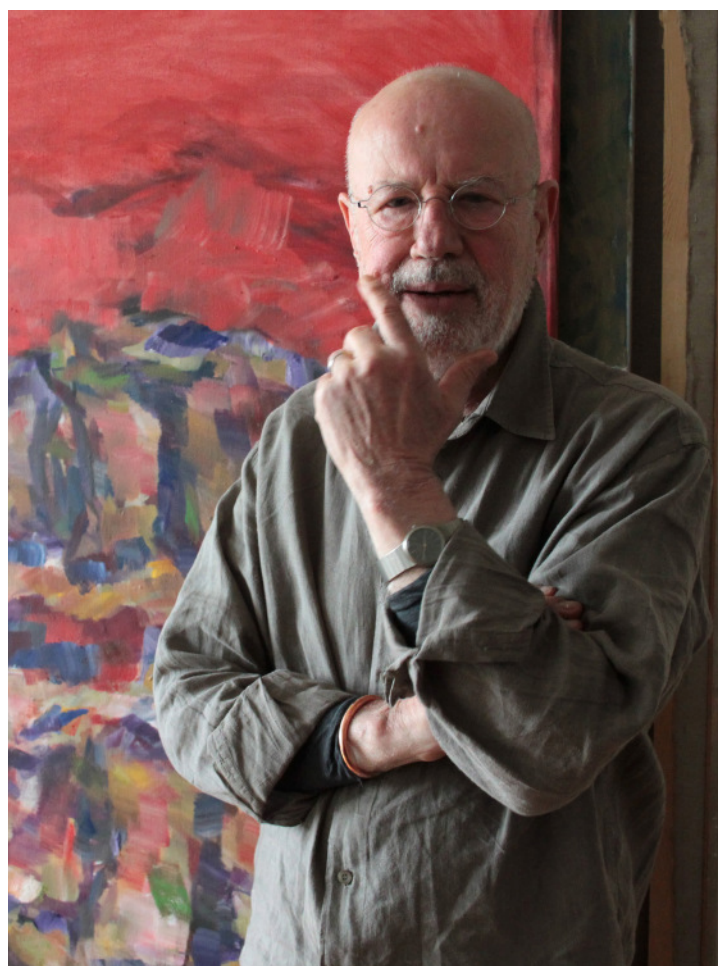
£60,000-80,000  
US\$74,000-98,000  
€70,000-92,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2014).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.



# MARWAN



Painted in 2014, *Marionette* is an important piece of Marwan's impressive large-scale semi-abstract canvases. Greatly influenced by German expressionism, the juxtaposition of quick and dynamic brushstrokes primarily in a vibrant blue palette, accented with touches of red, yellow, and purple against a pale sandy-coloured background, enhances the prominence of the central figure. The energetic brushwork around the marionette creates a halo-looking framing to the figure which evokes a sense of movement within stillness – as for stop-motion snapshot of a moving body. This stylistic duality reflects the metaphorical paradox of marionettes – inanimate and unblinking objects but still able to stir emotion within us.

Born in Damascus in 1934, Marwan moved to Germany in 1957 where he began studying painting at the Hochschule der Bildende Künste in Berlin under the supervision of the German artist Hann Trier. His cherished artistic contributions transcended geographical and cultural borders, propelling him to the forefront of Germany's New Figuration movement amidst the dynamic 1960s art milieu. At the core of his legacy lie his iconic explorations of the human form, prominently featured in his reoccurring *Marionette* series. Marwan's works are part of several important institutions worldwide such as the Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Tate Modern, London, The British Museum, London and the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.



MARWAN, 2012.  
© Dietmar Bühler.

MARWAN, *Marionette*, 1979.  
Image courtesy of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha.  
© Estate of MARWAN.



22

DIA AL-AZZAWI  
(B. 1939, BAGHDAD)

*Summeria Face*

signed and dated in Arabic (lower right); signed in Arabic,  
inscribed and dated '1974' (on the reverse)  
oil on canvas  
37% x 37%in. (95.5 x 95.5cm.)  
Painted in 1974

£50,000-70,000  
US\$61,000-85,000  
€58,000-81,000

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2012).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Berlin, Martin-Gropius-Bau, *Beirut and the Golden  
Sixties: A Manifesto of Fragility*, 2022-2023  
(illustrated in colour, p. 134). This exhibition later  
travelled to Lyon, The 16th Lyon Biennale; Doha,  
Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art.

LITERATURE:

*Dia Al-Azzawi: A Retrospective (From 1963 until  
Tomorrow)*, exh. cat., Doha, Mathaf: Arab Museum  
of Modern Art, 2016-2017 (illustrated in colour, p. 16;  
titled *Kun lia qina (Be My Mask)*).

This work is accompanied by a certificate of  
authenticity from Dia Al-Azzawi.



# DIA AL-AZZAWI



Installation View, *Beirut and the Golden Sixties: A Manifesto of Fragility*,  
Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, 2023.  
Photo: Ali Al-Anssari.  
Image courtesy of Qatar Museums © 2023.

Born in Baghdad in 1939, Dia Al-Azzawi is hailed as one of the most influential living artists of the Arab world. Renowned for his vibrant and figurative canvases, his artistic repertoire extends across various mediums, drawing from Iraq's cultural legacy to mirror collective struggles and contemporary issues.

Al-Azzawi's early works were informed by living amidst Baghdad's dynamic art scene, where he played a crucial role in shaping the genre of mid-20th-century Iraqi modernism. In 1969, he together with Rafa Nasiri, Mohammad Muhriddin, Ismail Fattah, Hachem al-Samarchi and Saleh al-Jumaie, established the group 'Towards a New Vision' (*al-Ru'yaa al-Jadidah*) and co-authored its manifesto, advocating for an exploration of history as a means to forge a connected artistic vocabulary for the present. Iraq's cultural heritage took on renewed significance for the artist, inspiring a reconnection with traditions such as Islamic illuminated manuscripts and its engagement with diverse creative expressions. Poetry seamlessly integrated into his artistic oeuvre, offering a wellspring of imaginative impetus and a repository of metaphoric associations.

Al-Azzawi was influenced by objects of Mesopotamian and Islamic cultures housed at the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad, from where after completing his studies in archaeology and fine arts at the Baghdad Institute of Fine Arts in 1964, he worked for over a decade before moving to London in 1976. To reflect on timeless aspects of the human condition, Al-Azzawi began merging contemporary painting techniques with motifs sourced from Iraq's rich Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian heritage with geometric patterns and arabesque elements inspired by the tribal culture of the desert.

In *Summeria Face*, a disjointed solitary figure of a human face and gripping fist, composed of an assortment of geometric forms, emerges against a contrasting black background, punctuated by occasional bursts of subdued colours. Its plain geometric visage pays homage to the iconic Mesopotamian figurines cherished by the artist. With the single figure positioned in an expansive realm of darkness, a looming sensation of isolation pervades. The four-petal almond rosette motif appearing alongside the clutched hand in green is a reference from material culture found across Europe and Asia, beginning in the earliest civilisations, from ancient Egypt and Greece to Mesopotamian and the Indus Valley, developing a divergence of significations across different geographies. On the top left appears a crossed three-digit: seven, eight, six numeric, written reversely in Arabic. The numerical combination, derived from an ancient system of Arabic numerology called *abjad*, is a signifier of good wishes. In reference to warding off evil, the inscription appears on various surfaces and objects, including amulets on which the digits are marked mysteriously in reverse to enhance their magical obscurity, hence transforming this canvas into a talisman of good fortune. This painting holds significant weight in demonstrating Al-Azzawi's stylistic progression, providing tangible evidence of the artist's glorious evolution.

Al-Azzawi's profound understanding of history and keen artistic sensibility plays a crucial role in characterising this work. He consistently draws inspiration from both Arab and Western artistic traditions. Al-Azzawi's work forms part of numerous institutional collections worldwide and continues to be exhibited extensively in the Middle East, North Africa, the United States, India, Brazil, and Europe, including major retrospectives at Institut du monde arabe, Paris (2002); and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha. Museums Gallery Al Riwaq, Doha (2016), displayed jointly.



23

AYMAN BAALBAKI  
(B. 1975, ODAISSEH)

*Untitled*

signed in Arabic, dated '09' (lower left)  
acrylic on canvas  
59 x 78¾in. (149.8 x 200cm.)  
Painted in 2009

£60,000-80,000  
US\$74,000-98,000  
€70,000-92,000

PROVENANCE:

Rose Issa Projects, London.  
Private Collection, Lebanon.  
Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 21 October 2014, lot 95.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

London, Rose Issa Projects, *Ayman Baalbaki: Ceci n'est pas la Suisse (Switzerland it ain't)*, 2009  
(illustrated in colour on the cover).

LITERATURE:

J. Pradel, P. Ardenne, P. Dagen, T. Savatier, N. Tamraz,  
*Ayman Baalbaki: face au KO / facing KO*, Paris 2022,  
p. 13 (illustrated in colour, pp. 14-15).  
A. Nysten, 'Dr Basel Dalloul in being Ayman Baalbaki  
issue', in *Selections Arts Magazine*, 24 March 2022  
(detail illustrated).







# AYMAN BAALBAKI

Born in 1975 against the turbulent backdrop of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), Ayman Baalbaki emerged from a childhood shrouded in socio-political conflict. His formative years were defined by the burdens of invasion, displacement, and destruction, casting a lingering and haunting shadow not only over Lebanon but also its broader context. Born into a lineage of artists that includes his father, Fawzi Baalbaki, and uncle Abdelhamid Baalbaki, Ayman Baalbaki channels the collective traumas of his generation—a result of nearly two decades of conflict in Lebanon—transforming them into a rich source of artistic inspiration.

Baalbaki's large-scale masterpieces harness the artist's firsthand experiences of life in a war-torn country, infusing vitality into the remnants of battered architectural structures in his homeland. *Untitled* (2009), a part of Baalbaki's ongoing series *Contre-Jour* (Against Daylight) since 2009, encapsulates the brutality of exodus—a sudden moment in time when war can shroud an entire nation in darkness. The present work extends Baalbaki's thematic exploration of deconstruction and abandonment as he vividly portrays the haunting image of a demolished, uninhabitable building. With a hyper-expressionistic style reminiscent of Neo-Expressionism, Baalbaki imbues the architectural scene with an extraordinary sense of anguish and torment. The painting not only captures the essence of Lebanon's post-conflict architecture but also transforms the demolished building into a powerful metaphor representing the nation and its people. Through his expressive application of thick layers of acrylic paint, each brushstroke creates depth and dimension where there was once a flat surface. Transcending a visual representation of the structure itself, the painting captures the voices of the once-inhabitants, the cries of those who suffered during the conflict, and the enduring traces of pain etched into the souls of survivors. The dominating composition of the building structure on the canvas underscores

its importance, symbolising the collective consciousness of the Lebanese people. Baalbaki incorporates earthy and flesh tones, perhaps as a tribute to the human lives that once thrived within these walls, juxtaposed against dark blacks that fill the shadows of the building's voids. Subtle brushstrokes of blues and greens in the background hint at a glimmer of light, acceptance, and hope amid the wreckage. Through *Untitled* (2009) and other works in his series *Contre-Jour*, Baalbaki reveals the profound scars carved into the fabric of his nation, prompting contemplation of the enduring human toll exacted by conflict.

In addition to his evocative depictions of dismembered buildings, Baalbaki is celebrated for his iconic portraits of *Al-Moulatham*, adorned with the symbolic keffiyeh—a traditional headdress that evolved into a symbol of Palestinian resistance. His paintings of abandoned tires and soldier's helmets also contribute to his extensive body of work, weaving a compelling narrative that simultaneously recounts the artist's personal history and that of his country while serving as a relatable expression for people globally who have endured the ravages of war.

Ayman Baalbaki embarked on his artistic journey by earning a Fine Arts diploma from the Lebanese Public University in Beirut in 1998. His passion for art led him to Paris in 2000, where he continued his education at Art et Espace within the École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs (ENSAD) until 2002. He obtained his D.E.A. in the art of images and contemporary art at Université Paris VIII from 2002 to 2003. During the summers of 2001 and 2002, he participated in the Ayloul Summer Academy in Amman, Jordan, under the mentorship of the esteemed Syrian modernist Marwan (1934-2016). Ayman Baalbaki's work has been widely exhibited internationally, including the 13th Cairo Biennale, the 54th Venice Biennale, and Institut du monde arabe, Paris amongst others.



24

SERWAN BARAN  
(B. 1968, BAGHDAD)

*Dog of the General*

signed and dated 'SERWAN.B 2014' (lower left)  
acrylic on canvas  
87¾ x 79¾in. (222 x 202.6cm)  
Painted in 2014

£30,000-50,000  
US\$37,000-61,000  
€35,000-58,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:

M. Jaggi, 'From war zone to haven: the view from Beirut', in *Financial Times*, 1 December 2017 (illustrated in colour; titled *Untitled*).



# SERWAN BARAN

Painted in 2014, *Dog of the General* is a monumental work of Serwan Baran's grotesque expressionist oeuvre. Rendered in earthy tones using a contrasting combination of fluid and rough brushstrokes, the work explores the capacity of acrylic paint for varying levels of transparency. A striding general in a khaki greatcoat is gripping the collar of a slavering hound as if trained to unleash both its savagery and his own. Both canine and war are the central subject in Baran's body of works. As Baran himself comments, the dog in the picture is both mythological and mundane: dogs are a symbol of transition to the afterlife or guardians of realms of death, but they were also deployed against Iraqi civilians as instruments of fear. Indeed, *Dog of the General* is a representative work in Baran's oeuvre addressing the artist's personal traumatic military experience as a soldier in the First Gulf War through grotesque and figural abstractions. The undefined hazy background levitates the subjects into an indefinite setting which could refer to the war that he himself lived through as well as all the other conflicts that are happening across the globe. Baran uses his art as a way of responding to war and the emotional consequences it has brought to him. In an interview he states: 'My work is a reaction to war, not a chronicle. I am repeating the shock over and over again, to rid myself of the nightmare. I do it because I'm opening up.' ('Interview with Iraq Pavilion artist Serwan Baran', in *Ruya Foundation*, 2 April 2019).

Born in 1968 in Baghdad, Iraq and graduating in 1992 from the University of Babylon, College of Fine Arts, Baran is considered one of the most influential contemporary Iraqi-Kurdish artists today. His artistic development was overseen by prominent artists of his time such as Marwan, whose influence can be spotted in his dynamic brushstrokes, and Faeq Hassan. He presented to the international audience his solo exhibition titled *Fatherland* at the Iraqi pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale which highlighted the conflict in Iraq and the surrounding region. His works have been featured in a number of exhibitions in Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Qatar as well as international Biennials, such as the Cairo Biennale in 1999, Al-Kharafi Biennial, Kuwait in 2011, and the fourth Marrakech Biennale in 2012. Baran currently lives and works in Beirut.



Courtesy of The Artist.





25

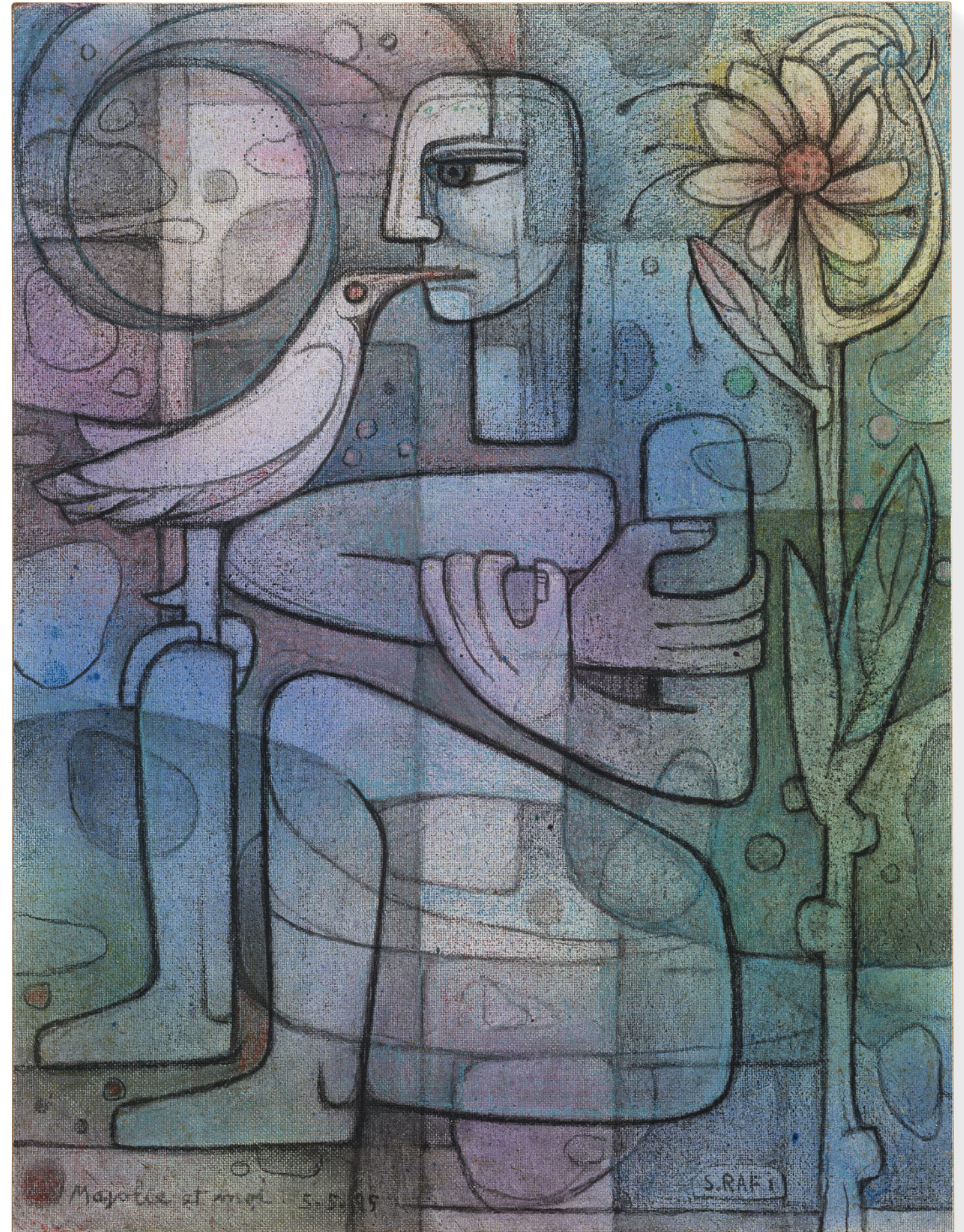
SAMIR RAFI  
(1926, CAIRO - 2004, PARIS)

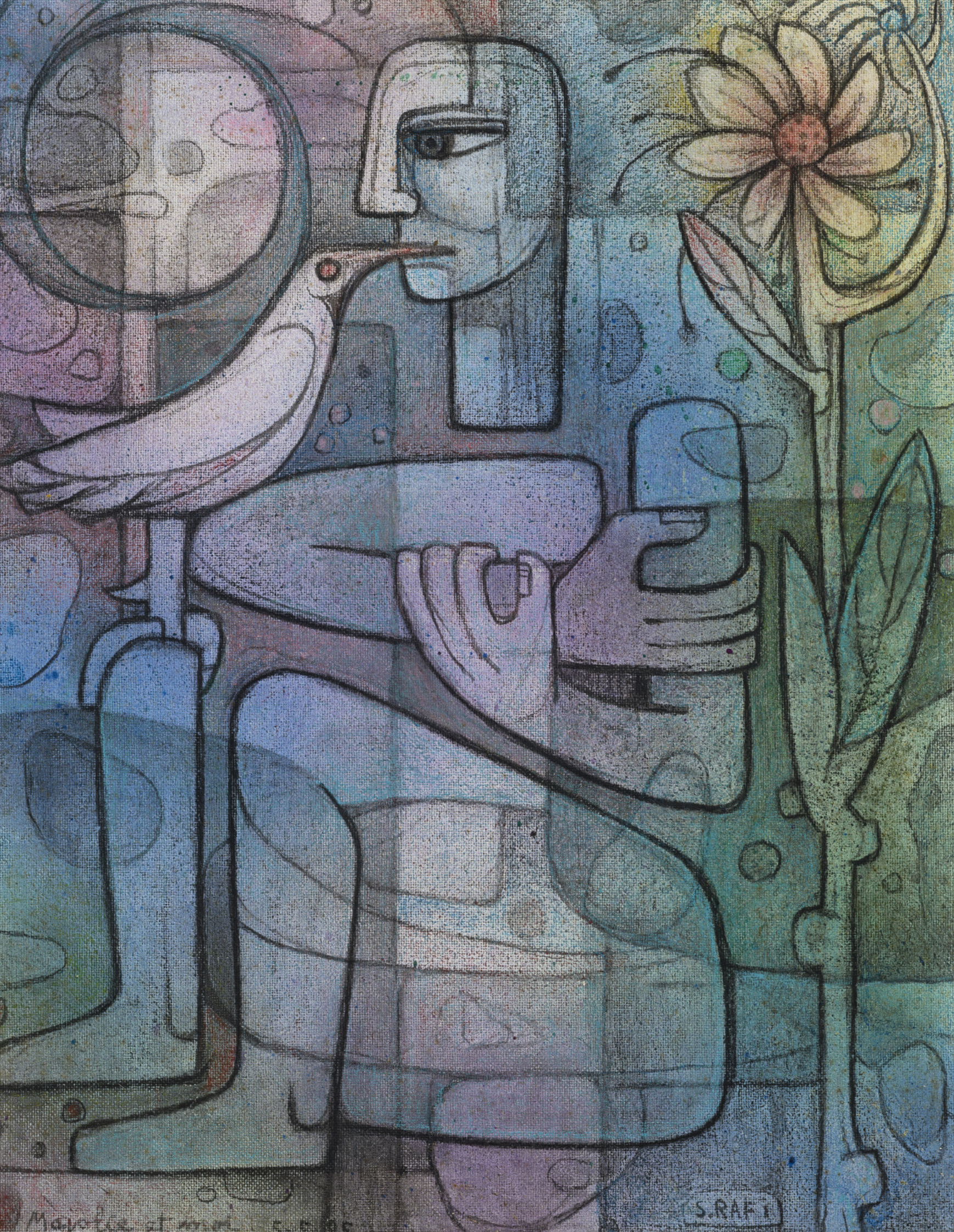
*Ma jolie et moi (My darling and I)*

signed 'S.RAFI' (lower right), titled and dated *Ma jolie et moi*  
5.5.95' (lower left)  
oil on panel  
32¼ x 24½in. (82 x 62.5cm.)  
Executed in 1995

£8,000-12,000  
US\$9,900-15,000  
€9,300-14,000

PROVENANCE:  
Private Collection, Cairo.  
Anon. sale, Bonhams London, 26 April 2017, lot 51.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.





# SAMIR RAFI

Executed in 1995, *Ma jolie et moi (My darling and I)* is emblematic of Samir Rafi's poetic riffs on reality. The work invites a viewer to step into the realm of his subconscious, where his observation of everyday life bearing the weight of solitude and desolation finds depiction with radiant expressions of layered anthropomorphic figures. Through his manipulation of perspective, skillful handling of lines and shadows, he creates an unexpected surreal universe with his signature imagery of the female form, incorporating symbols from nature and memories of his formative years spent in Egypt. The symbolism in the artwork nods to ancient Egyptian and Nubian art, providing a foundation for discussions on emotive themes of kinship, camaraderie, and freedom.

Born in 1926 in Cairo, Rafi pursued a degree in decorative arts at Cairo's Fine Arts School in 1948. In 1954, he moved to Paris permanently and studied Modern Art and Museology at the École du Louvre from 1955 to 1958, and concurrently pursued his PhD in Art History under the supervision of Professor André Chastel at La Sorbonne. There, he met Pablo Picasso and the architect Le Corbusier. Inspired by European Surrealism, Rafi joined the Art and Liberty Group, which rejected any form of cultural alienation and propaganda and advocated for a more nuanced approach to literature and visual arts in Egypt. Rafi emerged as a prominent figure in modern Egyptian art alongside Abd al-Hadi El-Gazzar and Hamed Nada. Employing a Surrealistic perspective, he crafted narratives of Egyptian public life, interweaving elements of magic and folklore in his paintings.



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26

MOHAMMAD NAGHI  
(1888, ALEXANDRIA - 1956, ALEXANDRIA)

*Grilling Lamb in Cyprus*

signed 'Naghi' (lower left)  
oil on canvas mounted on panel  
14 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 20 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (37.9 x 53.1cm.)  
Painted in 1955

£15,000-20,000  
US\$19,000-24,000  
€18,000-23,000

PROVENANCE:

Dr Mohamed Said Farsi Collection.  
Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 30 October 2014, lot 202.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Cairo, Conseil Supérieur des Beaux-Arts,  
*Rétrospective Mohamed Naghi: A L'occasion du  
premier Anniversaire de sa Mort, 1957, no. 9* (illustrated,  
unpaged; titled *La campagne à Chypre*).

LITERATURE:

S. Al-Sharouny, *A Museum in a Book: Selections from  
Dr Mohammed Said Farsi's Art Collection*, Cairo 1998,  
no. 21/30 (illustrated, p. 36; illustrated in colour, p. 42).



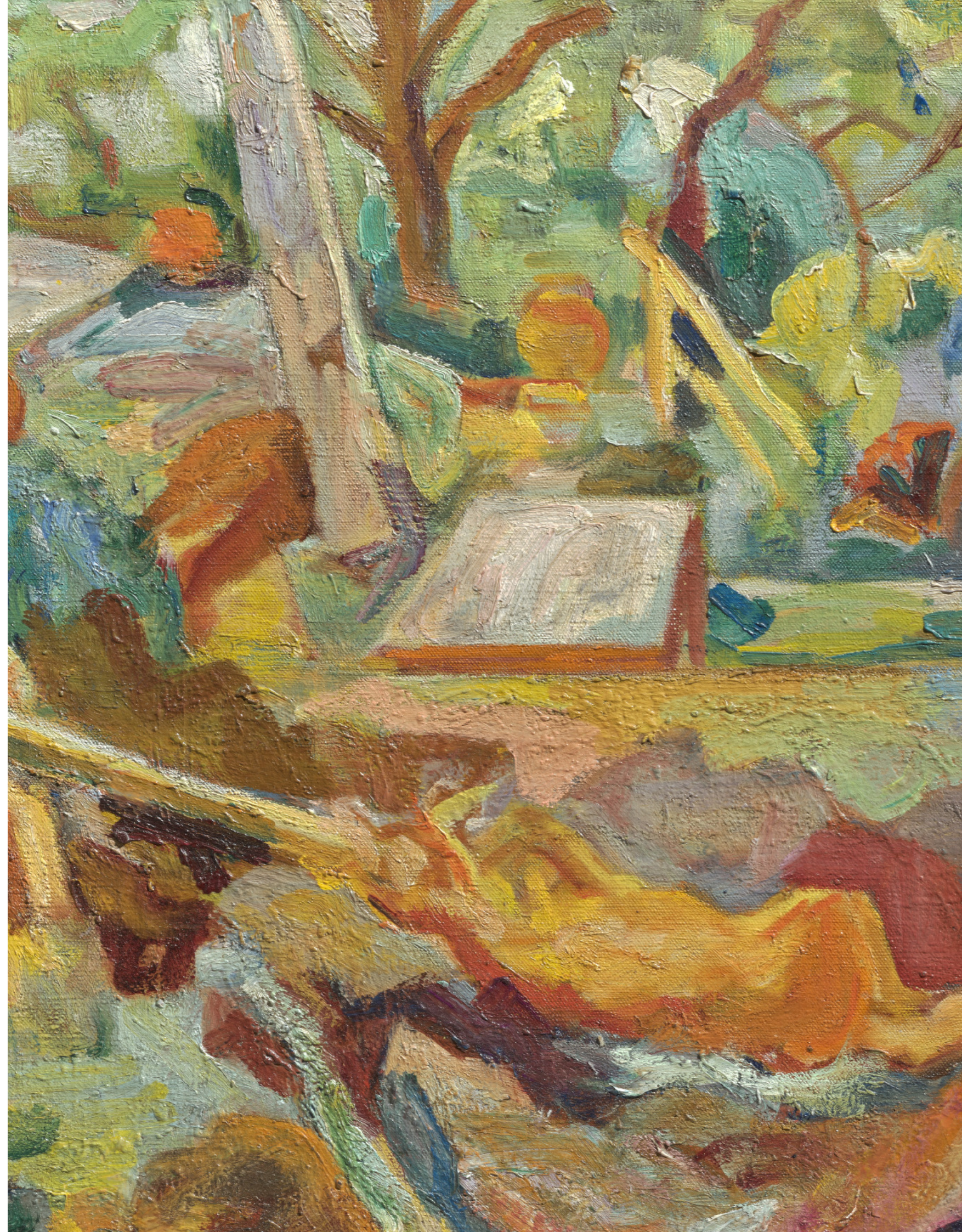
# MOHAMED NAGHI

*Grilling Lamb in Cyprus* by Mohammad Naghi is a remarkable example of the artist's oeuvre. This work is produced after the revelation Naghi had with the Abyssinia series which he painted during the thirties. This series marked a shift in Naghi's style as he reflected on his Western training in the quest to find a modern, intrinsically Egyptian style. This change in his style is seen through the bold experimentation with vibrant colours and the depiction of quotidian acts in the present work.

Growing up in an aristocratic family in cosmopolitan Alexandria, Naghi (1888-1956) was exposed to western techniques and schools early on. He was trained under Alberto Piattoli during his school years and continued his fine arts studies at the Scuola Libera del Nuda in Florence after gaining a law degree. He later went to Giverny, north-west of Paris, to learn from the impressionist master Claude Monet (1840-1926). In 1926, Naghi returned to France and was introduced to post-Cubist artist André Lhote (1885-1962) who would become a close friend of both Mohammad Naghi and his sister Effat (1905-1994). Naghi had always been both aware and critical of the marginalisation of Egyptian art, and spent his career as a diplomat and an artist attempting to reconcile his knowledge of western techniques and aesthetics with the revival of Egypt's artistic identity. Painted during his final years in the fifties, *Grilling Lamb in Cyprus* can be seen as Naghi's culmination of his pursuits towards finding an intrinsically Egyptian style.



La compagne à Chypre (Huile) 1955 — Collection des Hols. الرفيق في قبرص ١٩٥٥ ( زيت ) ملك الورد  
Cairo, Conseil Supérieur des Beaux-Arts, *Rétrospective Mohamed Naghi A L'Occasion du Premier Anniversaire de sa Mort*, 1957.





27

BIBI ZOGBÉ

(1890, SAHEL ALMA - 1973, MAR DEL PLATA)

*De Mi Jardin (From My Garden)*

signed 'BiBi ZoGbé' (lower right) signed, titled and dated "DE Mi jARDiN" POR BiBi ZoGbé 64' (on the reverse)

oil on board

27 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (69.5 x 59.9cm.)

Executed in 1964

£7,000-10,000

US\$8,700-12,000

€8,100-12,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Buenos Aires.

Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 18 October 2016, lot 47.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.

Thence by descent to the present owner.





# BIBI ZOGBÉ

Referred to as 'La Pintura de Flores' or 'the flower painter', Bibi Zogbé's sobriquet is reflective of her characteristic depiction of flowers and shrubs seen in this painting: *De Mi Jardin (From My Garden)*. Painted in 1964, the work shares its name with a group of Zogbé's works that depict the explosive energy of natural vegetation. Inspired by her childhood memories of growing up in Lebanon, from where at the age of sixteen she immigrated to Argentina and lived between her residences in Buenos Aires and Punta del Este in Uruguay, this stunning composition with fiery gobs of oil blends the hues of different seasons in one frame.

From the flowering of apple and cherry blossoms in spring to the phenomenal changing of leaves in autumn, Zogbé meticulously examines the intricacies of stems and leaves and strategically scatters flowers as revitalising bursts of colour against the emerald background. This painting demonstrates the virtuosity of the artist to absorb and fuse both Impressionism and Realism. Zogbé's cosmopolitan life influenced her artistic persona, prompting her to draw inspiration from various traditions — all while observing the ideas of modernism.



Bibi Zogbe. Image courtesy of Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Franklin Rawson





28

NASSER CHAURA  
(1920, DAMASCUS - 1992, DAMASCUS)

*Untitled*

signed and dated in Arabic, signed and dated 'N. CHAURA 1990'  
(lower right)  
oil on canvas  
33.5/6 x 27 1/2 in. (85.5 x 69.9cm.)  
Painted in 1990

£8,000-12,000  
US\$9,900-15,000  
€9,300-14,000

PROVENANCE:  
Nasser Chaura Gallery, Damascus.  
Private Collection, Beirut.  
Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 20 October 2015, lot 6.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.



# NASSER CHAURA

Painted in 1990, *Untitled* by Nasser Chaura is one of his very last works in his oeuvre. As such, this work is the ultimate epitome of the artist's flourishing artistic brilliance, which displays his mastery of assimilating inspiration from the principles of Impressionism, Abstraction, and Nouveau Réalisme in this single veritable painting. Idealising the bountiful orchards that surrounded him while growing up in Syria, the stunning depiction is magical in its sense of evoking vivid warmth of the natural world surrounded by graceful, swaying trees, gazing into a vibrant panorama teeming with a dance of light, shadow, intricate texture, and pristine shapes.

Throughout Chaura's oeuvre, the themes of nature and landscape dominate. He commented 'my love for nature was the main inspiration for me as we lived in an old wooden house surrounded by a small vegetable garden' in the town of al-Muhajireen ('Nassir Shoura', in *Atassi Foundation*). Making drawings while still in school, in 1939 he left for Rome to gain formal artistic training, however returning back to Syria due to the eruption of Second World War. Eventually in 1942, he moved to Egypt, graduating from the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Cairo in 1947. Engaged in discourses surrounding the arts, Chaura played a pivotal role in establishing several arts organisations in Syria, such as the Veronese Atelier and Group D. These collectives convened regularly to discuss contemporary matters of art and politics, as well as to formulate group exhibitions, marking a pivotal moment in Syrian art history, fostering collaboration and international exchange. Chaura has been widely recognised as the father of Syrian Impressionism.



Nasser Chaura, *Untitled*, 1991.  
Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).



29

JAMIL MOLAEB  
(B. 1948, BAISSOUR)

*The Vertical Sea*

signed 'MOLAEB' (lower right); dated '2013' (on the reverse)  
acrylic on canvas  
56½ x 40½in. (143.5 x 102.9cm.)  
Painted in 2009

£7,000-10,000  
US\$8,700-12,000  
€8,100-12,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.





# JAMIL MOLAEB

Painted in 2009, *Vertical Sea* is a representative work of Jamil Molaeb's seascape oeuvre. Displaying a gradual transition from one tone of blue to another, the work skillfully explores the nuances of colour and light. On the lower right side of the canvas, a small boat is floating on the surface of the water acting as a key in bridging between figuration and abstraction. A sense of harmony and quietness is enhanced by the absence of figures, redirecting the attention of the viewer towards the balance and unity of the composition. The sea and the sky blend silently at the horizon, playing with the different layers of depth.

Born in 1948 in Baysour, a village in Mount Lebanon's Aley District, Jamil Molaeb studied art in Beirut, Algeria, and the United States. During his travels, which served in stark comparison to his predominantly rustic childhood, he recognised the need to sidestep from the influence of Western art movements, electing instead to channel his energies into his indigenous heritage.

Image courtesy of Jamil Molaeb Museum Collection.  
© The Artist.



30

CHAOUKI CHOUKINI  
(B. 1946, CHOUKINE)

*Petit prince, enfant de Gaza (Little prince,  
child of Gaza)*

incised with the artist's signature, number and date and stamped  
with the foundry mark 'CHOUKINI 1/8 [sic] 2010' (on the base)  
bronze

46½ x 20½ x 13½in. (118.1 x 51 x 33.4cm.)

Executed in 2010, this work is number one from an edition of six  
plus two artist's proofs

£30,000-50,000

US\$37,000-62,000

€35,000-58,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, France (acquired directly from  
the artist).

Anon. sale, Christie's Dubai, 30 October 2013, lot  
126.

Claude Lemand, Paris.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
(acquired from the above in 2014).

Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Paris, Galerie Claude Lemand, *Chaouki Choukini,  
Le bois et le bronze*, 2012.

Paris, Galerie Claude Lemand, *The Lebanese  
Creativity: 1959-2012*, 2012.

Paris, Galerie Claude Lemand, *From East and West  
2016: Paintings, Sculptures, Artist Books*, 2016  
(another from the edition exhibited).

Paris, Institut du monde arabe, *Lumières du Liban.  
Art moderne et contemporain de 1950 à aujourd'hui*,  
2021-2022 (another from the edition exhibited).

Another from the edition was donated by Claude &  
France Lemand to Institut du monde arabe, Paris.



# CHAOUKI CHOUKINI

Chaouki Choukini's biomorphic sculptures range from expansive horizontal pieces to vertical, almost totem-like figures cast in wood or bronze. Choukini draws on elements from the natural environment and industrial processes to forge innovative modes of sculptural expression to investigate the boundaries and overlapping of ideas, materials, and shapes. Choukini's artistic process often begins with a watercolour sketch. Though they are destined to be carved or cast in wood or bronze, the shapes that populate his sketches are not hard and brittle but feature soft lines and subtle hues, and show the artist's skill in lending an organic softness to the severe geometric shapes of his work.

Inspired by the glint of sunlight on rocks in Lebanon, Choukini's sculptures hinge the interplay between light and solid forms. Through *Petit prince, enfant de Gaza* (*Little prince, child of Gaza*), he endeavours to advance a fresh, abstracted comprehension of the human form, where the presence of human profile is a subtle facet of the entire sculptural composition. With this remarkably imposing and intricate bronze sculpture, the artist draws attention to the plight of children in war-torn Gaza. *Petit prince, enfant de Gaza* (*Little prince, child of Gaza*) in its fragmental sight of tension between edges, corners and cubist elements, symbolises the non-

existence of youthful pleasures amidst the shadow of ravaging war. The sculpture becomes a potent platform through which the artist wordlessly conveys the tragedy and stark realities of absent childhood.

Born in 1947 in Choukine, a village in southern Lebanon, Chaouki Choukini's interest in sculpture was developed early in his childhood while working as an apprentice in a local carpentry studio making toys out of wood. He subsequently studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts de Paris from 1967 to 1972. Prior to living and working between Paris and Normandy, where the artist continues to be based, in 1984, Choukini spent a year-long sojourn in Japan. This period left an indelible imprint on his artistic expression, as he drew profound inspiration from the ethos of Japanese minimalism. Choukini is a recipient of the Prix de la Jeune Sculpture in 1978, the Taylor Foundation Prize in 2010 and the Prix de la Fondation Pierre Gianadda, from de l'Academie des Beaux Arts, France in 2015. His works are held in important collections, such as Centre Pompidou, Paris; Institut du monde arabe, Paris; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, and Sharjah Art Foundation. He currently lives and works in Paris.





31

ASIM ABU SHAKRA  
(1961, UMM AL-FAHM - 1990, JERUSALEM)

*Garters*

oil on card  
39 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (100 x 70cm.)  
Executed in 1988

£20,000-30,000  
US\$25,000-37,000  
€24,000-35,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist's estate.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, *Asim Abu-Shakra*,  
1994, p. 83, no. 25 (illustrated in colour, p. 39).  
Paris, Musée-Galerie de la Seita, *Signes de terre:*  
*Asim Abu-Shakra*, 1996, no. 7 (illustrated in colour,  
p. 24; titled *Porte-jarretelles*).

LITERATURE:

N. Itzhaki, *Asim Abu Shaqra*, Milan 2013, no. 20  
(illustrated in colour, p. 71).





# ASIM ABU SHAKRA



Asim Abu Shakra/The Palestine Museum Digital Archives/George Alaama Collection.

Born in Um Al-Fahem to a Palestinian family and living in Tel Aviv, Asim Abu Shakra's world is one of politics, identity and conflict. His life, one that was too short and too heavy, is portrayed boldly through his paintings. Despite passing away at just twenty-eight, Abu Shakra is considered to be one of the most brilliant artists of his time.

Asim Abu Shakra's work can be described as being intimately political. The black paint and wide violent brushstrokes depicting otherwise mundane objects provide a glimpse of understanding into his mind. The cactus, a symbol of Palestinian resistance and resilience, becomes the centre of Abu Shakra's oeuvre. However, Abu Shakra domesticates it, putting it in a pot near a window sill in some of his works. This scene was one that Abu Shakra has seen in real life, but he also reproduced it in his work as it resonated with him as a Palestinian living in Tel Aviv.

During the 1980s, Abu Shakra produces a series of paintings depicting garters alongside another group of works on neckties. Both series are depictions of western garments that do not necessarily hold much weight when one sees the whole outfit. However Abu Shakra gives these accessories a heavy presence. Using black brushstrokes and thick layers of white paint, this garter, a flimsy piece of cloth, becomes heavy, as if one was wearing cuffs that weighed as much as a large rock. When seen in the context of the other paintings, such as his portrait of a man wearing a buttoned collar or the series of neckties, the transformation of these small insignificant accessories into controlling instruments that dictate and limit the individuals becomes clearer. In all of Abu Shakra's painting the tiny and the mundane is given a lot more significance and a lot more weight than otherwise one could imagine.





32

HAZEM HARB  
(B. 1980, GAZA)

*Untitled #24 (Archaeology of Occupation)*

print on Hahnemuhle FineArt Baryta 325gms. mounted on 3mm.  
aluminium composite  
59 x 77½in. (150 x 197cm.)  
Executed in 2015

£7,000-10,000  
US\$8,700-12,000  
€8,100-12,000

PROVENANCE:  
Athr Gallery, Jeddah.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:  
Jeddah, Athr Gallery, *Hazem Harb: The Invisible  
Landscape and Concrete Futures*, 2015 (illustrated  
in colour, p. 27). This exhibition later travelled to  
Dubai, Salsali Private Museum.

LITERATURE:  
J. Kalsi, 'Structures that erase identity', in *Gulf  
News*, 11 May 2015 (illustrated in colour).



# HAZEM HARB

Hazem Harb is a contemporary Palestinian visual artist who artfully reimagines the concept of 'home' as a collection of shared stories passed down through generations. These narratives are not just stories; they are deeply etched into the collective consciousness, meticulously documented through visual and written records, and form the very foundation of 'home' for the Palestinian community. Harb's mixed media body of work serves as a powerful expression of this sentiment, vividly illustrating how a profound sense of belonging endures, even in the face of displacement.

Harb revitalises archival photography from pre-1948 Palestine through his series, *Archeology of Occupation*. The present work, *Untitled #24*, which is from this series, showcases Harb's fascination with collage as a medium for exploring visual contradictions, particularly related to the complexities of land and identity within a Palestinian context. Harb's creative process begins with the meticulous curation of archival images, capturing the picturesque essence of his homeland: its unspoiled towns, landmarks, and landscapes before occupation. These photographs encapsulate the cherished memories of his childhood, revealing buildings whose walls echo his ancestors' voices and streets that once pulsed with vitality. He then overlays these sites with collages of concrete slabs, disruptive lines, and geometric shapes, adding layers of complexity to the surface. In the composition of *Untitled #24*, the backdrop of the collage captures a striking view of the Mediterranean city of Haifa. The black-and-white photograph portrays an expansive stretch of land, with the city's silhouette on the horizon and three solitary palm trees punctuating the tranquil scenery. Harb overlays the photograph with black and marble triangles resembling modern, sterile architectural structures. This juxtaposition creates a compelling interplay between the past and present, the authentic and the artificial. Harb's compositions invite reflection and contemplation, challenging the notion that history exists in isolation. Through dual perspectives in his collages, he crafts a vivid picture of his homeland's past and the untapped possibilities it may still embrace.

Born in Gaza in 1980, Hazem Harb moved to Rome to pursue his MFA at The European Institute of Design in 2002 and a course in Visual Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in 2006, he settled in the UAE in 2013 where he currently resides. Hazem Harb has been included in solo and group exhibitions internationally, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Seoul Museum of Art; Maraya Art Centre, Abu Dhabi and The Mosaic Rooms, London.



Hazem Harb in his Studio. Image courtesy of The Artist, © Saher Nassar.





\*33 SLIMAN MANSOUR

(B. 1947, BIRZEIT)

*Uncertain Landscape 1*

signed and dated in Arabic 'S. Mansour 09' (lower left)

acrylic on canvas

33½ x 41in. (84.1 x 104.2cm.)

Painted in 2009

£20,000-30,000

US\$25,000-36,000

€24,000-35,000

PROVENANCE:

George al Ama, Palestine.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.

Thence by descent to the present owner.



# SLIMAN MANSOUR



Painted in 2009, Sliman Mansour's *Uncertain Landscape* offers a glimpse into how narratives of diasporic and oppressed communities fill the void left by the absence of a cohesive story to navigate the rugged terrains of an obscure past.

In her article 'Jerusalem: City of Dreams', Tina Sherwell says: 'Mapping is an area of contestation in the Palestinian context; and issues such as mapping, and archeology, are deeply politicized activities. Palestinians have been unable to create their own aerial maps of Palestine as they have no right to flight over the skies, nor is there a Palestinian airport or airline in operation. Mapping has been dominated by those who have wanted to conquer the land, whether it be the extensive mapping carried out by the Palestinian Exploration Fund during the early British mandate years or by the state of Israel' (T. Sherwell, 'Jerusalem: City of Dreams', in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, Issue 49, Spring 2012).

Realised from an aerial perspective, *Uncertain Landscape 1* is Mansour's appropriation of digital mapping and photography in order to depict the landscapes of his own land using the authority given to aerial imagery and a way of reclaiming the right to fly its skies.

Sliman Mansour was born in 1947 in Birzeit, Palestine, just a year before the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians

during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, known commonly as *Nakba*, the word for catastrophe in Arabic. As a painter, sculptor, and cartoonist, Mansour has lived through the continuing political strife and rebellion, witnessing the annexation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. His early schooling happened at the Evangelical Lutheran School in Bethlehem, where he was introduced to European art history by his German teacher, Felix Theis. Later, he went to the Bezalel Art Academy in West Jerusalem to study drawing and painting under noted artist and academic Yossi Stern and Joseph Hirsch. As one of the rare Palestinians at Bezalel, Mansour completed his BFA in 1970, following which he played a pivotal role in shaping Palestinian modern art by co-founding the League of Palestinian Artists in 1973. In 1994, he established the Al Wasiti Art Centre in Jerusalem and served as its director from 1995 to 1996. Alongside his teaching responsibilities at Al Quds University, Mansour actively contributed to founding the Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art in 2004 and the International Academy of Art in 2006, both located in Ramallah. His work is part of prestigious private and public collections, including the Guggenheim Museum, Abu Dhabi; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Institut du monde arabe, Paris; Jordan National Museum, Amman; The Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah among others. Sliman Anis Mansour lives and works in Jerusalem.

Sliman Mansour, *Uncertain Landscape 2*, Al Ram, 2009.  
Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).



34

DIA AL-AZZAWI  
(B. 1939, BAGHDAD)

*Architectural Composition*

signed and dated in Arabic (lower left); signed in Arabic,  
inscribed and dated '1971' (on the reverse)  
acrylic and oil on canvas  
39¼ x 39¼in. (99.7 x 99.5cm.)  
Painted in 1971

£50,000-70,000  
US\$61,000-85,000  
€58,000-81,000

PROVENANCE:  
Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2012).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

This work is accompanied by a certificate of  
authenticity from Dia Al-Azzawi.





# DIA AL-AZZAWI

Painted in 1971, Dia Al-Azzawi's *Architectural Composition* is a mélange of symbols, forms, and ideas that unequivocally portray the artist's blooming imagination, seeking inspiration from the intersection of his formal training in archaeology, fine arts and the ancient Mesopotamian cultures, Islamic calligraphic traditions, and modern abstraction. Conveying remarkably disparate, surprising, and yet somehow familiar meanings, the glaringly recurring motif in this vivid blue canvas is the form of the human eye, which invites a viewer to draw connections between the seen and unseen nature of tangible and intangible heritage. Demonstrating Al-Azzawi's self-awareness, profound artistic proficiency, and animated appreciation for the vibrant cultural legacy of his birthplace, Iraq – this work embodies a modernist interpretation of traditional Iraqi art, skillfully weaving together an exceptional fusion of customary symbolism. His keen observation developed into a fascination for Iraqi symbols, particularly talismans imbued with positive energies, which appear in this painting, further endeavours to unravel, and elucidate their meanings.

This exceptional canvas from Al-Azzawi's oeuvre is primed from his experience of living, studying and growing up in Baghdad, a place synonymously referred to in history as the 'Centre of Learning'. Exemplified by the reference on the top-right, where six circles laid in each of the three successive rows of a total of eighteen

dots, connecting and emanating from the two polar funnel-shaped devices, Al-Azzawi stylistically directs attention to noticing the changing rhythms of various cities. Using a visual metaphor, the artist communicates his layered thought processes, employing a semi-abstract approach to self-expression. He skillfully blends the past and present to unveil existential inquiries, almost creating a universal map of cultural exchanges amidst his experiences of living between them. In this painting, the interplay of letters and forms and their mysteries referencing the layout of Sumerian cities is a reflection of Al-Azzawi's preoccupation with architectural configurations. As his career progressed, he skillfully merged these familiar details in an unpredictable and ingenious manner, creating iconic compositions that contributed to his global acclaim.

Al-Azzawi's profound understanding of history and keen artistic sensibility plays a crucial role in characterising this work. He consistently draws inspiration from both Arab and Western artistic traditions. Al-Azzawi's work forms part of numerous institutional collections worldwide and continues to be exhibited extensively in the Middle East, North Africa, the United States, India, Brazil, and Europe, including major retrospectives at Institut du monde arabe, Paris (2002); and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2016), displayed jointly.

Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Foundation (DAF).



35

DIA AL-AZZAWI  
(B. 1939, BAGHDAD)

*Bird's Watcher*

incised with the artist's signature, numbered and dated 'Azzawi  
2011 4/6' (lower right)

bronze

26 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (68.3 x 13 x 12.5cm.)

Executed in 2011, this work is number four from an edition of six

£10,000-15,000

US\$13,000-18,000

€12,000-17,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.

Thence by descent to the present owner.





# DIA AL-AZZAWI

Executed in 2011, *Bird's Watcher* is an iconic work from Dia Al-Azzawi's outstanding sculptural oeuvre. A man is sat on the edge of a golden narrow elongated structure, looking towards the sky in the search of flying birds. The asymmetrical posture of the man, hugging one leg with his arm and the other one hanging down, suggests his contemplative state of mind.

He comments 'My work is part of the Renaissance of Arab Art trend, yet it is universal in its dimension and interlocked within contemporary history and culture'. (R. A. Proctor, 'Dia Azzawi: I AM THE CRY', in *Harper's Bazaar Arabia*, 14 February 2017). This sculpture encapsulates the artist's keen self-awareness, remarkable mastery, and lively reverence for the material culture of his birthplace, representing a modernist take on traditional Iraqi art with the skillful blending of Mesopotamian iconography. It showcases the genius of a pioneer of modern Iraqi art for seamlessly blending the past and present, harmonising the artist's engagement with Iraq's political landscape, its enduring turmoil, and the nuanced sophistication of its contribution to the rich global heritage. Having moved to London in 1976, painter, sculptor, etcher and draughtsman Dia Al-Azzawi realised that by looking at Iraq from afar, he could understand more about Iraq and Arabic culture than if he had stayed back.





36

**FAEQ HASSAN**  
(1914, BAGHDAD - 1992, PARIS)

*The Fishermen*

signed in Arabic (lower left)  
gouache on paper  
22 x 29in. (55.9 x 73.5cm.)  
Executed in the 1960s

£18,000-25,000  
US\$23,000-31,000  
€21,000-29,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection (acquired directly from the artist  
in the 1960s).

Private Collection (thence by descent from the  
above).

Anon. sale, Sotheby's London, 25 April 2017, lot 36.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Baghdad, *Faeq Hassan*, 1962.

LITERATURE:

*Makou Magazine*, issue 1, 2023 (illustrated in  
colour, p. 27).



# FAEQ HASSAN



Painted in the 1960s, *The Fishermen*, is an exceptional example of Faeq Hassan's oeuvre. Liberated from the confines of academic style, he demonstrated his command over form and colour through structured figures and linear arrangement, resonating with the pictoriality of Mesopotamian cuneiform script. His approach was directed by the consciousness of Primitivism and a quest for a simpler way of life to avoid societal constraints and growing Western influence in his homeland. The use of flat geometric shapes, broad swaths of colour, and a straightforward rendering of form in this painting exemplify this reconnection with his heritage.

Hassan's practice was influenced by various artistic traditions traversing across different geographies and informed by ordinary life in Iraq. Having graduated in painting from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1938, he found inspiration in modern European art movements. While one can clearly draw parallels between Hassan's early abstract art and European cubism, his work also harmonises Sumerian, Islamic, and Iraqi folkloric imageries. Hassan wielded his brush with a precision akin to a knife, cutting the canvas into fragments to reduce figures into geometric forms.

Navigating the paradigms of East and West, Hassan forged a distinctly modern style that seamlessly integrated polar traditions, resulting in an aesthetic that resonated with both Eastern and Western audiences. Today, Hassan's enduring legacy as one of the pioneers of modern Iraqi art remains immortalised through his inspirational body of work.

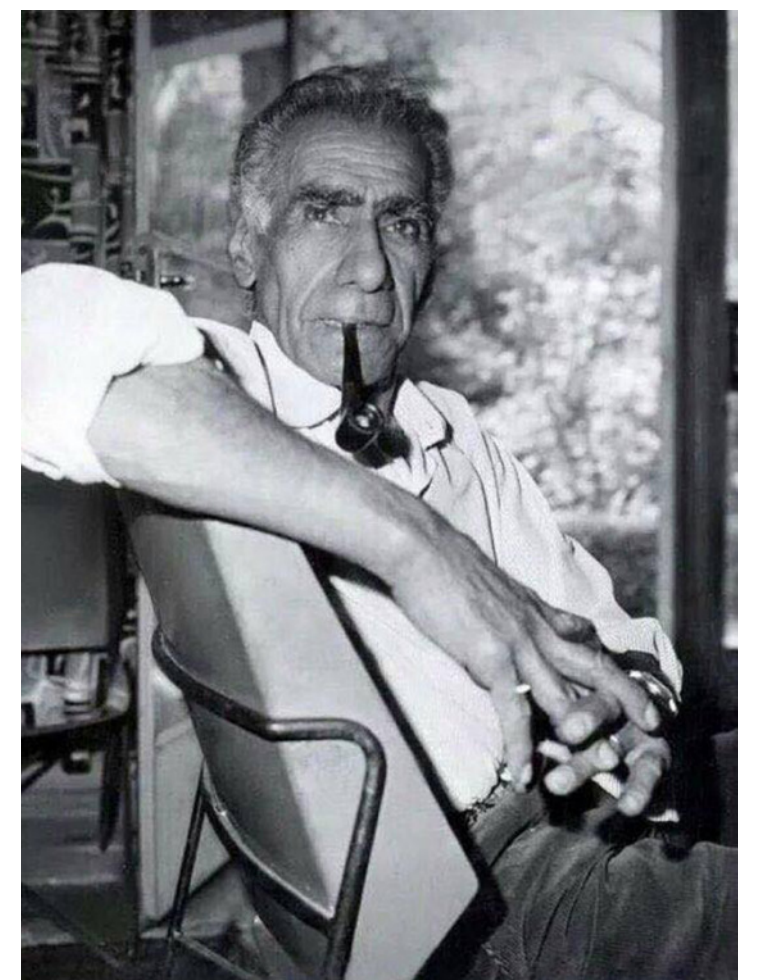


Image courtesy of the Ibrahimi Collection, Amman/Baghdad.



37

HAFIDH AL-DROUBI  
(1914, BAGHDAD - 1991, BAGHDAD)

*Cock fight*

signed and dated in Arabic (lower left)  
oil on canvas  
18 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 38 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (48 x 97cm.)  
Painted in 1967

£18,000-25,000  
US\$23,000-31,000  
€21,000-29,000

PROVENANCE:

Abbas Al Azzawi, Amman.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

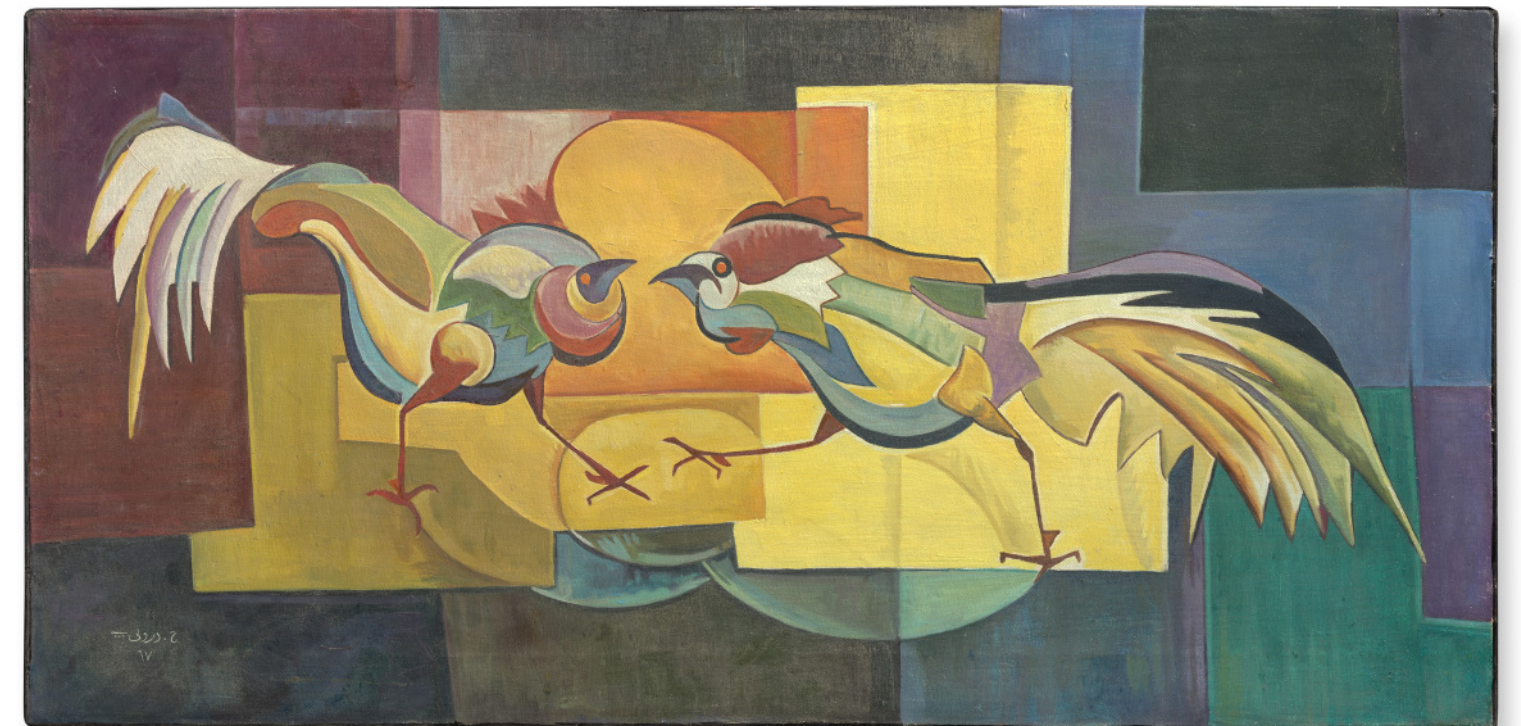
EXHIBITED:

Paris, Institut du monde arabe, *Picasso et les avant-gardes arabes*, 2022.

LITERATURE:

J. Lasnier, 'Quand Picasso inspirait les artistes des avant-gardes arabes', in *Connaissance des arts*, 6 April 2022 (illustrated in colour).  
A. Nysten, 'The Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF)', in *Selection Arts Magazine*, 21 July 2022 (illustrated in colour).  
D. Al-Azzawi, 'Hafidh alDroubi: alFann Sa'adati', in *Makou Magazine*, issue 4, December 2021 (illustrated in colour, p. 128).

The work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from the Aldroubi family.

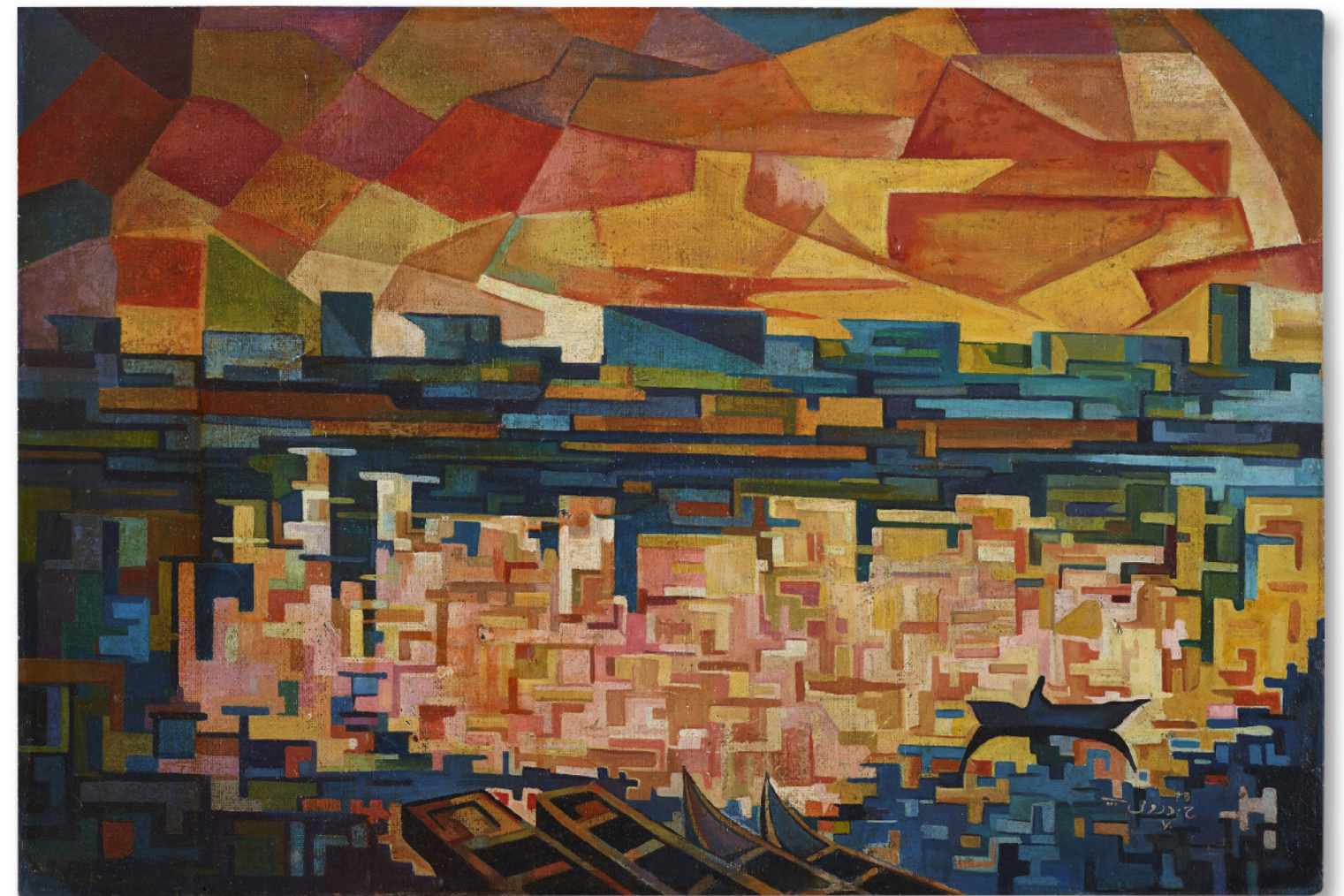


# HAFIDH AL-DROUBI

Painted in 1967, Hafidh al-Droubi's *Cock fight* is an astonishing portrayal of the powerful sport of the same title, regarded as an entertaining pastime since prehistoric times. In this painting, the two facing-off roosters are depicted with condensed, multicoloured shapes, blending into the background of overlapping rectangular planes. The bodies of roosters are composed of elongated and jagged forms, each possessing a distinct identity contributing to the animated composition of the work. Inspired by the altering perspective, tonal gradations, and fragmentation of space in Cubism, this artwork is a synthetic composition of the transformation of everyday sight into a medley of three-dimensional forms. Much like his predecessors and fellow artists in the Arab world, al-Droubi travelled to Rome in 1937 for training. He returned to Baghdad in 1940 before graduating from Goldsmiths College in London in 1950. Throughout his career, al-Droubi made immense contributions to the evolution of modern art in Iraq. He established Iraq's first free art studio in 1942 and founded the artist collective 'The Impressionists' in 1953, which shared art education and embraced artists working across different media and styles. Al Droubi actively engaged with the burgeoning art scene in the city, taking on multiple roles. He was the chairperson of the society Iraqi Plastic Artists for six years and served as the Dean of the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad.



Hafidh al-Droubi in his Studio, Baghdad, 1955.



Hafidh al-Droubi, *Sunset over Dijla*, 1970.  
Image Courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).



38

MOHAMMED GHANI HIKMAT  
(1929, BAGHDAD - 2011, AMMAN)

*Moving Gracefully*

incised with the artist's signature in Arabic (on the base)  
wood  
26¾ x 4¾ x 4in. (68 x 12.5 x 10cm.)  
Executed in 1965

£8,000-12,000  
US\$9,900-15,000  
€9,300-14,000

PROVENANCE:  
Delair Shaker, Amman.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2016).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:  
*Al-Adib, Mohammed Ghani*, 1994, no. 293  
(illustrated).





# MOHAMMED GHANI HIKMAT



Image courtesy of the Mohammed Ghani Hikmat Archives.

Executed in 1965, *Moving Gracefully* is an exceptional example of Mohammed Ghani Hikmat's elegant sculptural oeuvre. His sculptural prowess reflects the essence of Iraq itself. Notably, his smaller-scale wooden sculptures, marked by their simplicity and abstract allure, often feature women draped in traditional Iraqi *Abayas*. This poignant representation reflects Ghani's fascination with motherhood as an artistic motif, vividly illustrated by the present work. Drawing inspiration from the shapes of traditional Baghdadi tombstones and driven by his longstanding interest in Renaissance Humanism, the present work skillfully captures Ghani's characteristic fusion of Eastern and Western influences.

Hikmat was a prolific sculptor and pioneer of Iraqi Modernism. His enduring influence resonates profoundly through the numerous public monuments that grace Iraq's cities today, serving as a testament to his commitment to restoring the beauty of his beloved yet wounded nation. Emerging from the creative heart of Baghdad, Hikmat played a pivotal role as a member of the Baghdad Modern Art Group, a collective founded by luminaries Shakir Hassan Al Said and Jewad Selim. Together, they sought to create a unique artistic language by blending Modernist techniques with Iraqi heritage, drawing inspiration from Abbasid-era manuscripts, Islamic motifs, and the ancient Sumerian and Babylonian monuments. Amid this political context, Hikmat used his art to transcend individuality to craft a unified and unmistakably Iraqi identity.



39

FATEH MOUDARRES  
(1922, ALEPPO - 1999, DAMASCUS)

*L'adieu de la bête*

signed in Arabic, signed 'Mouddarres' (lower right); signed again,  
inscribed and dated in Arabic, signed, titled and dated 'F.mouddarres  
1981 Damas' (on the reverse)

oil and sand on canvas  
39½ x 39½ in. (100.6 x 100.4 cm.)  
Executed in 1981

£20,000-30,000  
US\$25,000-37,000  
€24,000-35,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, London.  
Anon. sale, Tajan Paris, 24 April 2013, lot 37.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

London, Grosvenor Gallery, *Modern Arab Masters*,  
2012, p. 17, no. 5 (illustrated in colour, p. 18).





# FATEH MOUDARRRES

Painted in 1981, *L'adieu de la bête* underscores Moudarres's distinct approach, characterising a harmonious chromatic scheme of warm hues and a balance between figuration and abstraction. Captivated by the enchantment of the natural world and human surroundings, Moudarres's subjects, arranged alongside one another, take a two-dimensional, rectangular form reminiscent of Sumerian idols and Assyrian monarchs. Interspersed with a subtle portrayal of village scenes and women with children, the work, in its flat and surreal appeal, challenges-imposed values and norms to celebrate equality against social hierarchy.

Moudarres created varying textures in his paintings, using rough brush strokes and thick layers of oil paint mixed with sand. In his commitment to the emotive use of colour and quest for an objective art based upon subjectivity, he likened himself to Vincent van Gogh, who, in principle, was influenced by the colour symbolism of Eugène-Delacroix. Moudarres viewed red as a primal, forceful hue due to its association with conflict and bloodshed and used it judiciously in politically charged works. He regarded blue as a dignified, witty colour best suited for political critique. To him, gold was symbolic of Byzantine art and served to contain or counterbalance the dominance of other colours, while white represented grandeur and generosity.

As one of Syria's foremost painters, he hailed for pioneering modernism in Syria. His unique style was inspired by ancient Syrian heritage, the challenges faced by local agricultural communities, and the tumultuous political events engulfing the region in the aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War. Depicted in understated

figures, his signature square-shaped heads reimagined the formations seen on palace reliefs from Assyrian civilization, the Palmyrene Empire, and primitive Christian iconography. Embracing the ideals of European Surrealists, Moudarres reflected on his subconscious using painting as a means to transmit hidden memories and suppressed longings. His art emanated from profoundly personal experiences, such as the early loss of his father and the premature passing of his two children. Influenced by the existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, whom he met in Europe, Moudarres recognised the transformative potential of death and the significance of confronting it by developing an association with life itself. Moudarres believed that by mastering the art of form and skillful manipulation of colour, he could reinvent time through his work.

Fateh Moudarres predominantly lived in Syria, with influential academic years spent at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome during the late 1950s and the École des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 1970s. After his return to Syria, he served as a lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts until 1993. Moudarres also authored several collections of poetry and short stories. His works were part of prominent exhibitions, including the Cairo Biennial in Egypt in 1994, the Seoul Biennial in Korea in 1986, the Contemporary Arab Art Exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris in 1980, the New York International Art Fair in 1964, the Sao Paulo Biennale where he received the Medal of Honour (1963 and 1975), and the Venice Biennale in 1961. A retrospective exhibition of his oeuvre was held at Institut du monde arabe in Paris in 1995.



Fateh Moudarres, *Untitled*, Undated.  
Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).



40

CHAÏBIA TALAL  
(1929, CHTOUKA - 2004, CASABLANCA)

*Aïcha*

signed 'CHAÏBIA' (lower right); signed, titled, inscribed and dated  
'1988 Aïcha N-25 CHAÏBIA' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

31¼ x 27¾in. (80.6 x 70.6cm.)

Painted in 1988

£15,000-20,000

US\$19,000-25,000

€18,000-23,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist, thence by descent.

Anon. sale, Compagnie Marocaine des œuvres et  
objets d'art Casablanca, 20 December 2014, lot 31.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.

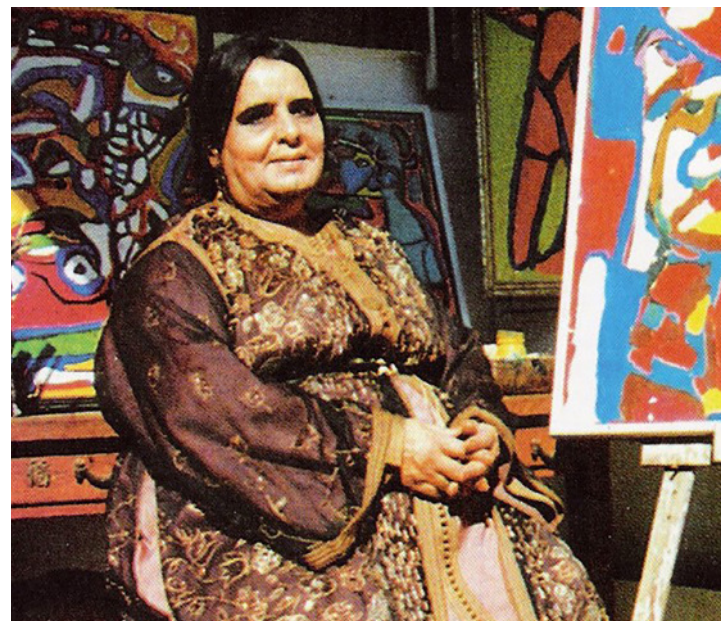
Thence by descent to the present owner.



# CHAÏBIA TALAL

Painted in 1988, *Aïcha* captures the essence of an abstract female figure set against a dynamic backdrop of solid, organic shapes. Renowned for her chromatic technique, Chaïbia Talal applied paint directly from the tubes without pre-mixing, systematically covering the canvas with saturated paint sections. This work showcases the artist's mastery of bold, flat colours and simplified forms, imbuing the artwork with a childlike innocence and a discernible sense of energy and dynamism. Talal brings her distinctive touch to this work, characterised by exaggerated proportions, elongated limbs, and bold facial expressions. Given her own experience as a single mother, *Aïcha* may potentially serve as a tribute to the feminist activist who founded the Association Solidarité Féminine (ASF) in 1985, Aïcha Chenna, often likened to 'Morocco's Mother Teresa'. Staying true to her characteristic joyful depiction of women, Talal incorporates regional attire and headpieces into this painting, thus paying homage to the rich cultural heritage she so deeply cherished.

Born in 1929 in the province of El Jadida, Talal is one of the most celebrated female Moroccan artists of the Twentieth Century. Her outstanding artistic journey unfolded amidst personal challenges. At the very young age of fifteen, she became a widow and a single mother, shouldering the responsibility of caring for her child. However, it was at the age of twenty-five that her life took a transformative turn. In a dream, she was presented with a collection of art materials, propelling her into a lifelong creative journey, despite her prior lack of artistic experience. Guided and supported by Moroccan painter Ahmed Cherkaoui and Pierre Gaudibert, the director of Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, Talal refined her 'Art Brut' style, veering away from conventional influences and embracing a more vivid colour palette and a simplified interpretation of form and shape in her art. She garnered acclaim for her colourful, vibrant and stylised paintings, with a primary focus on capturing the portraits of local Moroccan women.



Chaïbia Talal in her Studio.  
Image courtesy of Archives of Women Artists Research and Exhibitions.





41

AHMED CHERKAOUI  
(1934, BOUJAD - 1967, CASABLANCA)

*Claire de Lune (Moonlight)*

signed and dated 'A. CHERKAOUI 63' (lower centre); signed,  
titled and dated 'A. CHERKAOUI D. 1963 "Claire de Lune"' (on  
the reverse)

oil on burlap

14 x 19 7/8 in. (35.4 x 50.5cm.)

Painted in 1963

£15,000-20,000

US\$19,000-25,000

€18,000-23,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection (acquired directly from the  
artist).

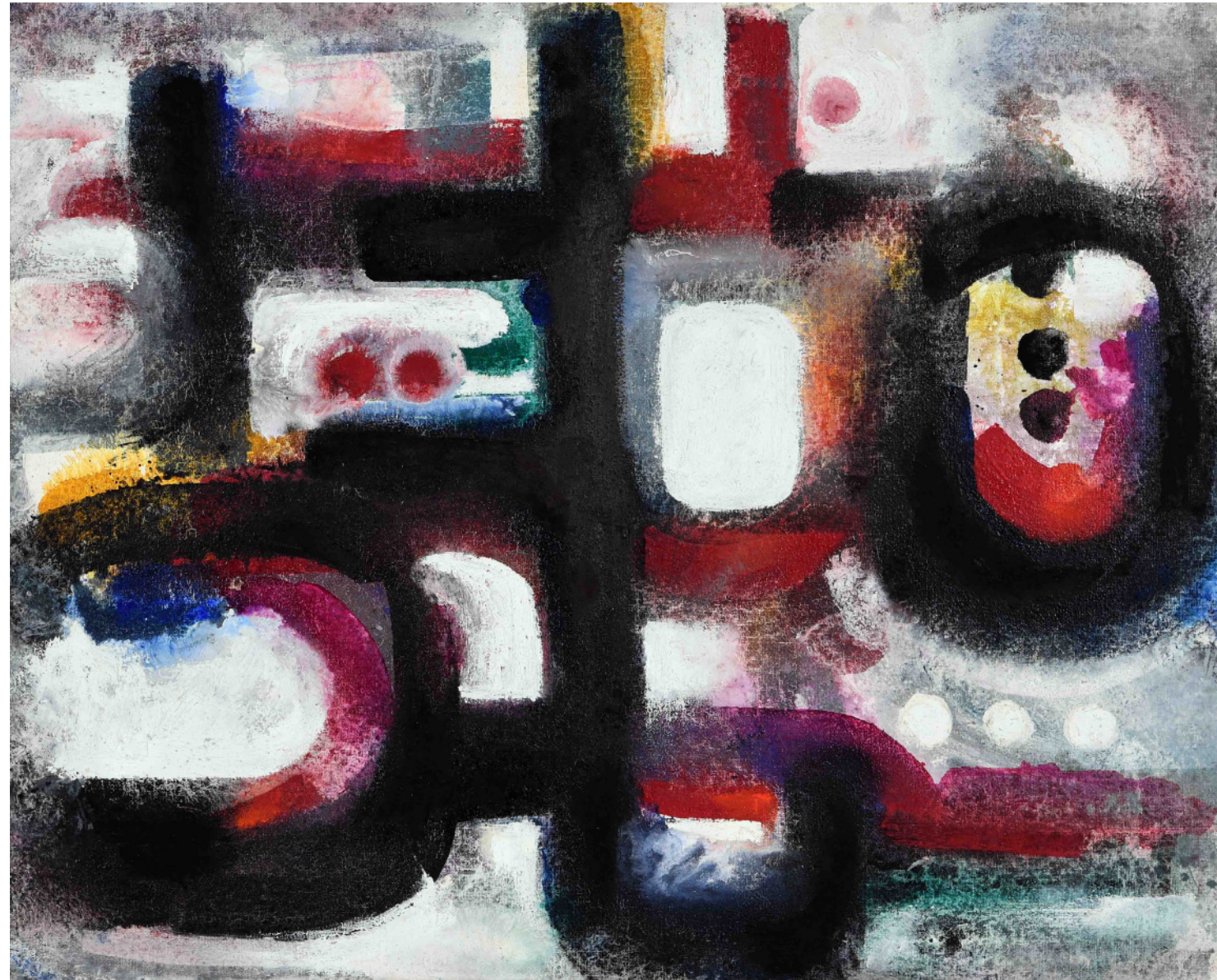
Anon. sale, Cornette de Saint Cyr, 5 April 2017,  
lot 90.

Elmarsa Gallery, Dubai.

Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.

Thence by descent to the present owner.





Ahmed Cherkaoui, *Talisman Rouge*, 1967.  
Image courtesy of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar

# AHMED CHERKAOUI

Executed in 1963, Ahmed Cherkaoui's *Clair de Lune (Moonlight)* is a distinctive work exploring abstraction through a pattern of blotting circles and gridlines in a vibrant and subdued palette. Taking inspiration from Islamic calligraphy and Amazigh culture, this painting abstracts and fuses various sign systems through a focus on form, colour, and its contrasts.

Considered as one of the most prominent modernist artists from North Africa, Cherkaoui is best known for rendering a range of symbols and forms inspired by Moroccan folk art and cultural heritage. His visual language was informed by the calligraphy he learned in the local Koranic school and his mother's Amazigh tattoos, which he encountered in his childhood. Later, he was influenced by notable European modernist figures like Paul Klee and Roger Bissière. Following his studies in graphics at the École des Metiers d'Art de Paris from 1956 to 1959, Cherkaoui spent a year at Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts in 1961 and held his first solo exhibition at the Atelier de Lucienne Thalheimer in Paris. Using various surface materials, Cherkaoui's focus on texture, colour, line, and form references fundamental compositions of various sign systems. Espousing the role of spontaneity in the artist's creative process, this artwork could be viewed as a representation of cosmic energy emerging out of the crush of primary colours. Creating a sombre yet dramatic impact, the gestural signage, burlap texture, and interlocking forms in this painting are a highly emotional, evocative, and almost ominous reminder of temporality, evolution, and mysticism.



Ahmed Cherkaoui



42

JILALI GHARBAOUI  
(1930, JORF EL MELHA - 1971, PARIS)

*Composition*

oil on canvas  
23 x 35½in. (58.5 x 90.4cm)  
Painted in the 1960s

£20,000-30,000  
US\$25,000-37,000  
€24,000-35,000

PROVENANCE:  
Jilali Gharbaoui and Therese Boersma Collection.  
Their sale, Compagnie marocaine des œuvres et  
objets d'art Casablanca, 22 March 2014, lot 18.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.



# JILALI GHARBAOUI

Painted in the 1960s, *Composition* is a representative work of Jilali Gharbaoui's unique abstract and geometrical oeuvre. The focus of the composition lays onto the two oval shapes and surrounding spirals with clearly defined edges around its circular dynamic core. Its composition projects a strong axial orientation as the massed forms extend in the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the picture plane, creating complex and rhythmic kaleidoscopic contours in a flattened illusionistic profile. To the viewer, the painting simultaneously holds out the promise of simplifying spatial perspective while complicating and thwarting that desire. Superimposed planes create an alternative space in Gharbaoui's canvas, leading the thought towards the faraway horizons of the celestial. He attached significant importance to his selection of colours, favouring the predominant use of blue in his artworks. During his studies in Rome, he visited its glorious churches, immersing himself in the Italian Renaissance paintings where the application of the colour blue is a profound signifier of tranquility. This experience impacted on his subsequent choice of colours.

Born in the town of Jorf El Melh in Sidi Kacem, Morocco, along with Ahmed Cherkaoui, Gharbaoui played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse of Moroccan modernism. Working with sculpture and painting, he gained prominence for his gestural style of painting with forceful brushwork and vivid hues. He began studying art at the Académie des Arts in Fes while still in secondary school. Art critic Pierre Restany introduced Gharbaoui as a member of the pioneering Groupe des Informels at the Salon Comparaison in Paris in 1959. Despite his brief career, Gharbaoui's legacy has been celebrated globally, including a retrospective in 1993 at Institut du monde arabe, Paris.



Jilali Gharbaoui.  
Image courtesy of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha.





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FARID BELKAHIA

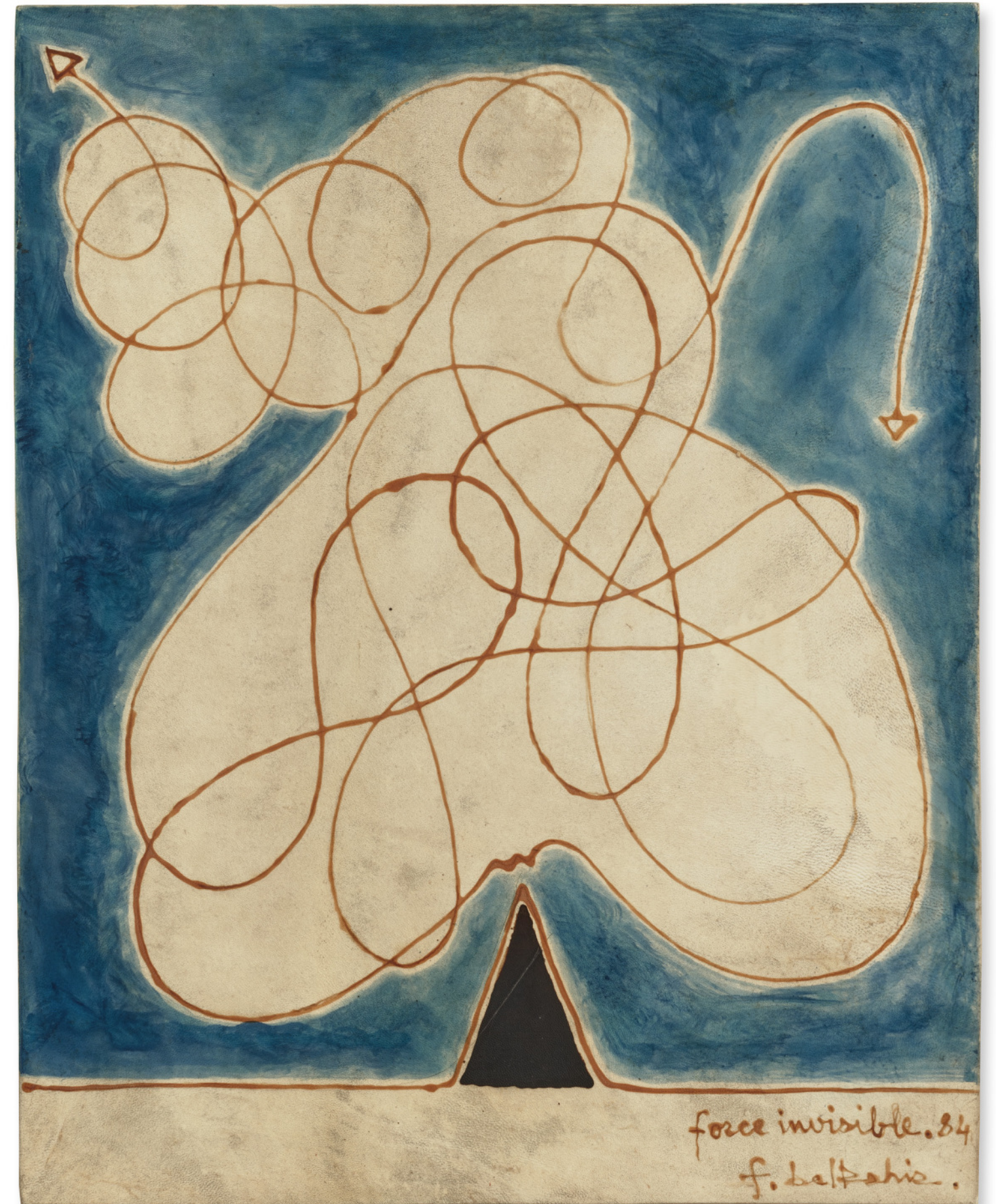
(1934, MARRAKESH - 2014, MARRAKESH)

*Force Invisible (Invisible Force)*

signed, titled and dated 'force invisible.84 f.belkahia.' (lower right)  
natural pigments on vellum laid on board  
24% x 19%in. (62.5 x 49.9cm.)  
Executed in 1984

£20,000-30,000  
US\$25,000-37,000  
€24,000-35,000

PROVENANCE:  
Le Violon Bleu, Sidi Bou Said.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2015).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.







# FARID BELKAHIA



Farid Belkahia, *Hommage à Gaston Bachelard*, 1984.  
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.  
© Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Philippe Migat.

Created in 1984, Farid Belkahia's *Force Invisible (Invisible Force)* showcases the artist's distinct dye on skin technique, epitomizing his modern take on Moroccan artisanal traditions. In *Force Invisible*, Belkahia introduces a winding brown line that crafts a silhouette set against a deep blue backdrop, stretching above a dark triangle originating from the tapered base. This intertwined structure, reminiscent of a bodily shape, is bordered by guiding lines. These lines originate or culminate at the ends of two arrow-like figures on the upper-left and centre-right sections, reminiscent of hands. Drawing inspiration from the Amazigh symbol lexicon, patterns, and materials, this piece channels the essence of ethereal energy or an "invisible force." The artwork's layout, marked by spirals and curved motifs synonymous with Belkahia's signature style, contemplates the fluidity of human and landscape shapes, highlighting the delicate links between unseen realms and all living entities.

Belkahia earned recognition for his exceptional skill in using skin, a shift from traditional oil painting in the early 1960s. Firmly rooted in Moroccan historical and cultural ethos, he crafted organic patterns using paints derived from natural dyes. This approach resonates with his belief, 'Tradition is man's future.' The significance of Belkahia's approach in developing an abstract art language cannot be overstated. As noted by S. Reilly in *Apollo Magazine*, 22 July 2019, his artistry presents a captivating duality as he attempts to reimagine Morocco's vast artistic legacy. By introducing enhanced

texture and depth, he integrated organic forms, Tifinagh letters, and motifs drawn from Moroccan fabrics and architectural designs. His innovative combinations of materials and styles led to the production of abstract pieces, striking a balance between flat artworks and three-dimensional sculptures.

Belkahia began his artistic endeavors at fifteen when he held his first exhibition in Marrakech in 1953. In the subsequent years, he traveled widely across Europe and the Middle East and embarked on his academic journey by enrolling at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris in 1955. He learned scenography at the *Theatre Academy* in Prague after his studies of modern European art in Paris. Upon his return to Marrakech, Belkahia became a prominent figure in Moroccan modernist art. Championing the reformulation of pre-colonial multicultural and popular arts, he directed the *School of Fine Arts of Casablanca* from 1962 to 1974 and formed a collective that shared his vision. This group included artists like Mohamed Melehi and Mohamed Chabâa and art historians Toni Maraini and Bert Flint. These influential figures had previously been part of vibrant artistic circles in Europe and North America and were exposed to the principles of the Bauhaus movement. Together, they pioneered an innovative approach to education, transforming the school into a hub for modern artistic expression deeply rooted in local Arab-African and Mediterranean culture, free from ideological confinement, and open to global influences.



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MAHJOUB BEN BELLA  
(1946, MAGHNIA - 2020, TOURCOING)

*Kalyste*

signed and dated 'Ben Bella 04' (lower right)  
oil on canvas  
59 x 59in. (150 x 149.8cm.)  
Painted in 2004

£15,000-20,000  
US\$19,000-24,000  
€18,000-23,000

PROVENANCE:  
Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2012).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.





# MAHJOUB BEN BELLA

Painted in 2004, celebrating the sense of freedom and infinite possibility, *Kalyste* is characterised by its fluid absence of hierarchical elements, encouraging viewers to immerse themselves in the apparent disorder of boundless abundance. Distinguished by richly layered hues and repetitive ideograms, the work seeks inspiration from Arab calligraphy and Western Abstract Expressionism. Enabling both line and colour to exist autonomously, Mahjoub Ben Bella's artistic approach involved creating clear-cut boundaries with the thick application of oil paints on canvas as forceful drippings, embracing the influence of gravity, speed, and spontaneity.

Ben Bella considered his creations akin to graffiti art, offering not so much a visual representation but a documentation of the intrinsic fluidity of paint alongside the blending of various modernist traditions. The artist meticulously selected the palette for each of his paintings, ensuring that the colours harmonise to accentuate the presence of guiding symbols. This attention to detail enabled the artist to craft intricate and vibrant compositions while maintaining sharp clarity, resulting in a harmonious fusion of colours that enchant a splendid array of abstract forms. Ben Bella's work is part of major international institutions such as Institut du monde arabe, Paris; National Museum, Tunis; The British Museum, London; and Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman.



Mahjoub Ben Bella in his Studio, Tourcoing, 2015.  
Image courtesy of The Estate of Mahjoub Ben Bella.



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SHAFIC ABBOUD  
(1926, BIKFAYA - 2004, PARIS)

*Surgie dans la Nuit (Burst into the Night)*

signed 'Abboud' (lower right); signed, titled, inscribed and dated  
'ABBOUD 1969 "Surgie dans la nuit"' (on the reverse)  
oil on canvas  
39¼ x 39¾in. (99.7 x 100cm.)  
Painted in 1969

£40,000-60,000  
US\$50,000-74,000  
€47,000-69,000

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2013).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Toulouse, Galerie Protée, *Shafic Abboud*, 1971.  
Paris, Galerie Claude Lemand, *Shafic Abboud*.  
*Colour is my Destiny. Paintings and Lithographs*,  
1959-2002, 2012.  
Beirut, Sursock Museum, *At the still point of the  
turning world, there is the dance*, 2019-2020.

This work is accompanied by a certificate of  
authenticity from Galerie Claude Lemand, and will  
be included in the forthcoming catalogue raisonné  
prepared by Christine Abboud under no. ID505.





# SHAFIC ABBOUD

Painted in 1969, *Surgie dans la Nuit* (Burst into the Night) is an important work of Shafic Abboud's oeuvre exploring morphological possibilities of colour, shape, and medium. Its amorphous title is inadvertent to bewilder the viewer in an unknown realm but rather to provide a guiding thread connecting his quivering, abstract forms with subtle traces of physicality, deftly rendered on the canvas. An array of differently coloured shapes in this painting, while initially appearing irregular, possess their own sense of internal order. Forbearing the principles of modernist grid structure, these forms lean away from any centre, producing an effect of rapid motion. Abboud's signature palette of oranges, blues, greens, and lighter hues is evident in this piece, embodying a sense of harnessed energy. The work centers around the depiction of light and its nature of recasting forms. He creates organic forms and diachronic planes by deftly layering them atop one another. This technique results in canvases adorned with thick impasto swathes and delicate specks of pigment. Although Abboud's creations do not depict linear narratives or landscapes, they are not entirely devoid of storytelling elements. He skillfully captures the spirit of a specific moment in time in the meshing of light and colour, reminiscing in some works for example Lebanon's skyline, whose scenic views were a source of inspiration for him. In capturing the essence of a fleeting moment, Abboud aligned his vision with Pierre Bonnard, who opted for flat colour fields over three-dimensional modelling. *Surgie dans la Nuit* is a prime example of Abboud's unique approach to Art Informel painting from the 1950s, melding European, Arab, and traditional Byzantine influences into a dynamic abstract expression. Moreover it carries a historically important exhibition history as it has been previously exhibited three times, first at the Galerie Protée in Toulouse in 1971, then at the Galerie Claude Lemand in 2012, and more recently at the show *At the still point of the turning world, there is the dance* held at the Sursock Museum in Beirut in 2019-2020.



Installation view *At the still point of the turning world, there is the dance*.  
Sursock Museum, Beirut, 2019.  
Image courtesy of Sursock Museum, Beirut. © Tarek Haddad.



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SAMIA HALABY  
(B. 1936, JERUSALEM)

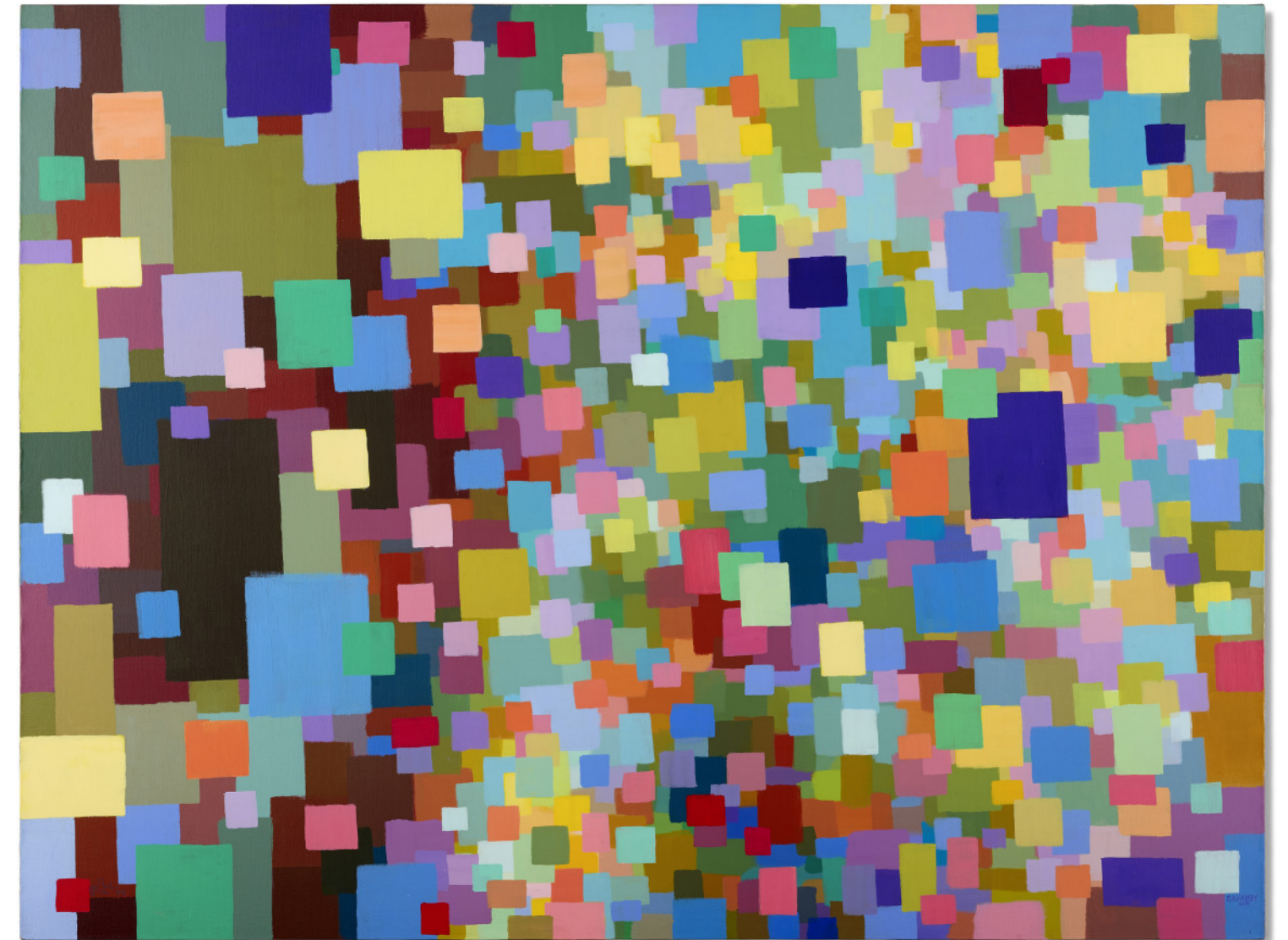
*Green and Earth*

signed and dated in Arabic (lower left), signed and dated 'S.A. HALABY 2014' (lower right); signed, inscribed, titled and dated 'No 760 SAMIA HALABY GREEN AND EARTH 2014', signed and dated in Arabic (on the reverse)  
acrylic on canvas  
60 x 79½in. (152.5 x 203cm.)  
Painted in 2014

£40,000-60,000  
US\$49,000-73,000  
€47,000-69,000

PROVENANCE:  
Ayyam Gallery, Dubai.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in 2015).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:  
*Mizna: Prose, Poetry, and Art Exploring Arab America*, vol. 16, issue 1, Summer 2015 (detail illustrated in colour on the cover).





# SAMIA HALABY

During Samia Halaby's career, new technologies such as computer-based kinetic and pixel art were challenging human perception. The magnification of images catalysed shifts across science and the arts, inspiring her processes of making art as a way of thinking through nature. By means of an abstract language that expresses the interconnectivity with various forms of life, her close attention to fragile relationships in today's time, like environmental and planetary crises, is discernable in *Green Earth*. Here, the viewer encounters changes in depth and shades along the outer and inner edges of a myriad of nesting squares and rectangles. Halaby says her artistic impetus springs from her instincts and understanding of the sights of urban landscapes, such as 'trees in the city and how they look at night in artificial light'. The panoramic views of New York from where she lives and works further nourish her imagination to imbue her urban portraits with sweeping intricacy. Using a plunging perspective, this painting distils buildings into stark, uncomplicated shapes spattered with hues, offering delight through visceral encounters with infinite nuances and contextual dependence on colour.

Born in Jerusalem in 1936 and raised in different places across the United States, Halaby embarked on her professional journey immediately after obtaining her MFA in Painting from Indiana University in 1963. Between the 1960s and the late 1980s,

Halaby taught at various universities in the United States. For a period of ten years, she held the distinction of being the first female associate professor at Yale University's School of Art. In 1964, while serving as a faculty at the Kansas City Art Institute, Halaby received a research grant that allowed her to travel to the Eastern Mediterranean, during which she delved into the world of geometric abstraction present in the Islamic architecture of the region. By conducting experiments with various surface media that marked the beginning of a lifelong exploration into the principles of abstract art, she sought to understand the essence of reality and its enactment in material form. Heavily influenced by the abstract movements of cubism and futurism, Halaby is motivated by the belief that innovative approaches to painting create the potential for reconfiguring perceptions, not only in the realm of aesthetics but also as significant contributions to technological and social progress.

Samia Halaby's works are part of numerous institutional collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art (New York and Abu Dhabi); Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Detroit Institute of Art; Cleveland Museum of Art; Institut du monde arabe; and The British Museum, London.

Image courtesy of Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).



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LAILA SHAWA  
(1940, GAZA - 2022, LONDON)

*Summer Dreams (Sahara Series)*

signed and dated 'SHAWA 08' (lower left); signed and dated  
'SHAWA 2008' (on the reverse)  
acrylic and 23.5 carat gold leaf on canvas, in artist's frame  
57¾ x 40½in. (146.6 x 102cm.)  
Executed in 2008

£15,000-20,000  
US\$19,000-24,000  
€18,000-23,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut  
(acquired from the above in February 2013).  
Thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:

S. Sultan Al Hashemi, 'Resistance to normalisation  
in the Gulf', in *Assafir Al-Arabi*, issue 484, January  
2022 (in Arabic).





# LAILA SHAWA

Executed in 2008, Laila Shawa's *Summer Dreams (Sahara Series)* is a beautiful mesmerising depiction of geometric patterns rendered in rich and warm hues of acrylic and gold leaf. Shawa's style, what she herself regards as 'Islamo-pop' art, appropriates key elements existing from the classical traditions of the Hellenic and Sasanian times to complicate and elaborate upon the artistic achievements of the Islamic world.

Being born in Gaza, Palestine in 1940 and as an artist who lived and worked between the United Kingdom and the United States, her concern was to reflect the harsh realities of community persecution. Shawa received formal art training at the Leonardo da Vinci School in Cairo and the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Rome. Additionally, she pursued studies at the School of Seeing in Salzburg, founded in 1953 by the Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka with an endeavor to bring around humanist principles after the harrowing aftermath of the World Wars that wrought Europe beyond recognition.

*Summer Dreams (Sahara Series)* creates a rippled form on the surface that stresses the importance of unity and order. By composing unbalanced interlacing of multisided polygons and six-pointed stars, she refuses to adhere to the principles of geometry, suggesting an infinite growth of freedom. Her art continues to be exhibited internationally and features in the collections of the National Galleries of Jordan and Malaysia, as well as The British Museum, London.

Laila Shawa.  
Image courtesy of The Sultan Gallery Archives, Kuwait.





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JULIANA SERAPHIM  
(1934, JAFFA - 2005, BEIRUT)

*Untitled*

signed and dated 'Juliana Séraphim 2001' (lower left); inscribed  
'A Ibrahim Najjar, Mon art et mon driot, en toute amitie, Juliana  
Séraphim' (on the stretcher)

oil on canvas  
39 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (100 x 120.5cm.)  
Painted in 2001

£15,000-20,000  
US\$19,000-25,000  
€18,000-23,000

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Beirut.  
Anon. sale, FA Auctions Beirut, 29 November  
2020, lot 18.  
Private Collection.  
Anon. sale, Nada Boulos Auction Beirut, 14  
September 2021, lot 34.  
Dr Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Collection, Beirut.  
Thence by descent to the present owner.





# JULIANA SERAPHIM



Juliana Seraphim, *Untitled*, 1980.  
Image courtesy of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation (DAF).

Painted in 2001, *Untitled* is a representative work of Juliana Seraphim's striking style embodying a kind of unbidden Surrealism, where her imagination takes flight in a dreamlike manner, offering a glimpse into her beliefs and subconscious. The expression – influenced by her life experiences, themes of sexuality, and the fight for freedom, particularly in the realm of women's rights – is evident in the composition of this work, featuring elements such as enchanting architectural structures, otherworldly blossoms, and the sensually depicted female figure. Within this work, the figure seamlessly transforms into flowers and vice versa, prompting contemplation on the intricate and tender nature of the female physical and emotional existence. Fantastical delicate motifs of spirals, towers, and arches evoke an air of mystery, crafting ethereal and captivating utopias. Seraphim draws parallels between the emotional depth of women and the fragility of flowers, yet she herself was far from timid.

Her work places a strong emphasis on the female form and delves into liberated female sensuality, reflecting the artist's commitment to dismantling gender norms and the power dynamics they sustain. This unconventional and vividly hued painting seems to conjure Seraphim's vision of an ideal world: one where femininity and sensitivity are embraced and celebrated, transcending the rough-hewn presence of masculinity. Seraphim's works are part of important international institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Institut du monde arabe, Paris; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman; The Sursock Museum, Beirut, among others.



# IMAGE CREDITS

## **FRONT AND BACK COVER**

Marwan, *Kopf links gedreht (Head turned left)*, 1972

© estate MARWAN

## **FRONTISPIECE 1**

Shaker Hassan Al Said, *Untitled*, 1954

## **FRONTISPIECE 2**

Mahmoud Saïd, *Fille à l'imprimé (Girl in a printed dress)*, 1938

## **FRONTISPIECE 3**

Samia Halaby, *Return (No. 323)*, 1978

## **FRONTISPIECE 4**

Ibrahim El-Salahi, *Palm Tree*, 2001 (detail)

## **FRONTISPIECE 5**

Kamal Boullata, *Nocturne II*, 2001 (detail)

## **FRONTISPIECE 6**

Kadhim Haydar, *Untitled*, circa 1970

## **FRONTISPIECE 7**

Inji Efflatoun, *Banana Trees*, 1967

## **FRONTISPIECE 8**

Yvette Achkar, *Sables mouvants (Quick sands)*, 2009

## **FRONTISPIECE 9**

Beirut, *Lebanon*, circa 1895. Photo: © GRANGER.

## **FRONTISPIECE 10**

Helen Khal, *Untitled*, 1970 (detail)

## **FRONTISPIECE 11**

Marwan, *Marionette*, 2014 (detail)





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