"In the late sixties, Zenderoudi adopted a dynamic multi-directional structure in his work, reminiscent of a calligrapher’s palette, mastering the so-called ordered chaos. This work is a great example of the letters completely turned upside down. Over this period Zenderoudi had already distanced himself from previous formalistic figuration seen in a Saghakhian period (early 60’s) and his early orderly abstracted calligraphy. MP + ASTI + SZ has the overwhelming richness and fullness of Persian carpet."

Karmel Asia 2008

Charles Hossein Zenderoudi 1957
MP + ASTI + SZ

Signed and dated 69 on the reverse.
Oil and metallic silver paint on canvas.
81.7 by 146cm; 32¼ by 57¼ in.

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Tehran.

£ 130,000-190,000
£ 161,000-235,000
US$ 221,000-335,000
Mausoleh Afzal
Mashgh (Homework)

ink on canvas
150 by 150cm; 59 by 59ins.
Executed in 2005.

LITERATURE
Illustrated in colour.
+ e 25,000-35,000
€ 25,000-43,000  USD 44,000-62,000
Sohrab Sepehri 1939-1990
Deyakhtan Hamishe (Always the Trees)

Signed, signed and titled in Farsi on a label affixed to the reverse
canvas.
110 by 185cm; 43½ by 72¾in.
Executed in 1967.

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Tahavar, (acquired directly from the artist in 1970)
Acquired directly from the above by the present owner in 2002.

EXHIBITED
Shiraz, Pahlavi University, Group Exhibition, 1968

£ 120,000-180,000
€ 149,000-223,000 US $ 212,000-317,000

The artist is shown in front of the work, 1971, courtesy of B. Bash Ahmad.
Both poet and painter, Sohrab Sepehri was a true eclectic whose legacy endures throughout Persian literary and artistic tradition. Owing to his literary grounding, Sepehri's paintings reflect the sentiments, style and theme of his poetry. Untitled represents a groundbreaking moment in Sohrab Sepehri's personal and pictorial development and for the evolution of Iranian abstract art. Considered as the crowning achievement of his critically acclaimed 1968 group show at the Pahlavi University, it cemented his reputation as the most exciting artistic talent of his generation and announced the versatility, masterful draughtsmanship and autobiographical intimacy that are now synonymous with his best mature work. Derakhshan Hamishir presents the artist's preferred subject matter, the tree, one of the artist's greatest fascinations, believing that trees acted as a rare symbol of benevolence and stability, in a world otherwise corrupted by the ignorance and malvolence of mankind. The tree, not only a key contributor to the integrity of the atmosphere, is an undiscriminating life-giving home to all of nature's beauties. Sepehri's praise for these bulwarks of nature is rightly justified and his depictions faithfully reflect this praise.

Sepehri was indeed known as a modern mystic, drawing into his work imagery and themes of eastern mysticism which are characteristically found in the poetry of his ancestors, Rumi and Hafez. A lover of nature, simplicity, and meditation, his poems and his paintings alike, pay homage to the natural beauty of his native Kashan. A deeply optimistic artist and a keen observer, Sepehri relates love and afflction for his surroundings through simple, modest, semi-abstracted depictions. His trees are softly rendered, recessive and gentle, almost stoic.

In 1960, Sepehri travelled to Tokyo and has since been profoundly influenced by Japanese Haiku, for which he became the main Farsi translator and drew artistic inspiration from the paintings of Japanese Zen masters such as Shoy Toyo or Hakun Ekaku. Sepehri's depictions of nature were minimal, meditative and often partially abstract. The present work is a great example of the artist's technique of partial depiction, rendering only the bases of the trees in a gesture which is suggestive, understated. Whether their origins lies in a source image or begin with an anecdote, a poem, or simply an atmosphere in mind, the relationship between Sepehri's early paintings and any precisely topography is rarely simple. While the process of painting a scene may be one of distillation and simplification, it is a journey whose end is unknown. Truly fascinated with the relationship between nature and human spirit, Sepehri epitomizes the romantic poet's ideology evolving around the re-discovery and communion with nature, appreciating its beauty and serenity rather than sinking into the down-ward spiral of modern life's anxieties. A painter whose works are strikingly modern, and whose minimalist landscapes are iconic and thoughtful, Untitled reflects a unique sense of meditative serenity, creating a true bridge between art and poetry.
Executed in 1963, Tree of Life is part of Marcus Grigorian’s much acclaimed Earthworks series. The Earthworks was inspired by the experimentation of artists beyond the conventional means of art making. The ‘Land Artists’ achieved this through the handling of earth itself. "Instead of putting a work of art on some land, some land is put into a work of art.”

Grigorian’s Earthworks began by examining the land as a wide expanse and from an aerial view. Over the course of his career however, Grigorian slowly focused in on the landscape creating a microcosm of the land, with individual particles of sand and earth.

Tree of Life is extraordinary in the way it encompasses both these very opposite approaches to space. The work can be viewed as an isolated form comprised of a central ridge with horizontal threads projecting from either side, creating the sense of a bird’s eye view, or as an abstraction of an organic form. Grigorian’s American and British contemporaries Robert Smithson and Richard Long were concerned with the vast, often literally working the landscape itself. The present work reflects these ideas projects on a more intimate scale.

Grigorian’s Earthworks also demonstrates a concern with the earth on a more intimate level. Focusing on its materiality, Tree of Life is no exception to this personal approach to the land.

The work’s intricate texture and materiality are suggestive of smaller constituents, and explore the relationship between mankind and earth.

The monochromatic surface also allows the work to address purely artistic issues such as space, form and tone. Through the diminution of colour, Tree of Life allows us to appreciate the relief format support on a purer level. With its textured surface highlighted though the cast shadows, the present work creates tonal changes of its own intermittently fluctuating with lights and responding to its surroundings. Grigorian was concerned with geometrical equilibrums, often preferring to work with square or circular formats - the sacred measurements in art. However the rectangular dimensions of Tree of Life still demonstrate harmonious proportions, and are necessary to counterbalance the length of the ridge.

The use of natural materials on a pictorial format in Tree of Life is comparable with the matter paintings of Antoni Tàpies, who encompassed the themes of mysticism and spirituality in his work, whilst still focusing on the materiality of the object itself. By mounting the piece on a wall, Tree of Life transforms into a pictorial object thus losing some of its sculptural qualities. Yet through this restriction of space, Tree of Life becomes greater than a map of the land, and its central abstract form lends itself to transcendental and subversive qualities.

"The photo and the present work, courtesy the Family"