

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

'A Fair Start.' *Canvas – Abu Dhabi Art Edition.* (November 14-15, 2018).

daily **Canvas**

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A FAIR START

Opening night secured mid-range sales and some institutional interest among the regional galleries

A promising beginning to the fair, the first day of Abu Dhabi Art saw art collectors and appreciators in full attendance with enthusiastic feedback from both new participating galleries and returning ones. Particular success stories came from Beirut-based Galerie Janine Rubeiz who sold two acrylic on canvas works by artist Hanibal Srouji from his Poetics of Chaos II series and one oil on canvas piece by artist Jamil Molaeb entitled Jerusalem. Each artwork was priced at between \$10,000 and \$15,000 and the gallery reported strong interest in their offerings from such institutions as the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Sharjah Art Foundation. Leila Heller Gallery, who has exhibited at the fair since its initiation, sold works by contemporary abstract artist Nancy Lorenz and a set of untitled sculptures made from recycled teak wood and found ceramics by Indian artist, Sudarshan Shetty. Prices for the sold pieces ranged between \$20,000 and \$40,000, according to the gallery. Both galleries reported to have sold to buyers from the Middle Eastern region.

Mumbai-based Gallery Isa sold the oil on canvas work Carpet Diem by Antonio Santin and has three pieces by artists Joseph Tong and Annie Morris reserved for sale. Tehran-based Shirin Gallery, returning for their third year, reported a strong start to the fair with sales from three of their Persian artists including an oil on canvas by Vahid Chamani; an acrylic on canvas by Hamid Ajami; and an

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acrylic and gold leaf on canvas by Shahriar Ahmadi. Shirin Gallery founder Shirin Partovi said, "I like the quality of the visitors who attend Abu Dhabi Art. Each year I meet a lot of potential buyers and collectors from the Middle East and beyond. The quality of guests keeps me coming back." Jeddah-based Athr Gallery has sold several pieces by artists including Sultan bin Fahad's Monotheism (Tawheed), a prayer carpet with small attachments of neon lights, and Farah Behbehani's embroidery work In the house of lovers, the music never stops, the walls are made of songs, and the floor dances - Rumi II, with five pieces under reserve from regional buyers. The sisters behind naqsh collective, Nisreen and Nermeen Abu Dail, are first-time exhibitors from Jordan. The duo reported that they were delighted with the footfall and have already received particular interest from regional buyers for works in their Wihdeh Collection, which are derived from Palestinian embroidery patterns, innovatively made of industrial marble with brass inlay, drawn from patterns of traditional Palestinian embroidery. "We are delighted with the level of interest experienced during the first few hours of the show," said Nisreen. "It's especially fulfilling to interact with visitors who engage with our work on an intellectual level and appreciate its meaning."

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Sudarshan Shetty. *Untitled*. 2017. Recycled teak wood and found ceramics. 96.5 x 71.1 cm each. Image courtesy of the artist and Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, New York



Farah Behbehani. *In the house of lovers, the music never stops, the walls are made of songs, and the floor dances - Rumi II*, 2018. Hand embroidery on linen. 85 x 85 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Athr Gallery



Sultan Bin Fahd. *Monotheism (Tawheed)* from the *Tasbih* series. 2018. Prayer carpet with neon lights. 132 x 93 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Athr Gallery

Hanibal Srouji. *Poetics of Chaos II*. 2017. Fire acrylic on canvas. Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Janine Rubeiz



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