

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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**OUTSTANDING WORKS FROM LEBANON, SYRIA,
SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, EGYPT & TURKEY
AMONG HIGHLIGHTS OF
CHRISTIE'S TENTH MIDDLE EASTERN ART SALE
IN DUBAI**



Kezban Arca Batibeki (Turkish, b.1956), *Duel I + II*. Estimate: \$25,000-35,000

Auction: Modern and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art - 19 April, 2011
Sponsored by Credit Suisse

Dubai – Christie's Dubai sale of Modern and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish art on 19 April will include important works by the leading artists of the Middle East and Turkey. Reflecting the increasing sophistication and maturity of this market, the sale features the strongest selection of contemporary works offered since the inaugural sale held in Dubai in 2006. The 120 lots are expected to sell for between \$5 million and \$6 million and will be followed by *Important Jewels: The Dubai Sale* on the evening of April 20. Both sales will be held at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel in Dubai.

Michael Jeha, Managing Director of Christie's Middle East, commented: *"As this is a relatively new market we are fortunate to continue to offer genuine masterpieces by the leaders of the modern and contemporary art movement in the region. Collectors recognize this and respond by participating in the sales from all over the world. It is this international interest which provides this market with its core strength and will enable it to grow even further."*

"Credit Suisse's long-term association with Christie's demonstrates our strong commitment to fostering initiatives in the field of fine art. Through this collaboration, Credit Suisse brings to clients, investors and collectors in the Middle East, an opportunity to engage in the auction of an exquisite selection of modern contemporary art and jewellery. Credit Suisse believes that art plays an important role in social and cultural development and through this sponsorship, we are also expressing our commitment to communities in which we live and work," said Raj Sehgal, Managing Director at Credit Suisse Private Banking in the Middle East and Indian Subcontinent.

Hala Khayat, Christie's specialist in Arab, Iranian and Turkish modern and contemporary art, said: *"This is a very diverse sale as it combines modern masterpieces by the Lebanese artist Paul Guiragossian, Syrian artist Fateh Moudarres and the great Egyptian artist Abdul Hadi El-Gazzar amongst others alongside the strongest group of contemporary works we have ever had. We are also introducing several new artists who have not been sold at auction before to this increasingly international audience."*

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Lebanon

Paul Guiragossian (Lebanese, 1926-1993) is one of the great names in Middle Eastern art and the sale includes four works that show the evolution of his oeuvre from his early figurative portraits to the abstract style for which he is best known. In *Madonna and Child* (estimate: \$50,000-70,000 / AED 190,000-250,000 - Lot 13) from the early 1960s, and therefore the earliest work by Guiragossian of the four, he draws from a palette of warm hues of red often associated with religious iconography. The Madonna appears to be flat against the surface and the use of thick brushstrokes can begin to be seen; the style that defines Guiragossian's later works. In lot 14 (estimate: \$60,000-80,000 / AED 220,000-290,000) circa 1968-1972, Guiragossian uses thick brushstrokes in a muted brown palette to depict a laborer with his head resting on his arms. Guiragossian's elongated abstract vertical slim figures were used from the late 1970s and *Allégresse* and *Nocturne*, painted in 1989 and 1987 respectively, are fine examples (each estimated at \$100,000-150,000 / AED 370,000-550,000 – Lots 11 and 12).

Given the opening of the Chafic Abboud retrospective in Paris this month, Christie's is fortunate to offer Abboud's (Lebanese, 1926-2004) *Les Fleurs de Février* from 1998 with an estimate of \$50,000-70,000 / AED 190,000-220,000 – Lot 18.



Contemporary works are led by an exuberant three-dimensional *Untitled* work by Nabil Nahas (Lebanese, b. 1949) which has raised clusters of hypnotic spirals and starfish protruding from the picture in luminous vibrant colours. The effect is created by adding powdered pumice to acrylic paint and the heavily encrusted, brightly coloured organic shapes which repeat themselves refer to the repeated use of a single pattern found in Islamic art (estimate: \$80,000-100,000 / AED 300,000-360,000 – Lot 37 – shown here).

work appears in prestigious public collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, the Flint Institute of Art, Michigan and Mathaf in Doha.

Another exceptional contemporary piece is by the talented young artist Ayman Baalbaki (Lebanese, b. 1975) *Let A Thousand Flowers Bloom*. The title is taken from a speech made by Chairman Mao in 1957 and was a slogan used in the 1960s and 1970s by leftist and nationalistic Arab parties in Lebanon and around the Arab world as an expression of optimism and hope for the future. The work is in oil, painted on upholstery fabric and mounted on a lit glass box work, (estimate: \$50,000-70,000 / AED 190,000-250,000 – Lot 36).

A charming sculpture of *Boy Carrying a Cloud* by Nadim Karam (Lebanese, b. 1957) uses multi-coloured buttons to form the body and white ones for the cloud, a symbol of the lives of nomads who travel beneath the constantly changing sky (estimate: \$20,000-25,000 / AED 73,000-91,000 – Lot 39 – shown here).



Syria

A painting by the celebrated Syrian artist Fateh Moudarres (Syrian, 1922-1999), showing a group of figures, arranged symmetrically is one of the highlights of the sale. The composition is quite clearly inspired by the city of Damascus, the striped patterning reminiscent of the walls of Mamluk buildings in Damascus, constructed in the ablaq technique, with alternate courses of black basalt and lighter stones. Here the stripes appear on the bodies of the figures in the crowd, so these figures are merged with the fabric of the city. It is estimated at \$120,000-150,000 / AED 440,000-550,000 – Lot 5 – shown here. By Louay Kayyali is *Seated Old Man*, painted in 1974 and estimated at \$60,000-80,000 / AED 220,000-290,000 – Lot 59.



A contemporary work by Youssef Abdelke (Syria, b.1951) entitled *Pear 2* and painted in 2007 is typical of the artist's way of glorifying the simple things in life. Showing a single pear on a plate with drawings of the same composition pinned to the wall behind, it is a homage to Abdeleke's grandmother who covered the walls of her home with pictures of her children and loved ones. He has also included

a self-portrait on one of the pinned-up images, the only work in the series where he chose to add this detail (estimate: \$30,000-40,000 / AED 110,000-150,000 – Lot 15).

Another interesting composition is the triptych by Kais Salman (Syrian, b.1976) from his “Material World” series depicting three women standing, as if in a window display with a barcode. His work addresses notions of beauty and comments on our ever-growing dependence on materialism, (estimate: \$30,000 - 40,000 / AED 110,000-150,000-Lot 95).

Egypt



Abdul Hadi El-Gazzar (Egyptian 1925-1965) was one of the most important modern Egyptian artists and one of the leading proponents of surrealism. In this masterpiece by the artist entitled *Fishing*, he traces the journey of two fishermen who return with a large shell

holding the catch of the day – an imposing blue fish – the same colour used on talismans and amulets to give good luck. A wall behind the figures shows a dream-like sequence of what the fishermen have witnessed through the day. The possibility of both good and bad luck is further suggested by a black cat on the left and white cat on the right of the picture while through an arched window we see a bright sandy beach. El Gazzar believed that people could not conjure up good luck with amulets and that ones destiny lay in ones own hands (estimate: \$250,000-350,000 / AED 910,000-1,300,000 – Lot 8 detail shown here).

In Ahmed Moustafa's (b. 1943) is *The Ship*, the artist has used Arabic calligraphy to represent a ship in a stormy sea. The script is a passage from one of the most famous Arab poets, Al-Aktal (c 640-710) describing a ship in a turbulent sea. The oil on watercolour is estimated at \$150,000-200,000 / AED 550,000-730,000 – Lot 23).

Contemporary Egyptian artists are represented by Youssef Nabil (b. 1972) in two works, *Ehsan and Light*, Cairo 1993, a photographic hand coloured print showing an elegant woman

within a photographic studio, a reference to his love of cinema and its glamorous leading ladies (estimate: \$30,000-40,000 / AED 110,000-150,000 – Lot 66) and *Ghada with Canvas Behind, New York, 2002* (estimate: \$8,000-12,000 / AED 30,000-40,000 – Lot 76). Another work is *Thinker* by Ahmed Askalany (Egyptian, b.1978), a unique sculpture in bronze where the dimensions are distorted with a small head on a giant body. The bowed crouching figure possesses a sense of both innocence and isolation, (estimate: \$22,000-28,000 / AED 80,000-100,000 – Lot 81).



Palestine

Albuquerque Heroines, 1972, by Samia Halaby (Palestinian, b. 1936) is an example of the artist's exploration of geometric patterns and, in this work, how two curves travel across a surface. Reminiscent of wave patterns or schools of fish moving in the water, the work was titled to honor the city of Albuquerque's women who were at the time pre-occupied with helping heroin addicts (estimate: \$60,000-80,000 / AED 220,000-290,000 – Lot 35).

Another very special work is by Abdulrahman Katanani (Palestinian, b. 1983) *The Oud Player* which is estimated at \$7,000 - 10,000 / AED 220,000-290,000 – Lot 40. This wall hung sculpture portrays a very light jewel-like musician, made out of bicycle parts, wires, and metal sheets. The use of these hard materials is a reference to the life of Palestinians living in refugee camps who are forced to re-use waste materials. He said: "When you put together things that other people have thrown out, you're really bringing them to life – a spiritual life that surpasses the life for which they were originally created."

Iran

A striking work *Chehel Sotoun* by Charles Hossein Zenderoudi (Iranian b. 1937) is another highlight of the sale. A homage to one of Isfahan's architectural jewels, the Chehel Sotoun Palace also known by its literal translation, the Palace of Forty Columns, the Palace was built in the 17th century when Isfahan was the capital of Iran. It is located in the centre of a park at the end of a long pool and the twenty slender columns of the façade become forty when

reflected in the pool, hence the forty columns, the number forty also having a symbolic meaning in Persia, encompassing the notions of both respect and admiration. The artist describes the Palace as: “one of those fascinating and magical places which carry you away...”. He captures the movement of the reflection of the columns in the water through the intensity of the rich variations of cerulean, cobalt, deep sky and dark blues, heightened with orange and red. The work is estimated at \$200,000-300,000 / AED 730,000-1,100,000 – shown here.



Mohammed Ehsai (Iranian, b. 1939) one of the most important master calligraphers in Iran, often works in black and white only, as in the work included in the sale entitled *Eshgh* (*Love*), which is estimated at \$180,000-220,000 / AED 660,000-870,000 – Lot 24. A bronze by Parviz Tanavoli (Iranian, b. 1937) is another highlight. Entitled *The Wall and the Birds*, a pair of birds are squeezed in the middle of the wall and the surface is highly polished with no texture or calligraphy making is as plain and pure as possible (estimate: \$120,000-180,000 / AED 440,000-650,000 – Lot 56).

The Iranian contemporary section is led by four work by Farhad Moshiri (Iranian, b. 1963). The first two are from his Jar Series; a horizontally striped colourful *Jar* (estimated at \$60,000-80,000 / AED 220,000-290,000 -Lot 43) and an impressive grand *Red Jar* (estimate: \$80,000-120,000 / AED 300,000-420,000 – Lot 44). These are followed by *Choc Line* (*from the Sweet Dreams series*), a playful outline of a man made with 97 small acrylic ornate paint pastries

or cakes (estimated at \$200,000-300,000 / AED 730,000-1,100,000 – Lot 45) and finally a very large work titled *8N619VT* with both Farsi calligraphy and letters on a gold flecked background estimated at \$180,000-240,000/AED 660,000-870,000 – Lot 46.

Among the photography is a work by the female artist Shirin Neshat (Iranian, b. 1957), *Munis and Revolutionary Man* (from the *Women without Men* series), which uses Farsi script as a way of confronting the Western view of Islam as both incomprehensible and dangerous. The photographic print, shows a couple lying flat in an empty space, with hand-written Persian calligraphy surrounding them, (estimate: \$60,000-80,000 / AED 220,000-290,000 – Lot 50).

An unusual circular work by Reza Derakshani (Iranian, b. 1952) entitled *Silent Jingle Bells* (from the *Mirror of Times* series) in which he shows two figures elongated against the edge of the circle depicts a dance scene from the Safavid period of Iran (estimate: \$60,000-80,000 / AED 220,000-290,000 –Lot 47).

Turkey

A panorama of Istanbul by Devrim Erbil (Turkish, b.1937) is the highlight of the Turkish lots in the sale, and shows in outline around 300 house and monuments. This composition follows the great tradition of views of the city in Turkish art. While Erbil's earlier depiction of the city are highly coloured, this view, painted in 1995 is in monochrome and is estimated at \$80,000-120,000 / AED 300,000-440,000 – Lot 84.



A cape of hand woven metal mesh with dramatic jade green slashes executed by Yasemin Aslan Bakiri (Turkish, b.1967) is also included. Bakiri has worked all over the world and is known for her work in three-dimensional design, glass and mosaic (estimate: \$20,000-25,000 / AED73,000-91,000 – Lot 80). The cover lot for the sale shows two women in a duel, with guns pointing at each other, one is conservatively dressed and the other is wearing only a corset. The artist, Kezban Arca Batibeki (Turkish, b.1956), uses popular culture to raise questions about women's role in society and

often depicts empowered women as objects of desire with guns and weapons, as in this work. The juxtaposition of the two women against a bright background may be seen to confront the antagonism in the Middle East between the traditional and the modern, (estimate: \$25,000-35,000 / AED 91,000-130,000 – Lot 41).

Coke for the World, by Bedri Baykam (Turkish, b.1957) presents a collage tracking the evolution of the world's most popular drink set beside familiar icons including the Statue of Liberty, a work by Van Gogh and the pyramids of Egypt. Juxtaposing painting and collage, Baykam creates what is referred to as a 4-D, multi-dimensional work, which allows images to appear to 'float' on top of each other. This work is from an edition of 3, the first of which is in the collection of the DEMSA Museum in Istanbul. It is estimated at \$45,000-60,000 / AED 170,000-220,000 – Lot 42.

Azade Köker's (Turkish, b.1949) *Milas Forest In Fire*, is a paper collage on canvas showing what the artist describes as: "...a cemetery. The soil and the branches, the insects and the moist of the soil nothing was as it used to be. They had all bid farewells to life, never to return." It is estimated at \$45,000-55,000 / AED 170,000-200,000 – Lot 51.

Saudi Arabia

Edge of Arabia, the internationally recognized, pioneering art project that has shed new light on the largely unknown contemporary art and culture of Saudi Arabia, will be selling by auction six works in the sale as a fundraiser to enable the expansion of Edge of Arabia's education programme and art workshops in Saudi Arabian schools and universities (separate press release available). Two works by Saudi Arabian artists to be sold separately from this group include Ayman Yossri Daydaban's *Wasat Al Halaba* (lot 89) and *Jama'a* by Noha Al-Sharif (Saudi Arabia, b.1980), showing a group of female figures in black on top of a marble slab to express "the power of prayer" (estimate: \$20,000-25,000 / AED 73,000-91,000 – Lot 106).

Notes to editors:

- Christie's auction of *Modern and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art* takes place at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel on Tuesday, April 19, 2011 at 7pm
- Christie's auction of *Jewels; The Dubai Sale*, takes place at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel on Wednesday, April 20, 2011 at 7pm
- Viewing is open to the public at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel:

Sunday 17 April:	2pm to 10pm
Monday 18 April:	2pm to 10pm
Tuesday 19 April:	10am to 10pm
Wednesday 20 April	10am to 4.30pm (Jewels only)

- For catalogues and further information, please telephone +971 4425 5647

Christie's in the Middle East

Christie's are the leading art auctioneers in the Middle East and the leading art business in the world. They were the first international auction house to have a permanent presence in the region, as well as the first to hold auctions which provided an international platform for artists of the region. Christie's has sold just under \$200 million of art, watches and jewellery in the Middle East since the first international art auction in the region took place in 2006, and has seen buyers from as many as 30 different countries participating at each sale. In addition to the regular auctions, Christie's is keen to encourage and support educational opportunities and holds exhibitions, educational seminars and charity auctions throughout the region.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2010 that totaled £3.3 billion/\$5.0 billion. 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 conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 sales 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 has 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new 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

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