



LEADING *a New* GLOBAL *Trend*

Ahead of Christie's Middle Eastern Modern and Contemporary Art Auction in November, we look at the rise of a new trend led by record-breaking female artists from the Arab region

Facing page: Catalina Swinburn. *Anauša No.11 - Immortal Warrior*. 2018/2019. Woven paper armour made from historical documentation archiving displaced archaeological stones from Persepolis. 200x150x40cm. Estimate: £25,000-35,000



Above: Lina Ben Rejeb. *Nous sommes de cette étoffe dont les rêves sont faits No.II*. 2019. Pictorial coat detachment, notebook cover and entomology display box. 50x39x8cm. Estimate: £15,000-20,000; Left: Maha Malluh. *Bloom*. 2019. Dishes. 62x56.5cm. Estimate: £15,000-20,000

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ascinated by the extraordinary diversity evident in contemporary Middle Eastern art, the world has long been held spellbound by masterpieces that evoke the rich artistic legacy of the Arab region, blending Islamic calligraphy with modernist elements and traditional aesthetics.

Of late, this fascination has picked up momentum and is led by Middle Eastern female artists who have mesmerised audiences with their spirit of freedom and sheer genius. “The most popular female artists are, without a doubt, Fahrelnissa Zeid, Monir Farmanfarmaian, Etel Adnan, Saloua Choucair and Huguette Caland, all of whom are from the same generation,” says Dina Nasser-Khadivi, an independent art advisor and Christie’s International Consultant who is hosting a special guest-curated art auction titled *Matters of Material* alongside Christie’s upcoming 15th sale season taking place this November, 2020.

Speaking to Bazaar Art in an exclusive interview, Nasser-Khadivi explains how the rise of these artists has garnered international attention and admiration. “In recent years, they have all had major institutional shows in places such as the Tate Modern, the Guggenheim New York,

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Catalina Swinburn. *Anaúša No.II - Inmortal Warrior*. 2018/2019. Woven paper armour made from historical documentation archiving displaced archaeological stones from Persepolis. 200x150x40cm. Estimate: £25,000-35,000

the Serpentine and the Hammer Museum in LA. The late Turkish Jordanian artist Fahrelnissa Zeid was coined by the Tate as being one of the greatest female artists of the 20th century, while the Iranian artist Monir Farmanfarmaian has been described by curator Hans Ulrich Obrist as being of the most important woman artist of her time; just like Etel Adnan who, in addition to being considered one of the most celebrated accomplished writers, has become, by far, one of the most popular artists in recent years on a global scale.”

Having set world auction records, a few of these artists like Huguette Caland (*Good Luck*, 2009, sold for \$162,500 in 2018), Yvette Achkar (*Untitled*, 1983, sold for \$125,000 in 2019) and Fahrelnissa Zeid (*Break of the Atom and Vegetal Life*, 1962, sold for \$2,741,000 in 2013) are testament to the steady and rising demand in art by female Middle Eastern artists, showing no signs of slowing down, but instead only appreciating in value and demand.

The upcoming sale will feature a few iconic pieces such as *Drawing in Glass No 3* (2009) by Monir Farmanfarmaian (£250,000-350,000), which is the most expensive artwork on offer in the lot, alongside the work of Egyptian artist Ghada Amer’s *Virgin without the Child* (2016, £100,000-150,000), Saudi Arabian artist Maha Malluh’s *Bloom* (2019, £15,000-20,000) and Tunisian artist Lina Ben Rejeb’s *Nous sommes de cette étoffe dont les rêves sont faits No.II* (2019, £15,000-20,000), to name only a few.

To maintain a contemporary mix, works by Iranian poet and painter, Sohrab Sepehri will complement that of Morocco’s most distinguished artist, Farid Belkahlia, Farhad Moshiri and Palestinian artist, Samia Halaby. In addition, the sale will also offer a versatile section on Middle Eastern design, curated by the renowned Munich-born, Dubai-based architect and designer Viktor Udzenija, best known for his aesthetic vision and astounding creations.

The Middle Eastern Modern and Contemporary Art Auction and the Guest Curated Art Auction, *Matters of Material* will be held online from 11-24 November 2020, but they will have some artworks exhibited in a physical exhibition in London from 14-23 November. Browsing online runs from 4 – 10 November and bidding runs from 11 – 22 November, 2020. For registration and viewing, visit christies.com ■



Ghada Amer. *The Virgin without the Child*. 2016. Acrylic, embroidery & gel medium on canvas. 127x106.7cm. Estimate: £100,000-150,000