

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | DUBAI
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | October 2013

CHRISTIE'S TO LEAD ITS PART I SALE WITH MASTERPIECES BY

Fahr El-Nissa Zeid (Turkish-Jordanian)

Parviz Tanavoli (Iranian)

Paul Guiragossian (Lebanese)

Abdulnasser Gharem (Saudi Arabian)

AND THE FARSI COLLECTION



Fahr El-Nissa Zeid, *Break of the Atom and Vegetal Life*, 1962

Christie's 15th sale season in Dubai: 24-30 October 2013

Sponsored by Zurich

Dubai – Christie's will offer 195 works of Modern and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art, this year across three different sales beginning ahead of the traditional Dubai sales with a two-week-long online-only sale for Middle Eastern art which will run from October 24 to 11 November. The pre-sale exhibition for Part I, Part II and the Watch sale will be open to the public from 27 October onwards at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel in Dubai, where a selection of the Part III lots will also be on view.

Hala Khayat, Associate Director and Head of Sale, stated: “The October sales are offering some of the most outstanding works of art by the most renowned artists throughout the Middle East. Artists like Mahmoud Saïd, Abdul Hadi El-Gazzar and Shafic Abboud will be presented in all three parts of this year’s sale, offering our clients different ways to interact with Christie’s. Part III the online-only sale, is a response to the increasing international interest in Middle Eastern art, allowing collectors to be active in the sale from anywhere in the world. To be able to present the chef-d’oeuvre in Fahr El-Nissa Zeid’s career is a very special moment. The work has been shown internationally and comes for the first time to auction and will surely garner a lot of interest. We are also delighted to have been entrusted with offering the Farsi Collection, which we have done so throughout the Dubai sale seasons in 2010. ”

The top lot of the entire sale season is a true masterpiece by the Turkish-Jordanian artist **Fahr El-Nissa Zeid** (1901-1991, illustrated on front page), entitled *Break of the Atom and Vegetal Life* painted in 1962 at the height of the artist’s career (estimate \$3-4 million). The only female from the Orient to record her name within the Abstract art movement, her oeuvre reveals the inspiration of the melting pot of styles that came to be known as the Ecole de Paris in the first half of the twentieth century.

Break of the Atom and Vegetal Life can be considered to be one of the most important works that the artist has ever created. Its large expansive and hypnotizing canvas reflects Zeid's own distinctive style of geometric abstraction, grounded in a rhythmic gesture. Inspired by a synthesis of Islamic calligraphic aesthetic traditions, mystical characteristics of Sufism coupled with Byzantine culture and Western motifs, Fahr El-Nissa Zeid employs an intricate use of colours and lines in a monumental and harmonious composition whereby purples morph into violets, while greens, reds and blues ring with violent blacks. As a highlight in the seminal retrospective of the artist's works in 1990 at the Neue-Galerie- Sammlung Ludwig in Aachen, Germany and the Institut du Monde Arabe, in Paris, the relevance of this work resonates in an increased language of globalization of today, cementing Zeid as an important figure in international art history and cultural discourse.



As an additional highlight of the evening on 29 October, Christie’s will present *Oh Persepolis II* a six feet tall sculpture by **Parviz Tanavoli** (Iranian, born 1937). In 2008 Christie’s presented the sister piece, *The Wall (Oh Persepolis)* which fetched the current world auction record price for any work by Tanavoli and for any Middle Eastern artist, when it sold for \$2.8 million. The present work, a polished bronze monolith, invites the viewer on a journey back to the triumphant civilization of Ancient Persia. It is covered with undecipherable signs and symbols that commemorate, as its title suggests, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire (ca. 550-330 B.C.), now a UNESCO world heritage site. Created between 1975 and 2008, the

monumental sculpture indeed presents a gleaming surface enlivened by multiple rows of invented pictographic elements that resemble the cuneiform inscriptions seen on the distinguished Darius Cylinder as well as the carved figures of the Immortals, discovered on the staircases of the great Apadana Palace.

Oh Persepolis II stands as the revival of the cultural happenings that took place in Persepolis as a display of power of the erstwhile ruling monarchy. Whereas the first version of the sculpture, *The Wall (Oh Persepolis)* recalled its glorious past, the present version expresses the artist's resentment of fear, perhaps hinting to the destiny of the monarchy or to the urge to protect the archeological site of Persepolis.



The third highlight Christie's will offer in the sale is by **Abdulnasser Gharem** (Saudi Arabian, born 1973), entitled *The Capitol Dome* executed in 2012. In 2011, Christie's sold another *Dome* by Gharem, for \$842,500, establishing him as most highly valued living Saudi artist. The dome was one of 6 works sold by Edge of Arabia at Christie's to support their charitable work in Saudi Arabia. The present work was the sculptural centrepiece of the group's recent exhibition *#COMETOGETHER* held in London in 2012. In *The Capitol Dome*, Gharem addresses the region's growth of social engagement in a fresh, provocative light. The installation constitutes a 13-foot replica of the Capitol Dome in Washington, D.C., propped up by a miniature version of Thomas Crawford's 19th-century statue of the armed goddess of Freedom.

The dome's interior is decorated in an Islamic fashion with details that are reminiscent of a mosque. The full installation sits atop a shining, oil-black surface, the artist provides a shrill comment on America's relationship with Arab oil while simultaneously offering the chance of reflection of what the future may hold. In his marriage of Western neo-Classical and Islamic architecture, the artist questions how harmonious the United States' model of democracy is with Arabic/Islamic culture.



La Lutte de l'Existence by **Paul Guiragossian** (Lebanese, 1926-1993) is sold to benefit the Paul Guiragossian foundation and their upcoming projects. Painted in the late 1980s, *La Lutte de l'Existence* reveals the strong expressionist imagery and the warm palette of Mediterranean colours that define Guiragossian's aesthetic exploration. In the late 1980s the Middle East was in upheaval and Lebanon was witnessing the last years

of a ravaging civil war and Guiragossian, through painting, exorcised his sentiments of suffering, misery and depression that had resulted from the unfortunate events that occurred in his city as well as in his personal life. The painting is one of the largest and most outstanding works by the artist to ever appear at auction and at an estimate of \$600,000-800,000 will attract collector's interest.

Over the past 15 sale seasons Christie's was in the fortunate position to offer works by the internationally sought after **Farhad Moshiri** (Iranian, born 1963). This season we are offering a work from 2008, *Home Sweet Home* (estimate: \$250,000-350,000). The work recreates a large, kitsch hanging door sign, the light chequered pink gingham print framed against what appears to be delicate white lace amidst the background of a light baby blue. On closer inspection, the viewer realises that this internationally renowned phrase is in fact carefully arranged and spelled out with an assortment of used knives plunged deep into the canvas with their gaily coloured handles out towards the viewer.



By capturing the feeling of home with such a sinister undertone, Moshiri thus tackles the juxtaposition and contrast of the moderate public life versus the extravagant embodiment of bad taste and kitsch that is within Iranian private life. The friction and irony that is instilled in the present work is similar to the sense of irony that is reflected in today's Iran; what appears to be soft or comforting is merely an illusion, masked by a Western superficial layer that clashes heavily with Islamic fundamentalism.

In 2010 Christie's was entrusted to sell the first two parts of **The Farsi Collection**, resulting in a stunning white glove sale that set the highest price for any private art collection ever sold in the Middle East, still valid today. This season, Christie's is honoured to offer 29 works from the collection throughout the Part I, Part II and the online-only Part III sales.



La Tricotouse was painted in 1947 by **Mahmoud Saïd** (Egyptian, 1897-1964) and will be offered in the Part I sale on 29 October with an estimate of \$50,000-70,000. It depicts one of his 'plebian female' models, who can be identified as Hamida, the artist's favorite model. *La Tricotouse* is not only a tribute to Saïd's love and mastery of colour, but it is also reminiscent of Western art which Saïd had widely studied and admired during his various trips to Europe in the early 1920s. The beauty and simplicity of Hamida in the present painting defines its 'Egyptianness', which is at the core of Saïd's oeuvre.

Abdul Hadi El-Gazzar (Egyptian, 1925-1965) is represented with several works in the Farsi Collection. *Moulid of the Dervishes*, painted in 1951, is a strong example from the artist's so-called Folkloric period which reflected his influence and inspiration from the people he encountered while he was living in the Sayeda Zeinab district, known for the congregations of the Sufi movement, which brought together large groups of ordinary people and magicians, circus acrobats, dervishes and charlatans. The work is a rare example in the artist's oeuvre where he has depicted two characters together, a man and a woman. Only half of the woman's face is depicted whereby she is covered by the traditional burqa'a, suggesting she is hiding a deep secret. Although traditionally in Egyptian visual arts the subject's profile is often depicted as a symbol of status and wealth, El-Gazzar's choice to depict the woman in an onward binding gaze suggests he is trying to capture the spirit of the lower class, to which he was exposed (estimate: \$50,000-70,000).

In the Part II sale, taking place on 30 October, **El-Gazzar** is represented by a work entitled *The Long-Faced Man*, painted in 1961, which will be offered with an estimate of \$30,000-40,000.

The Part III, the online-only sale, will present another work by **Mahmoud Saïd**, *Le Canal de Mahmoudieh*, painted in 1922 with an estimate of \$50,000-70,000 and *Le Café à Chypre*, a work by another Egyptian artist, **Mohammed Naghi** (1888-1956), which will be offered for \$18,000-22,000.

The Part I sale will offer a total of 30 works with a low estimate of \$7 million. Adding 112 lots from Part II and 53 lots from Part III, Christie's will offer a total of 195 lots of Middle Eastern art during Christie's 15th sale season in Dubai.

Alexandra Kindermann | +41 44 268 1019 / +4179 101 4196 | akindermann@christies.com
Emma Cunningham | +44 207 389 2664 / +44 7881 843447 | ecunningham@christies.com
Zaib Shadani | +971 4 369 3575 | zaib.shadani@theportsmouthgroup.com

SALES:

- Christie's inaugural Part III Middle Eastern Art sale (online-only) will be open for bidding from 24 October to 11 November 2013
- Christie's auction of Modern and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art, takes place at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel on Tuesday and Wednesday, 29 & 30 October 2013 at 7.00pm
- Christie's Watch sale will take place on Tuesday 29 October at 8.00pm

PRESS CONFERENCE AND VIEWING TIMES:

- Press Conference and Viewing: Sunday 27 October at 11.30am
- Viewing is open to the public at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel:

Sunday 27 October:	2pm to 10pm
Monday 28 October:	2pm to 10pm
Tuesday 29 October:	10am to 1.30pm (selected lots)
Wednesday 30 October:	10am to 12noon (selected lots)
- For catalogues and further information, please telephone +971 4425 5647

View our short film about Christie's in the Middle East:

<http://www.christies.com/features/a-history-of-christies-in-the-middle-east-2400-3.aspx>

About Zurich

Zurich Insurance Group (Zurich) is a leading multi-line insurance provider with a global network of subsidiaries and offices in Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East as well as other markets. It offers a wide range of general insurance and life insurance products and services for individuals, small businesses, mid-sized and large companies as well as multinational corporations. Zurich employs about 60,000 people serving customers in more than 170 countries. The Group, formerly known as Zurich Financial Services Group, is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, where it was founded in 1872. The holding company, Zurich Insurance Group Ltd (ZURN), is listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange and has a level I American Depositary Receipt program (ZURVY) which is traded over-the-counter on OTCQX. Further information about Zurich is available at www.zurich.com.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2013 that totaled £2.4 billion/ \$3.68 billion. In 2012, Christie's had global auction and private sales that totaled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 billion making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £465.2 million (\$711.8 million) in the first half of 2013, an increase of 13% on the previous year, and for the third successive year represents the highest total for the period in both company and art market history.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits*