

Samia Osseiran Junblatt, Lebanese Painter Who Recently Made Her Venice Biennale Debut, Dies at 80



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Samia Osseiran Junblatt, *Sunset*, 1968.

Samia Osseiran Junblatt (<https://www.artnews.com/t/samia-osseiran-junblatt/>), a leading Lebanese artist who took up painting as a way of responding to events from her personal life, has died at 80. The Beirut-based Dalloul Art Foundation, which lent a work by her to the just-closed Venice Biennale, posted news of her passing to Instagram last week.

In her art, Osseiran Junblatt digested the space age, the deaths of her mother and brother, and more. Intersecting planes of color and floating orbs are recurring elements across her oeuvre, which has been widely shown in Lebanon.

Born in 1944 in the Lebanese city of Sidon, she studied art at a women's college in Beirut during the mid-'60s, then went to Florence for a master's degree before returning to the Lebanese capital once more. Briefly, during the mid-'70s, she studied the graphic arts in Tokyo.

Her work of the '60s and '70s bears out her studies of modernism as it existed both in Lebanon and the West. *Sunset* (1968), the work by her that appeared in the 2024 Biennale, features a red sun hanging above a long corridor leading to nowhere. The work bears out the hallmarks of Surrealism while also referring to sights seen in Lebanon.

"I love the sunset the most," she said in 2016. "I watch the sun dip into the sea every evening and like it most in the winter when the forms are more varied and beautiful."

Sunset appeared in a section of the 2024 Venice Biennale devoted to abstraction beyond the West that also featured pieces by Samia Halaby, Saloua Raouda Choucair, Carmen Herrera, Freddy Rodríguez, and Ione Saldanha, all of whom also made their debut at the storied exhibition this year.

Osseiran Junblatt would go on to vary her work greatly in tone, depending on what she was thinking about at the time. Whereas her brother's death in 1972 induced a period defined by darkness and meditations on mortality, her mother's passing in 2007 moved her to paint flowers as a tribute to life's fleetingness.

In addition to her own paintings, Osseiran Junblatt also focused on others' practices, forming an artists' organization in 1977 with the hope of spurring on the art scene in Southern Lebanon, where she was based for much of her career.