



Tuesday, April 5, 2011 | 09:07 p.m.  
Last updated 0 minute ago

TGT@Twitter | RSS Feed



HOME LOCAL MIDEAST ASIA WORLD BUSINESS SPORT OPINION WRITERS

 

## Auction stations!

By Muhammad Yusuf

March 24, 2011

Print Send to Friend



Bonhams, one of the world's oldest and largest auctioneers of fine art and antiques (founded 1793), is holding its first dedicated Photographs Sale in Dubai alongside its annual Orientalist Art auction April 13 at the One & Only Royal Mirage, Dubai. At the exclusive tete-a-tete with Time Out, Guy Vesey, Regional Director, Bonhams Middle East and Taline Nicole Aynilian, Head of Department, Orientalist Art, Bonhams, who were in Dubai to get a feel of the place, fine tune

proceedings and put paid to glitches, seemed to be looking forward with high expectations to A-Day (Auction Day).

"The upcoming Orientalist sale and the first dedicated Photographs Sale in the region mark a truly international event," Vesey said. "The Orientalist works are stunning examples of western artists capturing the region, with artists from all over the world. Much the same for our Photographs Sale, which includes artists from as far as Sydney, New York City, London and even artists living and working here in Dubai. We are thrilled to be able to offer our clients the opportunity to buy truly international works of art."

He is of French origin, who has claims (unproven yet) of having ancestors who moved to Britain with the Normans and William the Conqueror. Dapper and someone who easily collects his thoughts, he said that many clients here have requested that photographs also be shown. "It is an approachable format of art," he said, "and the prices are affordable. We have been including photographs for sale since 2007 and have done well. This time we have sourced a lot of works from New York City and London. The aim is to open the market to a wider market."

According to him, photography is doing well in the West, with New York City being the hub. He said that in the Middle East, local talent in photography was extremely strong. "We could have a dedicated the sale to the Middle East exclusively, but we didn't want to pigeonhole the region and its photo-artists to a subsection, but wanted them in a wider context. An artist is one for many reasons; where he comes from is only one of them."

The highlights this auction season include a photograph titled Euphoria, 2010, by award-winning Palestinian artist Steve Sabella. It is part of his internationally acclaimed Jerusalem: In Exile project, which explores the mental image Palestinians hold of Jerusalem. It has attracted a pre-sale estimate of \$14,000 – 18,000.

Another important lot in the photography sale is an enormous seven-part photo collage by Lebanese artist Camille Zakharia titled Cultivate Your Garden, 1998, which has attracted a pre-sale estimate of \$30,000 – 40,000.

Other sale highlights include Sebastiao Salgado's Without Daylight, Oil Wells, Kuwait, 1991 (estimate \$6,000 – 7,000); Lillian Bassman's Park Avenue Woman, 1954 (estimate \$5,000 – 6,000); Armet Ertug's The Library of St Florian Abbe, Austria, 2009 (estimate \$35,000 – 40,000) and Horst P. Horst's Corn

### Related Stories

#### Burning bright

Even when Britney Spears was in the midst of her Charlie Sheen-esque breakdown, she was putting out grooves to wear out the dance floor; 2007's Blackout is the best album..

#### Plotting a hit

If artists are the hearts and souls of art exhibitions, then curators are its hands and voice. The word "curator" comes from the Latin cura or care, meaning "manager" or..

#### Familiar sounds

When producer Mark Ronson began working with Duran Duran on All You Need Is Now, he reportedly challenged the 80s pop veterans to revisit the sound of their formative mus..

#### Signature style

He's a character actor who became a leading man. But no matter the amount of face time, Paul Giamatti has always brought his own signature style — and a face that's wonde..

#### Hollywood's last big luminary

Movie stardom sat pretty on Elizabeth

### FRONTPAGE



### PANORAMA



### TIME OUT



### SPORT



the history of Orientalism, 1800, 1850, 1900 (estimate \$5,000 – 7,000), and Henri Matisse's *Chanel*, Paris, 1937 (estimate \$7,000 – 9,000).

"Interest for photography has spread from the Middle East to South Asia, particularly Pakistan, and to China, Hong Kong and Australia," Vesey said. Global recession, regional wars and unrest have had only a minimal impact on art, according to him. He also points out the truth universally acknowledged that war, with all its horrors, often produces good art. "The economic impact, however, remains to be seen," he said.

First-generation Armenian-American Aynilian, who has been described as a "Goya-esque beauty who is forging an exciting career, beautifully framed," acknowledged that at first look, Orientalism evoked images of sexy, alluring and fantastical pictures of the Middle East. But she puts this to the context in which the paintings were made.

"The artists of the Orientalism genre worked prior to the invention of photography," she pointed out. "During that time, there was little or no access to the East. One had to sit on a camel, suffer from malaria sometimes, find a sponsor, bring one's own supplies and look after the logistical aspects of bringing back one's works," she said. The equivalent of making art in such circumstances, according to her, would be like an artist bringing back pictures from Mars today, had photography not been invented.

The Middle East was like Mars of those days. "It was the Victorian period in England," Aynilian noted. "It was a time when conservative mores ruled and the idea of having four wives, not drinking liquor and segregation of the sexes, was quite foreign to the Victorians." So they were intensely curious about the Middle East, and wanted to know about such basics as the colour of the skin or the shape of the hands or legs of the people of the region, much as we would be curious about how Martians look like. When the artists brought the pictures from the Middle East, it would have been as though they had brought it from Mars!

But the past is yesterday's story and Aynilian strongly supports today's Orientalist discourse. "I would not even call this 'Neo-Orientalism,'" she said. "It is actually a Renaissance for the modern person who looks at the Middle East. The works of art which are selling so well in this region now accurately depict the reality." "Orientalism is more a state of mind, unrestricted by timeline or date," she said, while pointing out some paintings up for sale which had Impressionist and Van Goghian touches to them. She has been working for the event since May 2010, and has been affected by the stories the pictures tell.

"You can stand in front of them for hours and hours," she said, "they always bring something new to the table." It is not only their beauty that captivates her: it is also their historical aspect and the lives of the artists that she finds fascinating.

"When you see a work, you ask questions to the artist," she says. "Why did he do it as he did, for example. Why are Western women placed in an Egyptian context? I sometimes feel like Sherlock Holmes, trying to tease out the stories."

She may be Sherlockian in her mental make-up, but she cannot deadpan like the detective. Excitement and worry mix in equal parts in her. "We are excited to present such a variety of the finest Orientalist examples, and yet we recognise the rarity of these pieces as their supply dwindles," she said, while pointing out that some of the pieces have unprecedented provenance, like the Rousseau that was handed down directly from the artist's family.

The Orientalist Sale includes masterpieces from renowned European and American artists from the 19th and 20th centuries and the sale will showcase some important examples in private hands in a genre that the Art Newspaper from the UK recently described as making a comeback. The top highlights include artists such as Edwin Lord Weeks whose work titled *Promenade in a Street in India* is estimated at \$ 200,000 - 400,000 and Etienne Dinet whose work titled *L'Arabe et son cheval* is estimated at \$ 150,000 - 250,000. Other artists represented at the auction include Frederick Arthur Bridgman, Clemente Pujol de Gustavino, Rudolf Ernst, Henri Rousseau, Rudolf Ernst and Jan Baptist Huysmans.

Bonhams, as the only auction house to hold dedicated Orientalist sales in Dubai, feels that the market for Orientalist and Middle Eastern pictures and works of art has never been stronger. It points out that its sales in Dubai continue to attract new collectors from North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

Taylor. Every single cell in her body seemed naturally wired for success in show business. Her sultry screen persona, her exquisite ..

---

Add this page to your favorite Social Bookmarking websites

Share |

### Comments

#### Post a comment

Name:

Country:

City:

Email:

Comment:



Enter the code shown:

Post Comment

Advertise | Copyright