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### Highlight of Christie's auction is Suleiman Mansour's Jamal Al Mahamel III (Camel of Burdens)

Christie's now has a 75 per cent market share in the region, a competitive advantage that is backed by the trust of collectors, buyers and sellers. Its twice-yearly auction opens at Jumeirah Emirates Towers to coincide with Art Dubai.



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Jamal Al Mahamel III (Camel of Burdens) by the Palestinian artist Suleiman Mansour. Courtesy Christie's

When Jamal Al Mahamel II (Camel of Burdens) by the Palestinian artist Suleiman Mansour was announced as the highlight of the Christie's March auction in January, it was estimated to sell for between US\$200,000 (Dh734,605) and \$300,000. Depicting an elderly Palestinian man carrying the city of Jerusalem on his back, it was thought to be the second of three versions of the painting, all by Mansour.

Then a London-based collector saw the catalogue online and came forward to say he believed the original 1973 artwork, the first version, was in his possession. Verification by Christie's proved that his claim was true and it also emerged that the one in the Christie's sale was actually the third version (2005). The second version, created in 1975, was believed to have been destroyed in 1986.

The confusion cleared, Jamal Al Mahamel III features among the 158 lots at Christie's twice-yearly auction in Dubai tonight, although its estimate has been dropped to \$50-\$60,000.

"Christie's are very proud to have helped in the rediscovery of the earlier version and we are very proud to be offering the third version in our sale," says Michael Jeha, the managing director of Christie's Middle East.

The sale has been coordinated to coincide with Art Dubai, a sign of the increasing maturity of the art market in the Middle East, and follows the same model as the auctions in London and New York.

Tonight's sale will feature work from 20 private collections and estates, including the prestigious Lebanese Mokbel collection, which includes a selection of works by Paul Guiragossian and Farid Aouad, and a marvellous Expressionist painting of the Tower of Babel by Ayman Baalbaki.

There are many striking contemporary pieces, too, but the majority of strong lots are from the Modern period (1940s-1980s), which marks a shift in direction for Christie's.

But Hala Khayat, the head of sales for Christie's Middle East, says it was not a conscious decision, but the natural path of development. "By being here for nine years and continuously dedicating energy and time, the collectors have opened up and are giving us pieces that they wouldn't have done before."

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Some of the other highlights include Farhat Al Nuba, a 1965 painting by Egyptian Tahia Halim. It depicts the jubilation of the people of Nubia, or southern Egypt, upon the announcement of President Gamal Abdul Nasser's second term and the construction of the Aswan Dam. The painting captures an important historical moment and is a rare piece from this female painter, who received a Guggenheim prize in the 1950s.

There are also pieces from the Lebanese masters Chafic Abboud and Saliba Douaihy, which depart from their usual style and show the breadth of their talent.

In the contemporary section, a mirrored artwork by the Iranian Monir Farmanfarmaian is bound to attract much interest, given that the still-prolific octogenarian recently opened a large solo exhibition at the Guggenheim New York.

**Christie's Modern & Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art sale is on Wednesday, March 18 at 7pm at Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel. The Important Watches auction is Thursday, March 19 at 7pm**

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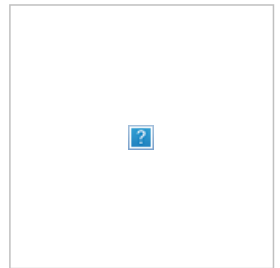
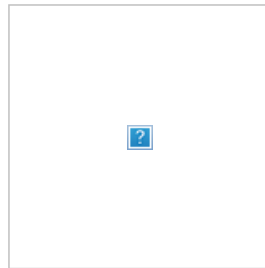
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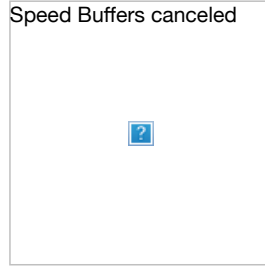
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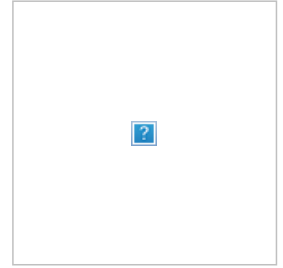
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