



## Masters: Modern and Contemporary Art Auction

Online Auction:  
1-6 December 2021

ATASSI  
Foundation

ArtScoops.

**Bidding Starts:**

Wednesday 1 December at 12:00h GMT

**Bidding starts closing:**

Monday 6 December at 18:00h GMT

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Front cover: Nazir Nabaa Lot 29

Opposite page: Leila Nseir Lot 4

Back cover: Fadi Yazigi Lot 21



# Introduction

Welcome to “Masters: Modern and Contemporary Art Auction” organized in collaboration with our partner ArtScoops.

In previous auctions we have focused on emerging up-and-coming artists both inside and outside of Syria. In this edition, we are shifting the focus to be modernist artworks created by Syria’s master artists.

Whilst there is an ongoing need to collectively support younger Syrian artists who have struggled to work amidst a decade of upheaval, we also strive to raise awareness of – and acknowledge – their predecessors – the pioneers and creative revolutionaries of days gone by. Some names in the auction will be familiar to many, such as the likes of Fateh Moudarres and Mahmoud Hammad, however, there are many which have little-to-no international recognition and continue to be overlooked by many auction houses and art collectors globally.

These figures are crucial to the art history of not only Syria, but of the region as a whole, playing an important role in our understanding of how many movements and media evolved locally and how art education progressed across the country.

Our auctions are intended to push Syrian art into the spotlight as well as to educate art collectors and art lovers on Syria’s artistic legacy. We are grateful, as always, to ArtScoops for being our partner. And we thank you, our supporters, for your ongoing faith in our work and in the artists. We hope you find your new art acquisition in this Auction.

November 2021  
Mouna and Shireen Atassi





## Lot 1

### FATEH MOUDARRES (1922–1999)

As one of Syria's most celebrated painters, Fateh Moudarres is internationally renowned as the pioneer of modernism in Syria, creating a unique style influenced by Syrian heritage, the plight of the rural population and regional upheavals. He painted sober figures with characteristic solid square-shaped heads reminiscent of styles from Assyrian statuary, Palmyrene figures and Christian iconography.

Born in Aleppo, Fateh Moudarres (1922–1999) studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome and continued his postgraduate studies at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris until 1972. Upon returning to Syria, where he was lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University until 1993, he became a highly influential professor for generations of artists.

Moudarres continued painting until his death, and his work has been included in international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, São Paulo Biennale, and the Seoul and Cairo Biennials. In addition, works by Moudarres have been acquired by institutions such as the British Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; National Museum in Damascus.



#### *Untitled*

circa 1990

Gouache and sand on carton

35 x 50 cm

Signed

**\$3,000 - \$6,000**

Provenance: Private collection, UAE



Lot 2

FATEH MOUDARRES (1922–1999)

*Untitled*

circa 1990  
Gouache and sand on carton  
35 x 50 cm  
Signed

**\$3,000 - \$6,000**

Provenance: Private collection, UAE



## Lot 3

### NASSIR CHAURA (1920–1992)

A well-known figure in the Syrian art scene, Nassir Chaura's painting styles evolved over time, yet the theme of nature and landscapes remained his subject. "My love for nature was the main inspiration for me as we lived in an old wooden house surrounded by a small vegetable garden," he once said. Impressionism was a huge influence in Chaura's early work, and his landscape paintings and scenes from Damascus neighborhoods were praised by critics for their delicate sense of color and light. His mature style saw him settle into a balance between impressionism and abstraction.

Born in Damascus, Nassir Chaura (1920–1992) graduated from the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Cairo in 1947. After returning to Syria, Chaura worked as an art teacher and also taught at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus when it opened in 1960 until his retirement in 1990.

Chaura was awarded the Syrian National Garter in 1982. His works have been acquired by the Syrian Ministry of Culture, The National Museum in Damascus, The People's Palace and in private collections.

#### *Untitled*

1988

Watercolour on carton

37 x 27 cm

Signed and dated

**\$4,000 - \$7,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon





## Lot 4

### LEILA NSEIR (B. 1941)

Growing up in rural villages, in order to get to school, Leila Nseir would walk through impoverished communities, observing the children there, in the snow and cold. Reflecting on these memories in her work, she has been searching “for the essence behind those faces.” Experimenting with various materials and techniques, Nseir is also known for putting women in her paintings as workers, in later stages of pregnancy, or even as martyrs. Breaking from cultural norms of the time, she has never shied away from controversy in work or in life.

Born in Al-Haffah, north of Lattakia, Leila Nseir (1941) began drawing at the age of 14. She received a government scholarship to study in Egypt and graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1963. Beginning her career during the height of Syrian modernism, Nseir was an active figure in the evolving art scene. Nseir’s work is found in public collections such as National Museum of Damascus and Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah as well as numerous private collections throughout the Middle East, Asia, Europe and North America.

#### *Untitled*

1980

Monoprint, mixed media on paper

65 x 36 cm

Signed

**\$6,000 - \$8,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Syria. Courtesy of Hekmieh Art Gallery



## Lot 5

### MAHMOUD HAMMAD (1923–1988)

Considered one of the founding pioneers of Arab abstraction and modern Syrian art, Mahmoud Hammad explored a number of themes, subjects and techniques throughout his career, depicting Arabic letterforms, figures and landscapes. He is perhaps best known for his later works, abstract compositions that reveal a balance between form and colour. From 1964 until his death, he painted a modernist-style series in which Arab script was the main element. By arranging the letters throughout the work, he added a rhythm to his paintings, which, at times, dissolved into complete abstraction.

Born in Damascus, Mahmoud Hammad (1923–1988) graduated from the Accademia di belle arti in Rome in 1957. Both in his lifetime and posthumously, Hammad received numerous awards, including the merit of Knight Commander of the Republic of Italy in 1975; the Syrian Highest Medal of Merit in Arts and Literature in 1979 as well as the National Syrian Garter in 1989. His work can be found in the collections of the British Museum; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut and the Jalanbo Art Foundation.

#### *Calligraphy- Albasmla*

1982

Linoleum cut on paper

50.3 x 34 cm

Edition 8/20

Signed, dated and numbered

**\$5,000 - \$8,000**

Provenance: Courtesy of the artist's family





## Lot 6

### NAZEM AL JAAFARI (1918–2015)

Nazem Al Jaafari dedicated much of his life and work to the city of Damascus. Documenting its people, activities, architecture and fashions, he sought to protect its history from modern construction through painting scenes and portraits using realistic techniques with elements of Impressionism. "I did not leave a small or large alleyway without drawing it [in] its minute details," he explained. "I drew its churches and mosques, its domes, its markets, its houses, its rooms and its gates (...) I document and establish an archive that preserves it in the memory of generations."

Born in Damascus, Nazem Al Jaafari (1918–2015) graduated from the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Cairo in 1947. Al Jaafari is reported to have completed up to 7,000 works in his lifetime, exhibiting mostly in South America and Europe. In 2006, he was celebrated with a retrospective at the National Museum in Damascus and, in parallel, two publications were released about his life and work.

#### *Untitled*

1972

Oil on canvas

65 x 45 cm

Signed and dated

**\$8,000 - \$14,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 7

### MICHEL KURCHE (1900–1973)

Considered one of the pioneers of Impressionism in Syria, Michel Kurche painted landscapes, Damascene neighborhoods, faces and figures. Sometimes depicting socio-political issues, like the Suez war or Bedouin life, he commented: "I cannot draw or depict hunger without suffering... What comes out of the heart inevitably penetrates into the heart... The artist's feelings are reflected in his production... so he becomes an impression." Working swiftly and full of emotion, Kurche would sometimes complete a painting in a just few minutes, deftly capturing the essence of a moment. Using watercolors or oil, he mastered the use of bright and cool hues to depict the effect of sunlight on subjects.

Born in Damascus, Michel Kurche (1900–1973) graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Contributing to the establishment of artistic associations in the 1940s, Kurche continued to paint and exhibit until his death in 1973. His works have been acquired by institutions in Damascus including the Syrian Ministry of Culture, The National Museum, the Republican Palace, Hospitality Palace and the Arab Scientific Complex. A prolific artist, he is credited with completing over 1,000 paintings in his lifetime, which can be found in private collections in Syria, Lebanon, Europe and the US.

#### *Untitled*

Undated  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 50 cm  
Signed

**\$4,000 - \$7,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Syria





## FATEH MOUDARRES (1922–1999)

As one of Syria's most celebrated painters, Fateh Moudarres is internationally renowned as the pioneer of modernism in Syria, creating a unique style influenced by Syrian heritage, the plight of the rural population and regional upheavals. He painted sober figures with characteristic solid square-shaped heads reminiscent of styles from Assyrian statuary, Palmyrene figures and Christian iconography.

Born in Aleppo, Fateh Moudarres (1922–1999) studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome and continued his postgraduate studies at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris until 1972. Upon returning to Syria, where he was lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University until 1993, he became a highly influential professor for generations of artists.

Moudarres continued painting until his death, and his work has been included in international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, São Paulo Biennale, and the Seoul and Cairo Biennials. In addition, works by Moudarres have been acquired by institutions such as the British Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; National Museum in Damascus.

### *Al Tahawol Wal Shohoud*

1981

Oil on canvas

75 x 55 cm

Signed and dated

**\$11,000- \$16,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon





## Lot 9

### SUAD MARDAM BEY (B. 1964)

While Souad Mardam Bey's painting style has evolved through different periods in her career, the distinct character of her female or non-gendered figures has remained a constant theme. Her large-scale canvases prominently feature the figures on textured color field backgrounds. They are usually adorned with various ornaments and costumed with patterned clothing, complimenting their intense facial features or expressions. When talking about her work she explains "Ultimately, it is all about achieving a spontaneous harmony between technique and subject... My technique and subject serve one another."

Born in Damascus, Souad Mardam Bey (1964) studied philosophy and visual art at the Lebanese University in Beirut. She has participated in solo and group exhibitions in France, Canada, Lebanon, Syria, Cairo, Kuwait, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Mexico and the US.

#### *Untitled*

2021

Oil and mixed media on canvas

180 x 100 cm

Signed and dated

**\$9,000- \$12,000**

Provenance: Directly from the artist



## Lot 10

### NASSIR CHAURA (1920–1992)

A well-known figure in the Syrian art scene, Nassir Chaura's painting styles evolved over time, yet the theme of nature and landscapes remained his subject. "My love for nature was the main inspiration for me as we lived in an old wooden house surrounded by a small vegetable garden," he once said. Impressionism was a huge influence in Chaura's early work, and his landscape paintings and scenes from Damascus neighborhoods were praised by critics for their delicate sense of colour and light. His mature style saw him settle into a balance between impressionism and abstraction.

Born in Damascus, Nassir Chaura (1920–1992) graduated from the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Cairo in 1947. After returning to Syria, Chaura worked as an art teacher and also taught at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus when it opened in 1960 until his retirement in 1990.

Chaura was awarded the Syrian National Garter in 1982. His works have been acquired by the Syrian Ministry of Culture, The National Museum in Damascus, The People's Palace and in private collections.

#### *Untitled*

1986  
Oil on canvas  
79 x 59 cm  
Signed and dated

**\$8,000- \$12,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 11

### NAZIR ISMAIL (1948–2016 )

“No artist is more loyal to his individuality, his feelings, his agony, his tears, and his joy like Nazir Ismail,” writes art critic Joseph Tarrab about Ismail’s expressive works.

Born in Damascus, Nazir Ismail (1948–2016) was self-taught, discovering art at early age from the famous folk artist Abu Subhi Al Tinawi, whose studio was close to his grandfather’s house.

Using his distinctive form of expressionism, he focused on mud houses, depicting the simplicity of their shape and rural life. Evolving his subject over time from these houses to elongated figures and faces, his work features distinctive geometric and stylized forms. Expressive elements in the brushwork, colours and faces of these figures create an emotive quality, with canvases full of symbols. Frequently using an earthy palette of colours, Ismail’s work displays themes of confusion, anxiety and loss.

Ismail held over 50 solo exhibitions during his lifetime in cities such as Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Beirut, Amman, Cairo, Dubai, Paris, Poitiers, Sharjah, Doha, Geneva and Vienna. He also won awards at the Sharjah Biennale and The Antrgravek Award in Berlin.

#### *Untitled*

1971

Acrylic on cardboard

43 x 70 cm

Signed and dated

**\$6,000 - \$10,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon







## Lot 12

### NASSIR CHAURA (1920–1992)

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#### *Untitled*

1991

Oil on canvas

80 x 60 cm

Signed and dated

**\$8,000 - \$12,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon

## Lot 13

### ABDUL LATIF AL SMOUDI (1948–2005)

Chronicling Abdul Latif Al Smoudi's artistic journey, a friend and fellow painter, Ismail al Rifai writes in a retrospective essay "His abstract paintings allow free rein to the viewer's imagination... They bear a plurality of symbols and indications that can only be decoded by letting thoughts drift away."

Born in Hama, Abdul Latif Al Smoudi (1948–2005) studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University in the early 1970s, contributing to the abstract arts movement in Syria. After moving to Sharjah, he was one of the earliest members of the Emirates Fine Arts Society and co-authored a seminal article for their sister publication, *Al Tashkeel*.

A key figure in the Arab abstraction movement, Al Smoudi looked to the beauty and culture of the Arab world for inspiration, using symbols and letters in his dense grid-like paintings. His colorful and intricate works, hosting various patterns or motifs, exude a vibrant energy and warmth.

Al Smoudi's work has been shown internationally in over 50 exhibitions, including retrospectives, and at institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, Damascus; Abu Dhabi's Cultural Foundation; and the Department of Islamic Manuscripts at the Louvre, Paris.

#### *Dance on the Wall*

1997

Oil on canvas

62 x 62 cm

Signed and dated

**\$10,000 - \$13,000**

Provenance: Courtesy of the Artist's family





## Lot 14

### MAHMOUD HAMMAD (1923–1988)

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#### *La Ghaleb*

1984

Oil on canvas

35 x 25 cm

Signed and dated

**\$10,000 - \$15,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 15

### NAIM ISMAIL (1930–1979)

One of the pioneering artists after the independence movement, Naim Ismail was known for his abstract style, geometric motifs and depiction of daily life, often combining Islamic influences and symbolic forms. He was concerned with creating work that was both visually aesthetic and able to express socio-political issues, conveying messages of unity, struggle, birth and blessings.

Born in Antioch, Naim Ismail (1930–1979) moved south during Syria's annexation by Turkey in 1939 with his family and brothers Adham, Sidqi and Aziz, all of whom became prominent artists and thinkers later in life. After receiving formal art training in Istanbul and Rome, Ismail settled in Damascus.

A prolific producer, Ismail created hundreds of pen drawings, paintings, frescoes, mosaics, publication covers and advertisements. His public works include the main façade of the trade union building in Damascus and the front of the Euphrates Dam in Tabqa. His work has been exhibited widely and acquired by private and public collections, including the Barjeel Art Foundation.

#### *Untitled*

1968

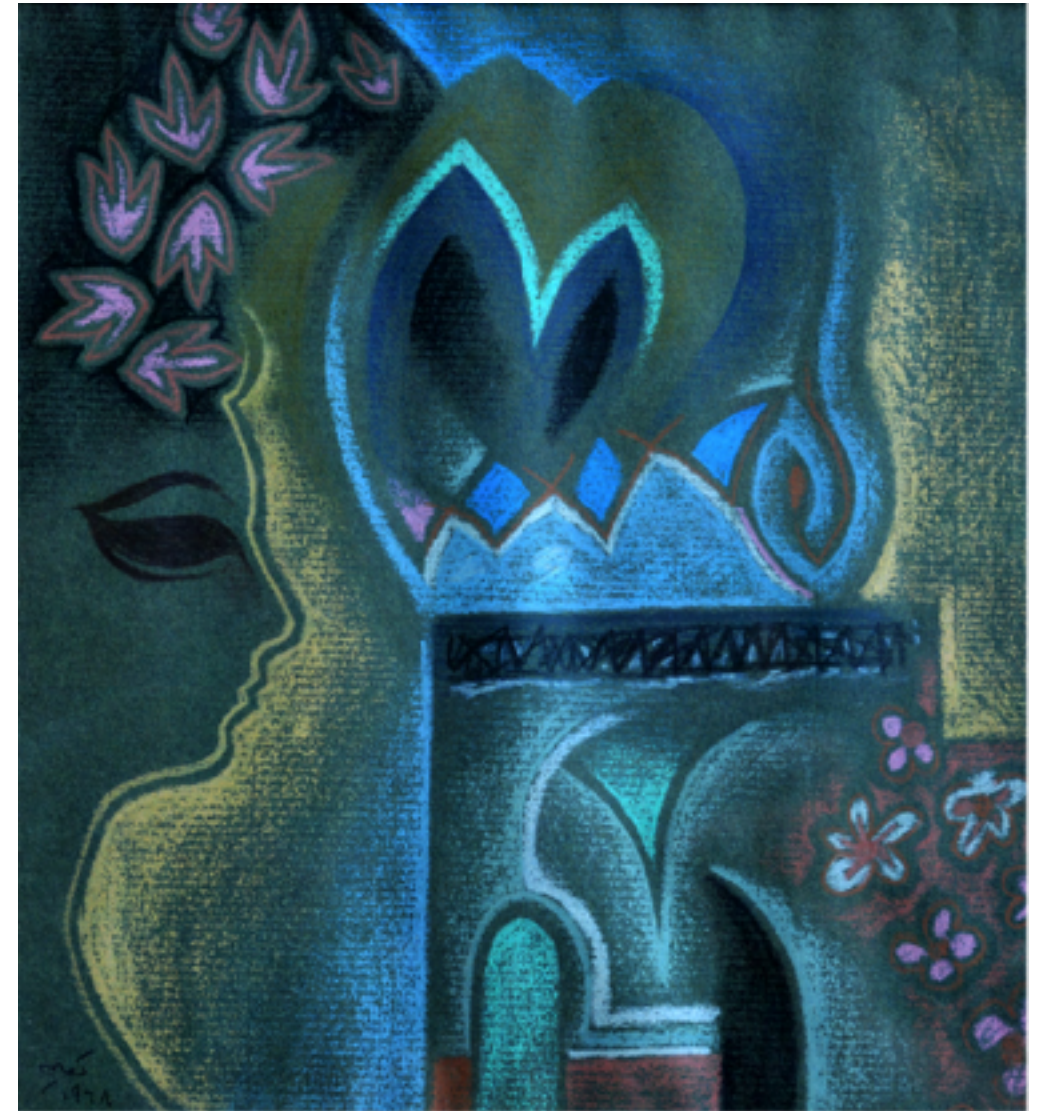
Soft pastel on cotton paper

20 x 20 cm

Signed and dated

**\$1,500- \$3,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Syria. Courtesy of Hekmieh Art Gallery





## Lot 16

### LEILA NSEIR (B. 1941)

Growing up in rural villages, in order to get to school, Leila Nseir would walk through impoverished communities, observing the children there, in the snow and cold. Reflecting on these memories in her work, she has been searching “for the essence behind those faces.” Experimenting with various materials and techniques, Nseir is also known for putting women in her paintings as workers, in later stages of pregnancy, or even as martyrs. Breaking from cultural norms of the time, she has never shied away from controversy in work or in life.

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#### *Untitled*

Undated  
Pastel on paper  
37 x 31 cm  
Signed

**\$4,000 - \$6,000**

Provenance: Private collection in Syria. Courtesy of Hekmieh Art Gallery



## Lot 17

### ABDULLAH MURAD (B. 1944)

Painting by layering different styles, brushstrokes and even collaging mixed media onto canvas, Abdullah Murad is considered one of the pioneers of abstract expressionist Arab Art. He describes his philosophy of spontaneous expression and playful enthusiasm as: “Art is like a dance. You keep moving and moving to whatever is going on.”

Born in Homs, Abdullah Murad (1944) graduated from the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University; in 1970. Inspired by the rhythm of the Arabesque lines, Murad’s works are deeply influenced by Fauvist colours and Abstract Expressionism. The energy in his work moves from frantic and condensed to calm and sparse to create asymmetrical compositions.

Exploring the tension between balance and imbalance, Murad’s technique varies from thick slabs of paint to thin translucent layers, playing with textures and surfaces, adding collages composed of newspaper clippings or other media.

Murad's work has been in international exhibitions and at auctions and is housed in private collections and public institutions such as the Sharjah Museum, National Museum of Damascus, Dalloul Art Foundation and the Syrian Ministry of Culture.

#### *Untitled*

2009

Oil on canvas

180 x 120 cm

Signed and dated

**\$8,000- \$12,000**

Provenance: Directly from the artist





## Lot 18

### KHALED TAKRETI (B. 1964)

“The East has always been depicted as a woman in my work, through her eyes, her soul and her stillness. The West is more about colour, frame and motion. I think my paintings are definitely influenced by both cultures,” replies Syrian artist Khaled Takreti when asked about the subject matter in his work.

Born in Beirut, Khaled Takreti (1964) trained to be an architect but soon became known as a painter.

Recognized for his innovative approach to portraiture, his figures have a graphic nature, yet portray realistic features. They are painted either monochromatically or with brilliant flat colours, appearing almost like cutouts against plain backgrounds, similar to Pop art’s appropriation of advertising imagery. The clean lines and geometry found in the background of many his works are derived from his architectural studies.

Takreti has exhibited at institutions such as the Musée de la Palmeraie, Marrakech; the Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea; Institut des Cultures d’Islam, Paris and La Villa Emerige, Paris. His works are housed in the Syrian National Museum, the Jordanian National Gallery of Fine Arts and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, among other private and public collections.

#### *My Heritage*

2014

Acrylic on canvas

160 x 106 cm

**\$20,000 - \$30,000**

Provenance: Directly from the artist



## Lot 19

### MAMDOUH KASHLAN (B. 1929)



One of the founding Syrian modernists, Mamdouh Kashlan's subject matter depicts scenes of people and landscapes. He explains "I present Damascus through my vision of its noble people and its characteristics... [I'm] consumed with its authentic Damascene life, which is full of sympathy, love and family... you see its houses and alleys intertwined and woven with my affection for it, you see its minarets glorified in their lofty, dignified beauty."

Born in Damascus, Mamdouh Kashlan (1929) won a scholarship to study art at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome graduating in 1957. He authored many books on art and art education, as well as on the artists Mahmoud Jalal and Louay Kayyali. Kashlan's linework and figures have a lively suppleness and energy that pairs with his coloration. He says that the bright and warm colors seen throughout his works are an emotional expression. They "overcome my psychological state and impose themselves even if my mood is bad or I am sad or depressed..."

During his lengthy career, Kashlan has participated in over a hundred international group and solo exhibitions. His work is in private and public collections such as The Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille; Museum of Modern Art, Cairo; National Museum, Damascus; Dummar Museum, Damascus; Aleppo Museum; Sursock Museum, Beirut; and in museums in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Bulgaria and Monte Negro.

#### *Al Hamel w Al Mahmoul*

1965

Oil on canvas

80 x 55 cm

Signed and dated

**\$8,000- \$12,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 20

### Burhan Karkutli (1932–2003)

Known for his political posters, artist and activist Burhan Karkutli explained the inspiration for his work, saying “Damascus gave me the beauty of art and the beauty of politics in one package. I carried it with me to the diaspora and these memories are part of my body.”

Born in Damascus, Burhan Karkutli (1932 – 2003) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1952 and worked for a short period as professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University. For stretches of time, he travelled to Spain, Morocco, Mexico and Venezuela, and in each of those places, he was involved in arts and activist movements. He eventually settled in Germany where he died in 2003.

The black and white drawings contain both human and animal characters drawn with his signature style of simplified forms and shapes, that contain motifs and patterns, filling the space between the thick black outlines. Inspired from the folk-art movements and politics from both his travels and Damascus, he depicted their causes as well as illustrating the Palestinian struggle, for which he is well-known. His work spans across various media including posters, book covers and editorial illustrations.

Karkutli’s work is part of international collections from the Lebanese Embassy in Mexico to the Birzeit Museum in Palestine.

#### *Freedom is Stronger than Prison*

1979

Ink on cardboard

50 x 40cm

Signed and dated

**\$8,000 - \$10,000**

Provenance: Courtesy of the artist’s family



## Lot 21

### FADI YAZIGI (B. 1966)

Describing the foundations of his long career, Syrian artist Fadi Yazigi explains "I try to explore new materials in my work, to experiment with a very wide variety of means and forms... Each new material gives a particular feeling... whether painting on canvas, cardboard, textiles or papers, using acrylic, oil and ink, I depict people and human emotions."

Born in Latakia, Fadi Yazigi (1966) studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University. Primarily, a figurative painter, Yazigi's work revolves around human emotions with a sensitivity towards the individuals that he encounters and depicts in his work. A strong facet of his career is experimenting with materials and techniques, allowing him to continuously recreate his figures in new ways.

Fadi Yazigi's work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions internationally at such venues as the Art Paris art fair; Galerie Tanit, Beirut; The Mosaic Rooms, London; Sharjah Biennale, UAE; and is in private and public collections including The Delfina Foundation, London; A.M. Qattan Foundation; the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority, and the Kaleemat Foundation.

#### *Untitled*

2018

Bronze

43 x 25 x 5 cm

Ed 1/6

Signed on the back

**\$20,000 - \$25,000**

Provenance: Directly from the artist





## Lot 22

### ISSAM DARWISH (B. 1952)

Known for his signature style and dream-like atmospheres, the artist Issam Darwish explains his perspective on art by saying it is “a view of the world, a position on reality and what is happening, but it has its own structure, laws and magic.”

Born in Damascus, Issam Darwish (1952) studied at the Adham Ismail Center for Fine Arts and then graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University in 1979. He studied under the great pioneers of modern art in Syria, including Fateh Moudarres who would later choose Darwish to exhibit with him in Amman. In 1987, he founded the Ishtar Gallery and later he would establish the Fateh Al Moudarres Gallery in commemoration of the deceased artist.

Connecting to the historic Magical Realism art movement, Darwish creates narrative paintings or landscapes that contain fantasy-like elements. Inspired by female figures who often play the protagonist, his serene scenes, painted in the impressionistic style of pointillism, have a sense of stillness.

Darwish has taken part in numerous local and international exhibitions.

#### *Waiting*

2010  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 120 cm  
Signed

**\$4,500 - \$6,600**

Provenance: Directly from the artist





## Lot 23

### NAZEM AL JAAFARI (1918–2015)

Nazem Al Jaafari dedicated much of his life and work to the city of Damascus. Documenting its people, activities, architecture and fashions, he sought to protect its history from modern construction through painting scenes and portraits using realistic techniques with elements of Impressionism. "I did not leave a small or large alleyway without drawing it [in] its minute details," he explained. "I drew its churches and mosques, its domes, its markets, its houses, its rooms and its gates (...) I document and establish an archive that preserves it in the memory of generations."

Born in Damascus, Nazem Al Jaafari (1918–2015) graduated from the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Cairo in 1947. Al Jaafari is reported to have completed up to 7,000 works in his lifetime, exhibiting mostly in South America and Europe. In 2006, he was celebrated with a retrospective at the National Museum in Damascus and, in parallel, two publications were released about his life and work.

#### *Part of Khan Asaad Pasha*

1987

Oil on canvas

68 x 54 cm

Signed and dated

**\$6,000 - \$9,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 24

### SAAD YAGAN (B. 1950)

A chronicler of the daily life of Aleppo's residents, Saad Yagan addresses "human issues that we all live in, allocating space to a specific topic that fits with the title of the experience and its dimensions, whether mythology, thought, literature or music."

Born in Aleppo, Saad Yagan (1950) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Aleppo in 1964 and the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University in 1970. He established The Point – an art and literature gallery in Aleppo – and has hosted several TV programmes on art.

Focused on figuration, Yagan's stylised bodies have serious, elongated faces that are often depicted mid-movement. Painting everything from café culture to the performing arts, his expressive and dynamic works are distinctive in the faces and bodies of their characters and feature a palette of predominately white, reds and blues.

Yagan's works are featured in public and private collections such as the Musée Modern Museum in Brussels; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts; Contemporary Art Museum of Montreal; National Museum of Damascus and Aleppo and the Syrian Ministry of Culture.

#### *The Coffee Place*

2008

Oil on canvas

150 x 90 cm

Signed and dated

**\$8,000 - \$12,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 25

### SAAD YAGAN (B. 1950)

#### *The Coffee Place*

2008

Acrylic, collage and sand on canvas

150 x 90 cm

Signed and dated

**\$8,000 - \$12,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon







Lot 24



Lot 25

## SAFWAN DAHOUL (B. 1961)

Known for his “Dream Series,” that he started in the late 1980s, Safwan Dahoul captures psychological aspects of humanity by looking inwards. He explains “Unconsciously, my work is a reflection of my inner world and my experiences, together with my interpretation of life and the reason for existence.”

Born in Hama, Safwan Dahoul (1961) studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University and received a Doctorate from the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Belgium. Afterwards, he returned to Syria and taught at Damascus University mentoring the next generation of artists, igniting their unique trajectories in art making.

Dahoul is known for his abstracted figures rendered in an angular style, with an occasionally contorted posture and solemn expression. He cites a range of influences from modernist art movements to Assyrian and Pharaonic art which can be seen in his aesthetics. Aside from these visual elements, Dahoul often traces his main inspiration back to the artistic practice of Frida Kahlo admiring “the way in which she explores her life through her art, how she could be true to herself and her daily existence.”

Dahoul’s paintings are held in numerous private and public collections, including the C.M.O.O.A., Casablanca; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; National Museum, Damascus; The Samawi Collection, Dubai; The Farjam Collection, Dubai; the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Kuwait.

### *Untitled*

2004  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 120 cm  
Signed and dated

**\$60,000 - \$80,000**

Provenance: Private collection, UAE





Lot 27

## AHMAD MOUALLA (B. 1958)



Renowned for large-scale theatrical scenes or groups of figures interlaced with calligraphy, Ahmad Moualla describes one of his most common themes: “The crowd is part of my soul. Painting a crowd of colours, strokes and expressions. I worked a lot on the subject of the herd and the individual, the individual as a prophet, or a criminal, a leader or a creator. Our history is full of individual heroes or dictators.” After studying several French masters who painted figures and historical scenes, Moualla began using a more expressive style of brushwork, which has evolved throughout his career. Combining images of crowds with calligraphic elements, he uses the text of activist poets, to create layers of meaning in each work.

Born in Baniyas, Ahmad Moualla (1958) graduated from the Department of Visual Communications, Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University and received a diploma from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris. Moualla has shown his work internationally at such venues as Green Art Gallery, Dubai; Municipality of Athens – Center of the Arts; MODEM Centre for Modern and Contemporary Arts in Debrecen, Hungary; Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Hong Kong; Contemporary Istanbul and Souq Waqif, Qatar.

### *Untitled*

2005

Oil on canvas

70 x 100 cm

Signed and dated

**\$10,000 - \$14,000**

Provenance: Private collection, UAE



## Lot 28

### AHMAD BARHO (B. 1965)

Growing up in a crowded neighborhood in Aleppo, Ahmad Barho began drawing as a child. Later, when giving an artist lecture in Kuwait he would say “The artist remains captive to his beginnings despite his progress in work, because here are the buried, internal things that remain in the depths of man, and [they] remain the catalyst for him throughout his artistic history.”

Born in Aleppo, Ahmad Barho (1965) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University in 1990. He is a member of the Syrian Plastic Artists Union and publishes articles on art and art criticism.

After completing his studies, he turned towards abstraction as an expression of his inner life and the result of his research into various Asian philosophies. Years later, when his studio was destroyed three times in the war, his work began to change, and elements such as figuration and architecture began to reemerge within his abstract canvases.

Barho has had solo exhibitions in Syria, France, Sudan, Germany Lebanon and Kuwait. His works were acquired by the Syrian Ministry of Culture and private collections worldwide.

#### *Untitled*

1998

Mixed media on canvas

140 x 140 cm

Signed and dated

**\$7,000- \$10,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## NAZIR NABAA (1929–2016)

Ranging from depictions of Arab women to abstracted portraiture, still lifes and political posters, Nazir Nabaa's diverse *oeuvre* is precise in details and textures. A celebrated professor and artist, the thread that unites his paintings is the research that he commits to each one. Alongside that rigour lies his philosophy: "I search for one thing, besides artistic research, I search for the soul."

Born in Damascus, Nazir Nabaa (1939–2016) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Cairo in 1965 and received a second degree from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1974.

Using vibrant colours, Nabaa's best-known works portray women amid rich Oriental backdrops as a representation of homeland and history, and these archetypical depictions of women act as symbols of nationalism. As regional conflicts heightened, the subject of his work began to shift to political themes such as the Palestinian crisis, Lebanese civil war and the American invasion of Baghdad.

Nabaa's work has been exhibited at museums such as the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts and has won the Judges Panel award at the Biennials of Alexandria and Cairo. His work has been acquired by institutions such as the Jalanbo Collection, Barjeel Art Foundation and Dalloul Art Foundation.

### *Untitled*

1989

Oil on canvas

80 x 80 cm

Signed and dated

**\$18,000 - \$25,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



Lot 30

## FATEH MOUDARRES (1922–1999)

As one of Syria's most celebrated painters, Fateh Moudarres is internationally renowned as the pioneer of modernism in Syria, creating a unique style influenced by Syrian heritage, the plight of the rural population and regional upheavals. He painted sober figures with characteristic solid square-shaped heads reminiscent of styles from Assyrian statuary, Palmyrene figures and Christian iconography.

Born in Aleppo, Fateh Moudarres (1922–1999) studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome and continued his postgraduate studies at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris until 1972. Upon returning to Syria, where he was lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University until 1993, he became a highly influential professor for generations of artists.

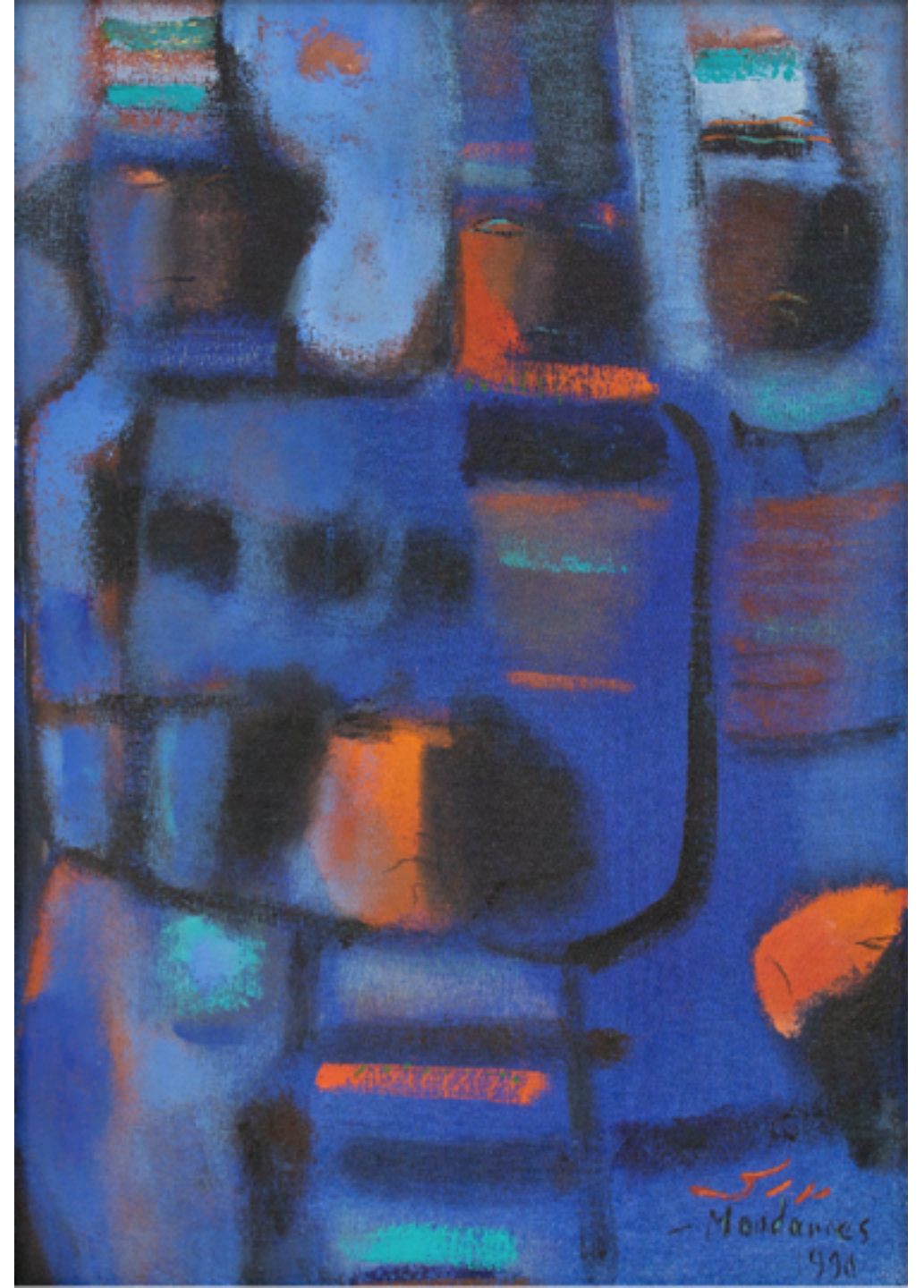
Moudarres continued painting until his death, and his work has been included in international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, São Paulo Biennale, and the Seoul and Cairo Biennials. In addition, works by Moudarres have been acquired by institutions such as the British Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; National Museum in Damascus. A retrospective of his career was held at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris in 1995.

### *Shohoud Soqout Al Malak*

1990  
Oil on canvas  
50 x 35 cm  
Signed and dated

**\$7,000 - \$10,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon





## Lot 31

### ABDULLAH MOURAD (B. 1944)

Painting by layering different styles, brushstrokes and even collaging mixed media onto canvas, Abdullah Murad is considered one of the pioneers of abstract expressionist Arab Art. He describes his philosophy of spontaneous expression and playful enthusiasm as: "Art is like a dance. You keep moving and moving to whatever is going on."

Born in Homs, Abdullah Murad (1944) graduated from the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University; in 1970. Inspired by the rhythm of the Arabesque lines, Murad's works are deeply influenced by Fauvist colours and Abstract Expressionism. The energy in his work moves from frantic and condensed to calm and sparse to create asymmetrical compositions.

Exploring the tension between balance and imbalance, Murad's technique varies from thick slabs of paint to thin translucent layers, playing with textures and surfaces, adding collages composed of newspaper clippings or other media.

Murad's work has been in international exhibitions and at auctions and is housed in private collections and public institutions such as the Sharjah Museum, National Museum of Damascus, Dalloul Art Foundation and the Syrian Ministry of Culture.

#### *Untitled*

2021  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 100 cm  
Signed and dated

**\$4,000 - \$6,600**

Provenance: Directly from the artist



## Lot 32

### NAZIR NABAA (1939–2016)

Ranging from depictions of Arab women to abstracted portraiture, still lifes and political posters, Nazir Nabaa's diverse *oeuvre* is precise in details and textures. A celebrated professor and artist, the thread that unites his paintings is the research that he commits to each one. Alongside that rigour lies his philosophy: "I search for one thing, besides artistic research, I search for the soul."

Born in Damascus, Nazir Nabaa (1939–2016) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Cairo in 1965 and received a second degree from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1974.

Using vibrant colours, Nabaa's best-known works portray women amid rich Oriental backdrops as a representation of homeland and history, and these archetypical depictions of women act as symbols of nationalism. As regional conflicts heightened, the subject of his work began to shift to political themes such as the Palestinian crisis, Lebanese civil war and the American invasion of Baghdad.

Nabaa's work has been exhibited at museums such as the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts and has won the Judges Panel award at the Biennials of Alexandria and Cairo. His work has been acquired by institutions such as the Jalanbo Collection, Barjeel Art Foundation and Dalloul Art Foundation.

#### *Tajalliyat*

2001

Mixed media on canvas

145 x 130 cm

Signed and dated

**\$9,000 - \$13,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon





## Lot 33

### SABHAN ADAM (B. 1972)

Challenging notions of beauty and ugliness, Sabhan Adam paints portraits of misshapen creatures often clothed in glamorous attire against plain backgrounds. While distorted and monstrous, the figures hold a complex set of emotions based on Adam's own psychology. He states: "The figures I paint have so many things in common with me – they look like me, they have the same head and the same Asian eyes as me. I draw myself with everything that exists inside – the sadness, the misery, the shocking things I have faced, the isolation, and the feeling of not belonging to this world."

Born in Hassaka, Sabhan Adam (1972) is a self-taught artist who creates works in relative isolation from the art world. A prolific artist, he has built up his career in both traditional and independent ways through exhibiting with galleries but also independently marketing and self-funding work and publications.

Adam has exhibited at institutions such as the Uffizi Gallery, the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and the Venice Biennale. His work has been acquired by the British Museum, Jalanbo Collection, Barjeel Art Foundation, and is in many private collections.

#### *Untitled*

2008

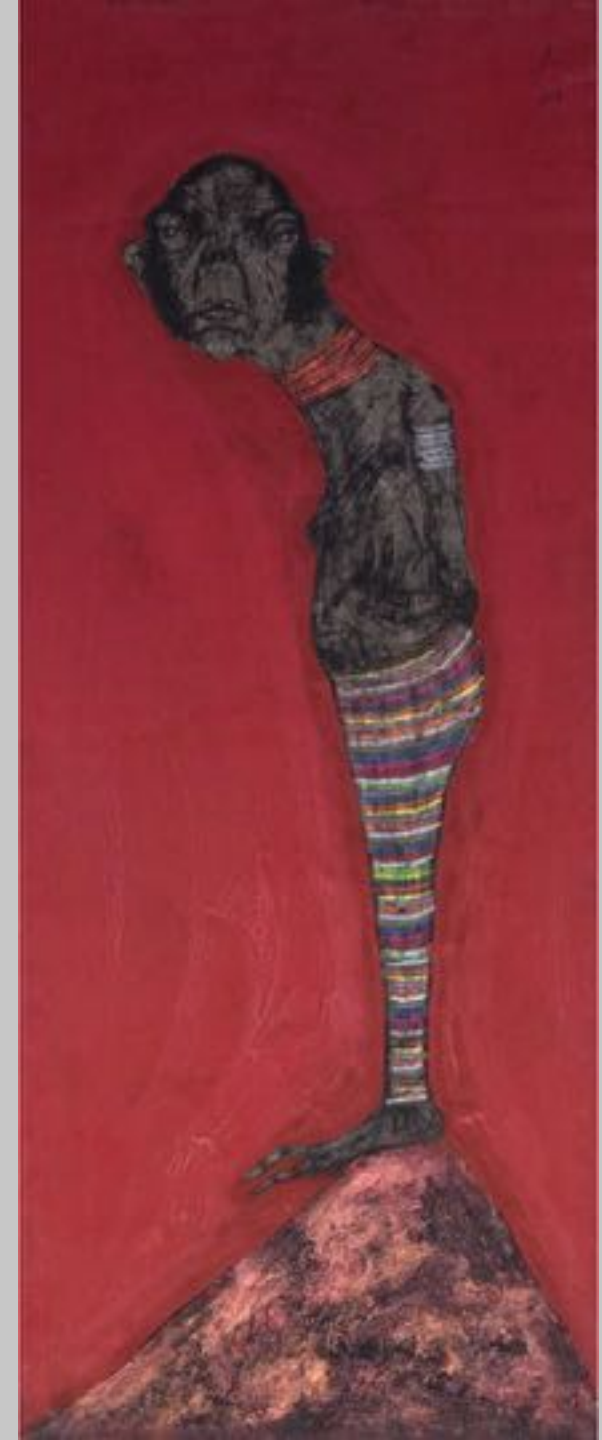
Mixed media on red canvas

216 x 86 cm

Signed and dated

**\$3,000 - \$5,000**

Provenance: Private collection, UAE





Lot 34

SABHAN ADAM (B. 1972)

*Untitled*

2008  
Mixed media on red canvas  
222 x 86 cm  
Signed and dated

**\$3,000 - \$5,000**

Provenance: Private collection, UAE





Lot 34



Lot 33



## Lot 35

### GEORGES MICHELET (1873–1946)

Georges C. Michelet (1873—1946) was a French Orientalist painter. He travelled to the Near East and painted images of daily life, that took the form of portraits and landscapes as well as urban and rural scenes. These works captured his impressions, while utilising the Western trend of Romanticism in painting. Emotions filled the canvases through the windswept landscapes and contain the excitement of mysterious cultural traditions, clothing and architecture that showcase the exotification of people and places for a European audience. Similar to most of his contemporaries, Michelet's work fueled the trend for Oriental furnishings, décor, textiles and architectural motifs for an elite clientele. Influential in shaping Western aesthetics, literary and intellectual circles, Orientalism romanticised Near Eastern culture and emphasised the grandeur of ancient civilisations. Aside from this body of work, Michelet was also commissioned to create portraits of wealthy and influential individuals and families.

#### *Deir Al Zor*

1935

Oil on canvas

50 x 61 cm and 37 x 42

Signed

**\$6,000 - \$10,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 36

### FATEH MOUDARRES (1922–1999)

As one of Syria's most celebrated painters, Fateh Moudarres is internationally renowned as the pioneer of modernism in Syria, creating a unique style influenced by Syrian heritage, the plight of the rural population and regional upheavals. He painted sober figures with characteristic solid square-shaped heads reminiscent of styles from Assyrian statuary, Palmyrene figures and Christian iconography.

Born in Aleppo, Fateh Moudarres (1922–1999) studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome and continued his postgraduate studies at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris until 1972. Upon returning to Syria, where he was lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University until 1993, he became a highly influential professor for generations of artists.

Moudarres continued painting until his death, and his work has been included in international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, São Paulo Biennale, and the Seoul and Cairo Biennials. In addition, works by Moudarres have been acquired by institutions such as the British Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; National Museum in Damascus.



#### *Untitled*

circa 1970  
Chinese ink on paper  
30 x 60 cm  
Signed

**\$3,000 - \$6,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon



## Lot 37

### YOUSSEF YOUSSEF (B.1978)

Circular pale faces dominate Youssef Youssef's large canvases, their somberness leaving a memorable, yet mysterious impression. The stylized portraiture, with their wide heads and small features, depicts individuals with slight differences or adornments making each painting unique. In many instances, the figures are portrayed with their eyes closed, sleeping or even dreaming. Throughout these works, Youssef's palette remains neutral and light with a flat application of paint, portraying a minimalist quality, in continuous harmony with the tranquil figures.

Born in Al Qamishli, Youssef Youssef (1978) started as a self-taught artist and then studied at the Adham Ismail Center for Fine Arts, graduating in 2004. Working with Tajalliyat Gallery, he has held exhibitions in Lebanon, Italy and Kuwait.

#### *The Girl*

2012

Natural colours on canvas

150 x 150 cm

Signed and dated

**\$7,000 - \$10,000**

Provenance: Private collection, Lebanon





## Lot 38

### NAZIR ISMAIL (1948–2016)

“No artist is more loyal to his individuality, his feelings, his agony, his tears, and his joy like Nazir Ismail,” writes art critic Joseph Tarrab about Ismail’s expressive works.

Born in Damascus, Nazir Ismail (1948–2016) was self-taught, discovering art at early age from the famous folk artist Abu Subhi Al Tinawi, whose studio was close to his grandfather’s house.

Using his distinctive form of expressionism, he focused on mud houses, depicting the simplicity of their shape and rural life. Evolving his subject over time from these houses to elongated figures and faces, his work features distinctive geometric and stylised forms. Expressive elements in the brushwork, colours and faces of these figures create an emotive quality, with canvases full of symbols. Frequently using an earthy palette of colours, Ismail’s work displays themes of confusion, anxiety and loss.

Ismail held over 50 solo exhibitions during his lifetime in cities such as Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Beirut, Amman, Cairo, Dubai, Paris, Poitiers, Sharjah, Doha, Geneva and Vienna. He also won awards at the Sharjah Biennale and The Antrgravek Award in Berlin.

#### *Untitled*

2005

Mixed media on paper

21 x 16 cm

Signed and dated

**\$1,800 - \$3,400**

Provenance: Private collection, Syria. Courtesy of Hekmieh Art Gallery



Ahmad Moualla Lot 27

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Once you have registered please keep your account details strictly confidential. You will be liable for any or all bids made via your account.

Please note that ArtScoops reserves the right to reject a registration to bid online, withdraw its permission to use our online bidding platform, or end an account for any reason at any time.

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When making a bid, a bidder is accepting personal liability to pay the purchase price including all applicable charges. Invoices are sent out to the Buyer by email after the auction.

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Signature

Date



Mamdouh Kashlan Lot 19



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 Abdullah Murad 17, 31  
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 Ahmad Moualla 27

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Burhan Karkutli 20

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Fadi Yazigi 21  
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