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 Thursday 6th July 2017
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JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER

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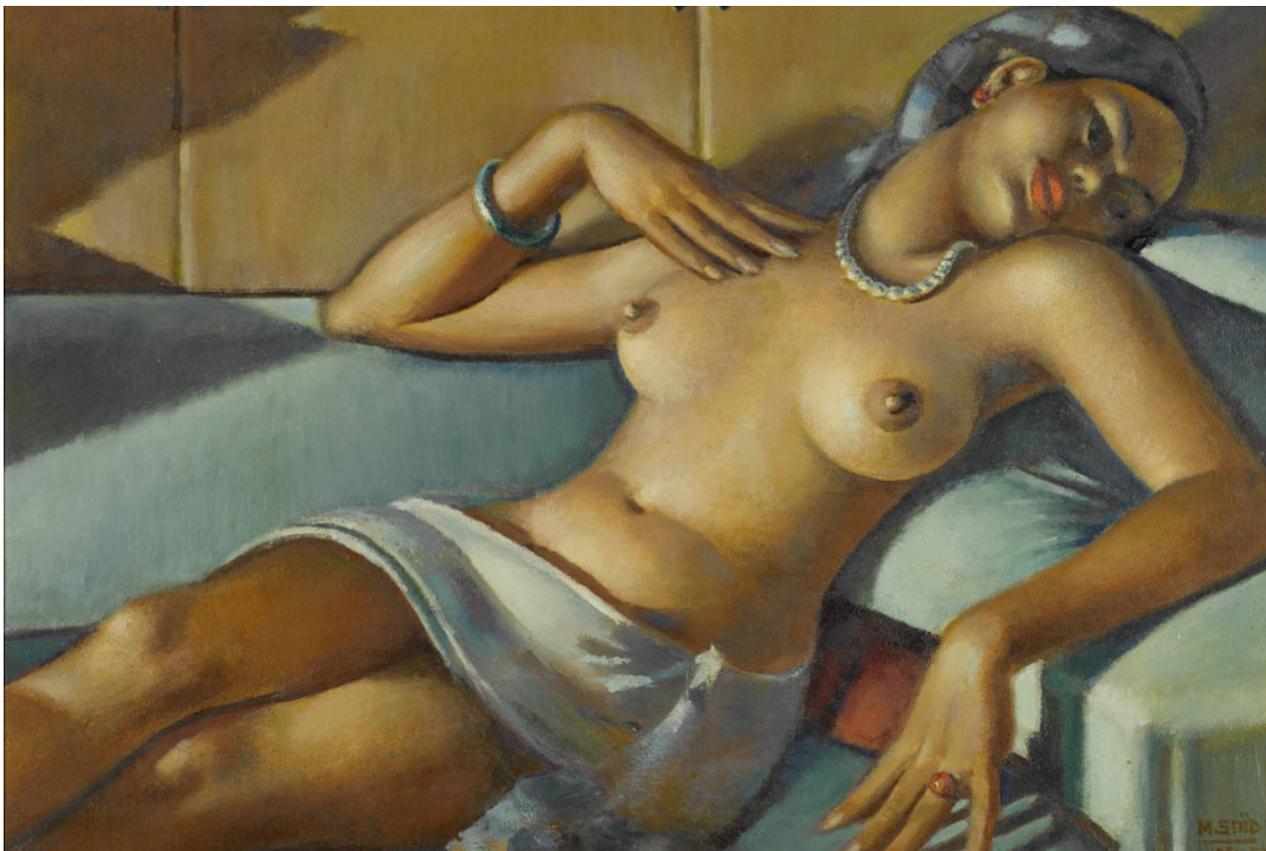
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Sotheby's to Sell Group of Important Paintings by Mahmoud Said



Highlighting the collection is Mahmoud Said's oil on canvas Untitled (Nude), dated 1951-1957. This example of a nude figure, which is estimated at £80,000-120,000 is typical of Said's paintings of relaxed beauties with full breasts and wide hips, in which the artist relishes every curve of her body, revering her nudity. Photo: Sotheby's.

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LONDON.- Following the record sums achieved for paintings by leading Egyptian modern artist Mahmoud Said (1897-1964) earlier this year, [Sotheby's](#) announced that four works by the acclaimed artist will highlight the forthcoming London sale of Modern and Contemporary Arab and Iranian Art on Wednesday, October 20, 2010. These paintings come from the collection of Dr. El-Kayem and appear on the market for the very first time since they were executed by the artist.

Commenting on the sale, Lina Lazaar, International Specialist in Sotheby's Contemporary Art Department said: "Mahmoud Said is recognised as one of Egypt's foremost and most successful modern artists and we are delighted to be offering for sale these four fresh-to-the-market paintings, the majority of which have been inspired by the artist's travels."

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Dalya Islam, Deputy Director, Sotheby's Middle East Department, continued: "These paintings provide further insight into Mahmoud Said's artistic output and life, and the sale of these four pieces will present collectors with the opportunity to acquire some truly exceptional examples of his work."

Discussing the sale of these works from the collection of his father, Dr. El-Kayem, Mr El-Kayem, said: "These paintings, some of which were gifted to my father by the Mahmoud Said, are testament to the artist's immense talent and affirms his position as one of the giants of Modern Oriental Art. The decision to sell these works, which we have lived with and loved for many years, has been a difficult one, but the time has come for a new custodian to house, love and appreciate these works, in the way we have, for the next part of their journey."

Through the course of his life, Dr. El-Kayem befriended aspiring and established Middle-Eastern artists, including Lebanese painters Seif Wanly and Aref Rayes, and renowned Egyptian modern artist Mahmoud Said. Said's friendship with Dr. El-Kayem began in the late 1940's and it lasted until the painter's death in 1964. The paintings which are included in the present collection come from a period when both the artist and collector socialised together and shared the same studio. These works have never before been seen in public or offered for sale. Dr. El-Kayem and Mahmoud Said often travelled together in Egypt, Europe and also Lebanon, destinations which inspired Said and influenced his work. Mahmoud Said's work came to epitomise the complexity of dealing with his own individual desires and the values of his society. These contradictions can be seen in all of his works ranging from stunning and poetic landscapes to his erotic and sensual nudes.

Commenting on the work of Mahmoud Said, Ahmed Rassim, a celebrated Arab poet and a friend of both Dr. El-Kayem and artist, wrote the following: "In order to enjoy the paintings of Said, in order to feel the charm that emanates from his art, one must understand all that oriental art encompasses in powerful subtlety; one must (also) understand that oriental painting is, above all ... the survival, more or less suggestive, of an intense emotion felt by the artist himself." "Said was always more concerned about expressing his own feelings than about providing us with intellectual gratification." (Ahmed Rassim ed. Le Journal d'un Peintre Raté, Cairo 1943, p. 49).

Highlighting the collection is Mahmoud Said's oil on canvas Untitled (Nude), dated 1951-1957. This example, which is estimated at £80,000-120,000 is typical of Said's paintings of relaxed beauties with full breasts and wide hips, in which the artist relishes every curve of her body, revering her nudity. Said celebrates the woman's sensuality, encapsulating the zeitgeist of the period with the liberation of women and the shift in social structure. Inspired by an Egyptian woman, this painting is steeped in the essence of 20th century Egypt. Said's nudes are not immediately associated with power and politics, but rather seem to be simply celebrations of Egyptian life. However, it must be noted that the nude was a fierce political statement. Until Said's time, the female form was taboo, most especially the nude figure. Said, however was the uncle of Queen Farida, wife of King Farouk of Egypt, and was therefore able to push these boundaries of artistic practice commonly seen in his country. A number of political factors relating to 20th-century Egypt also had a profound effect on the work of the Egyptian pioneers in art, including Said and Mahmoud Mokhtar (1883-1934), as it was a time of enormous upheaval with Britain declaring Egyptian independence, which was preceded by a great nationalist movement largely driven by women and the lower classes.