

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Leila Heller Gallery Presents

Marcos Grigorian at FRIEZE MASTERS | Booth S13

October 15 - 19, 2014



Marcos Grigorian *Upstairs Downstairs*, 1968

Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce its participation at Frieze Masters, October 15-19, 2014, at London's Regent's Park, booth S13. The booth will feature nine works from the 1960s by Marcos Grigorian, a leading modern master, whose art has a truly global resonance.

In the early 1960s, Grigorian moved for a few years to the US. He taught art and exhibited some of his works at the Walker Art Center. It was during this period in his career that Grigorian began using organic materials to create his seminal Earthworks. Made of dried earth and sand on canvas and inspired by the sunbaked, windswept Iranian deserts, Grigorian's earth paintings preceded the Land Art Movement in the US by a decade. *Earth work* (1963), featured at Frieze Masters 2014, is an iconic example of this artistic proclivity.

Experimenting with humble materials, Grigorian assembled work using burlap instead of canvas and earth instead of paint. Like his 1967 *Sangak*, these assembled works often featured the kind of food traditionally eaten by Iran's working classes—bread, pistachios, beef stew, and tea with sugar cubes. Like Jean-Michel Basquiat, who worked in another time and place, Grigorian pointed to those who subsisted on the edges of society, making a meal by eating a bit of bread

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while sitting on a patch of dried earth. Grigorian's aesthetic was humble by intention, pointing to those left behind by the Shah's grand modernization programs.

Besides his use of materials, Grigorian's referencing of nature can be seen in the contours of his art. His masterful *Upstairs, Downstairs* (1968) shown above, is an excellent example of his characteristic use of squares to frame his Earthworks. In sacred geometry, the square's four sides represent the four directions—north, south, east, west—and the four elements—fire, sun, earth, water. Also exhibited in the booth, *Tree of Life* (1961) represents another a leitmotif in his work. In both content and formal aspects, Grigorian's art provided an aesthetic and philosophical comment on the relationship between man and nature, between society and art. Though deeply steeped in local Iranian motifs, the work has a broader global resonance that remains incredibly relevant.

As an artist, curator, gallerist, collector, and teacher, he played a seminal role in shaping the trajectory of Iranian art in the second half of the twentieth century.

About the Artist:

Marcos Grigorian was born in Russia in 1925 and passed away in Armenia in 2007. During his life, he lived in Iran, Italy, the US, and Armenia. In the late 1950s, he became one of the first artists to commemorate the Holocaust with a series of murals titled "The Gate of Auschwitz." He called the work "a 120 feet-long cry of horror." Grigorian was an artist, a curator, a collector, a teacher, and an actor—leaving an indelible mark on the visual culture of the twentieth century.

Grigorian's art is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tate Modern, the British Museum, the Grey Gallery of NYU, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the National Gallery and the Near East Museum in Armenia, and the Nelson Rockefeller Collection.

Leila Heller Gallery promotes a cutting-edge program of international contemporary emerging and mid-career artists. The gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting international contemporary artists; the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets.

In 2010, after nearly 30 years operating on the Upper East Side, Leila Heller Gallery moved to West 25th Street in the heart of Chelsea's gallery district. In 2014, Leila Heller Gallery expanded to a second location in New York City at 43 West 57th Street, a six-floor gallery space totaling 18,000 square feet, which is amongst the largest in New York.

The new gallery complements the West 25th Street location in Chelsea, which remains dedicated to fostering the careers of emerging and mid-career artists, as well as curated shows. At Leila Heller Gallery 57th Street, an expanded program of artists is presented in a deeper art historical context via curated exhibitions mounted alongside concurrent exhibition of well-established Modern and Contemporary artists.

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