Chafic Abboud 1936-2004

Untitled

signed and dated 68 signed and dated 68 on the reverse
on canvas
73 by 60cm; 28 by 25in.

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Paris
Acquired directly from the above by the present owner

For a further example of Chafic Abboud's work, please see lot 205 in
this sale.

£20,000-30,000
€24,800-37,100  US$35,200-53,000
Farid Belkahia is one of the most important contemporary Moroccan artists. Developing a new iconography that came to influence a younger generation of artists, his works are diverse: alphabets, alphabets of memories and mysticism. Interlaced, mixed, touching one another, rolled up and unraveled, the shapes of楼主's writing of the Tuareg and Barbers, the African in the desert, the sign of the disk representing the lunar and zodiacal calendar and the North African symbol of the protecting hand.

As early as 1962, Belkahia sought to create this new iconography inspired by American tradition. In 1965, he abandoned canvas and oil paint, turning to natural pigments and organic surfaces. His colors were therefrom sourced from mineral and plant origin, featuring fennel, saffron, cobalt, and pomegranate skin. Belkahia also worked with copper, which he folded, cut and nailed to wood, often using circular forms that mark the classic rectangular frame. After copper came animal skin, described by Lemi-Gourhan as a "tanner's skin." Belkahia uses velum that is washed, scraped, and dried before it can be used.

In Cell Nocturne, the masochistic elements of Belkahia's "expressionist period" of the 1950s have disappeared. Replaced by the triangle, circle, digit, floral forms, and arrow motifs inspired by the works of Paul Klee, Farid Belkahia tangles up these forms so they appear dislocated, almost in abstraction. The forms are elongated and elongated, sometimes disappearing far over the limits of the frame. The journey of the artist offers us is beyond the visible world; it is a journey into the memory of humanity. Cell Nocturne, painted on skin, is a significant of this evolution in it can be found a number of Belkahia's iconic symbols and motifs: Solar forms, the circle with several circumferences; protective forms, the eye in the center; and sensual forms, the two mountains that coincide with the sky resembling breasts. The timeless dance of fecundity and cosmic unity are dear to the artist and occupy the whole of his work, a work that occupies a liminal stage, hovering between heaven and earth.

"Memory has always been the starting point in my art work", says Belkahia, "Memory is insubstantial. It is an abstraction where the past and future collide in a present which belongs to eternity." It is this invisible memory, "sacred and ancient, and whose fragments continue to live in the soil of artists," as Paul Klee called it, which lies in Belkahia's work. With the work on velum that Belkahia has initiated in 1974, there is a metaphysical quest whose roots follow the ambivalence of being and things. If the skin recalls the sacrifice of the animal, the colors and motifs traced by the henna awaken the memory of joyful ceremonies, the wedding and the circumcision. Man and beast are captured in the coloured skin, united in a single vital energy.

If henna in its splenetic form is synonymous with joy and beauty for women, in its permanent form (the tattoo) it is a symbol of the tribal bond, the bond of the masculine over the feminine. And if the green of the henna powder recalls the colour of paradise and of fertility, the red that the henna produces once in contact with the skin is a colour of fire and of chaos. Moreover, if henna is profane, smooth, another natural colour that Belkahia employs in his work, is used for inscribing on the wooden tablets the sacred writing of the Koran. Velum was one of the first materials to have been used since prehistoric times; it is also the material of parchment, used for preserving the memories of the greatest civilizations, and was used to record some of the oldest copies of the Qur'an.

The skin is the most vital part of the body; it has sense memory. Of touch, of temperature, it can be branded and sculpted. It remembers pleasure, pain, heat and cold. It is the essence that Belkahia chooses to convey in his use of velum. Implanting memory and mysticism through his alternative images.

For a further example of Farid Belkahia's work, please see lot 252 in this sale.
This outstanding painting by Fateh Moudarres embodies all the salient themes of his work: the family unit, rural society, the importance of women and the industrialisation of his nation.

With the agricultural crisis of the 1960s and the displacement of whole villages to the metropolitan centres, Moudarres was himself obliged to relocate to an inhospitable city. As a result his paintings often feature large groups of people clustered together, supporting one another. In this way he conveyed his reverence for the traditional way of life, and simultaneously created a pictorial swan-song for the village that he so revered. Moudarres bemoans the loss of shared dependency, the consciousness and the altruism intrinsic to village life.

Of particular importance to Moudarres was the female figure. With profoundly close ties to his mother, he often depicted women as the beating heart of the social group. Moudarres celebrated the females, whether as mother, wife, sister or daughter, as the focus of the painting, depicted with a child in her arms, clapping her leg or shielded by a protecting hand (see Mona Arossi (Ed.), Moudarres, Paris 1995, figs. 1, 5, 11, 12, 13, 19). In this painting the female figures support one another in their migration to the city. Clumped together the woman lead their families to the unknown and seek comfort from one another.

As a boy, Moudarres found great solace in nature, which provided an escape from the harsh realities of his daily life. His imagination and palette often turned him to the deep cuts, ochres and browns of pastoral Syria. This nostalgia permeates all his works, whether mountain scenes or peasant life, they are often executed in this particular colour range, and take on a distance, as if in memories in soft focus, through his signature blurred and radiating lines.

For a further example of Fateh Moudarres' work, please see lot 216 in this sale.
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Khalid al Rahal 1956-1987

Mel Bagno (In The Bathroom)

Signed and dated 75
Oil, plaster and varnish on board
30 by 60cm; 11 3/4 by 23 5/8 in.

PROVENANCE
Galleria Accademia, Turin

£ 10,000-15,000
€ 12,400-18,600
US$ 17,600-26,400
Fateh Moudarres

Untitled

signed and dated 78; signed and dated 1978-1999 on the reverse
don canvas
100 by 75cm, 39% by 29in.

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Damascus (acquired directly from the artist)
Acquired directly from the above by the present owner in 1988

£ 25,000-35,000
€ 30,900-43,300 US$ 44,000-62,000

Profoundly affected by the murder of his father when Moudarres was just two years old, canvases address many of the issues that he experienced in his youth—intimidation in a patriarchal society as a result of his father's absence, poverty and hardship. Naturally, the boy held a deep regard for his mother who provided him with enormous security and strength. As a result the family unit features in most of his works. Figures cluster together forming a tightly knit and indissoluble barrier, as they do here, large, protective hands fall on the shoulders of the children, small faces turn up to the larger figures that tower over them. A poignant reminder of the artist's youth.

Strongly influenced by the style and approach of the antique societies of the region, Moudarres borrowed the abstracted figural type of the Assyrian and Babylonian cultures, with their rounded heads and heavy geometric bodies. Furthermore, the lush female figures of yore were often depicted with heavy breasts, a symbol of the nurturing mother, the giver of life. This type of symbolism would have been enormously appealing to Moudarres, whose own reverence for women, especially the mother-figure, is apparent in almost all his work, as it is here.

For a further example of Fateh Moudarres' work, please see lot 214 in this sale.
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Paul Guiragossian 1920-1994

The Market Place

signed
oil on canvas
75 by 100 cm; 29 1/2 by 39 in.
Executed in 1987.

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Beirut

For further examples of Paul Guiragossian's work, please see lots 204 and 211 in this sale.

£ 15,000-20,000
€ 18,600-24,800 · US$ 26,400-35,200
Dia Azzawi  b. 1939
Khaliif's Wife

signed and dated 68; signed, titled and dated 1968 on the reverse
oil on canvas
95.5 by 81.2cm., 371/4 by 32in.

PROVENANCE
National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad
Private Collection, Baghdad
Acquired directly from the above by the present owner in 1971

EXHIBITED
Baghdad, National Museum of Modern Art, Dia Azzawi, 1968
For an example of Dia Azzawi's later style, please see lot 265 in this sale.

£ 12,000-18,000
£ 14,900-22,500  USD 21,200-31,700
Mahmoud Said is an Egyptian icon. An aristocrat with socialist leanings and a lawyer with artistic aspirations, the man was an enigma tied to his social obligations but burning with a revolutionary fervour in the aftermath of Egyptian independence in 1952.

These conflicting aspects of Mahmoud Said's life are reflected in his work, an oeuvre as remarkable as the artist himself: intense and highly emotional, confounding and contradictory. Said's canvases are rare glimpses into the deep mind of a marginalized and sensitive personality and that provide an uncompromising and sometimes uncomfortable view of the paradox that was Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century.

Described by his niece, Queen Farida of Egypt, as "a quiet, gentle, oppressively timid man, a 'type de famille' who suffered from a lack of recognition by his family," it is clear that he was somewhat instructed by a family that could not comprehend his politics and his sensitive nature. Described by critics such as Ahmed Raisi as "more concerned about expressing his own feelings than about providing us with intellectual gratification," it becomes apparent that his works are not fully appreciated by the literary either (Liliane Karrouk, Modern Egyptian Art, Cairo, 2005, p. 21).

Mahmoud Said lived and worked at a time of enormous upheaval in Egypt, and in order to understand his work it is crucial to understand his milieu. On February 28, 1922 Britain declared Egyptian independence, a momentous event preceded by a great nationalist movement that was largely driven by women and the lower classes. In 1919, four years before Egypt was granted independence, a group of prominent Egyptian politicians approached the British high commissioner to request complete independence. This delegation included the now revered Said Zaghul and Ali Sharawi, who were later imprisoned and deported to Malta. The ill-conceived deportation of these political figureheads prompted strikes and mass demonstrations by students, government officials, doctors, lawyers and other professionals, transport workers and women.

With the loss of Egyptian men from the political playground, Egyptian women took the reins. Led by Safia Zaghul and Huda Sharawi, wives of the imprisoned figureheads, 120 to 300 upper-class veiled women staged a demonstration against the British occupation on March 16 of 1919. From this point forward, women demonstrated alongside men, and even in the countryside the female (bitterly) disrupted British communications and damaged infrastructure.