

New Record For Lebanon's Pioneering Female Artist



This is Middle Eastern art week in London and while Sotheby's sales series is covered here, [Bonhams](#) too had a strong [Modern and Contemporary Middle Eastern Art](#) sale on 26 April, led, refreshingly by a female artist.

Over 90 per cent of works sold in the sale which totalled £2.2m and top lot was a [sculpture made in 1960 by the late Lebanese artist Saloua Raouda Choucair](#) (1916-2017). It sold for £275,000 (Dhs1,710,199), over ten times the estimate and a record for the artist. All warped biomorphic curves reminiscent of British sculptors Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore, at 60cm high *Interform* is the largest sculpture by Saloua Choucair to come to auction. It came from the collection of Georges El-Zeenny, the late owner of Beirut's The Smugglers Inn, the artist's ardent patron who protected her during Lebanon's civil war

On *Interform's* heels was [Mir + 54 + BZ + S](#), a 1962 work by Iranian master Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, which sold for £245,000 (Dhs1,523,631) against a £200,000-300,000. Zenderoudi made the work just over a year after moving to France, and this work combines a Fauve-inspired palette and a composition influenced by European letterism with the Persian tradition of intricate calligraphy, always central to the artist's work.

A painting from 1953 by Iraqi modernist Jewad Selim provoked a bidding battle that

saw it far exceed a £60,000-100,000 estimate to sell for £221,000 (Dhs1,374,378). A medley of Modernist visual language and traditional Iraqi and Islamic motifs, [Woman Selling Material](#) is typical Selim, painted during his Baghdad Group period, a group he founded with an aim of reconciling Iraq's aesthetic traditions with the contemporary world. He painted this work for his ground-breaking one-man touring exhibition in the USA in 1953.