

## Antique lovers seek auctions in Kuwait



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KUWAIT: Despite of the global recession, artifacts and antiques are still demanded due to human's nature to seek beauty, uniqueness and to escape from the daily pressure. The art provides us with the means of beauty; they play an important role in the lives of many people. Therefore, they became a source of technique and style in our life. Auctions are considered the shelter for those who want to own antiques. To shed light about auctions in Kuwait, Al-Watan Daily interviewed the founding Partner of JAMM Sheikha Lulu Al-Sabah

What is JAAM?

Al-Sabah: JAMM is a comprehensive art management and consultancy service to private and corporate clients from all over the world. . Some of our services include an all-rounded support for starting, maintaining and catering private & corporate art collections, artist representation, exhibitions, events and private client representation.

One of our key goals is to promote collaboration without cultural divide meaning that we are also very involved in the contemporary art field in other established and emerging markets - not just the Middle East.

How about the role of the Role of the art advisor?

Al-Sabah: The role of the art advisor is to assist collectors, both new and established, in every aspect in the formation and maintenance of a collection. As a boutique company we are able to offer a highly bespoke service to all of our clients, giving them the time and dedication needed to fulfill their aesthetic investment criteria.

Who is your target in this auction?

Al-Sabah: Our target audience is very varied - from private individuals who are actively collecting; to corporations looking to extend their cultural footprint and public services actively seeking a legacy. We therefore are afforded the great luxury of being involved in a greatly diverse spectrum of projects whether in Dubai, London, Paris, Kuwait or New York.

What is the reason behind organizing this event? Is it for charity?

Al-Sabah: A charity event implies that the works have been donated, which is not the case in this auction. This is first and foremost an art auction. As JAMM supports the Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitats (K'S PATH), we have decided to offer 30 percent of the proceeds from this sale to this cause. Kuwait Society's PATH is committed to improving the environment, by cleaning the beaches, the sea, among other measures. In terms of the art, we have an exceptional pool of talent in the Middle East and the auction offers a wonderful opportunity to showcase key examples from both emerging and established artists. It also provides an opportunity to expose the works of contemporary Kuwaiti artists to collectors from across the world.

Who is conducting this auction?

Al-Sabah: Aileen Agopian, Director of Contemporary art for Phillips de Pury & Company in New York & a main auctioneer will be flying in to conduct the auction. We're particularly delighted having not only worked with Aileen many times in the past, but with her extensive international experience at setting new sale levels at contemporary auctions, we're hoping for a new record.

What is your message for the Kuwaiti society?

Al-Sabah: My message is that for Kuwaiti artists to make it to the international level, they must first get the support of their local people. I ask that you come and see these works on Feb.16 and if a specific work moves you, bid on it on Feb.17.

Of course, the best scenario is that the works are 100 percent sold! However, our success has already been achieved. There has never been a contemporary auction in Kuwait, and as such JAMM is honored to be the first to bring this to fruition. We're also delighted to be bringing together such an esteemed audience of people - collectors, artists, gallerists, journalists - all of whom are actively engaged in the contemporary cultural movement.

Art is a talent or science?

Al-Sabah: I think it is a bit of both, as it requires certain technical skills and talent. Many people have the talent when they are young but unfortunately do not develop this talent. For this reason, we need more art classes and art schools in Kuwait.

What are the elements of this industry?

This industry requires cooperation between the public and private sector. As the Middle East art market is still a young market, we need to all work together for a common goal.

Where the Middle East is concerned, JAMM is positioned to bridge the gaps that are becoming evident with the speed of which the market is developing. In the coming years, and with the marked number of museums due to open their doors, there is a growing disparity between the increased number of collectors and lack of expertise to handle that growth. Additionally, artists from the Middle East need international exposure and JAMM works in a collaborative way to facilitate that process, whether that is working with galleries, artists or collectors directly.

We will be offering over 50 works of art by renowned Middle Eastern artists, including Mohammad Rawas, Rokni Haerizadeh, Nabil Nahas, Jamal Abdul Rahim, Reza Derakshani, Hassan Meer, Ahmed Aloudani, Farideh Lashai, Sami Mohammed, Chant Avedissian and Lamiya Gangash, the auction will provide an opportunity for both new and existing clients in the GCC region and beyond to add to their collections of contemporary Arab and Iranian art.

A public exhibition of the artworks will take place at the Al Corniche Club in Kuwait on 16 February, ahead of the auction. JAMM hopes that the preview will provide an opportunity for the public to visit and enjoy the art that will go under the hammer on the 17<sup>th</sup>.