

Painter, Rashid Khalifa Makes Debut at Abu Dhabi Art Fair 2012

-- One of Bahrain's Leading Artists, and Patron of the Arts Selected for Exhibition by New York's Leading Middle Eastern Contemporary Art Dealer, Leila Heller--

By Laura Stewart

Joining such important Middle Eastern contemporary painters as **Ayak Alkadhi, Kezban Arca Baribeki, Mitra Tabrizian and Hadieh Shafie** -- not to mention **Jackson Pollock!** -- Bahraini painter, **Rashid Khalifa** will be featured in the booth of leading New York-based art dealer, Leila Heller at Abu Dhabi Art 2012.

Chosen by Ms. Heller to join her exclusive stable of the best artists working in the MENASA region -- two paintings from Khalifa's most recent series, ***Fabric of Society (2011)***, and ***I See It White (2011)***, will be a highlight of Heller's booth -- always a first destination for serious collectors of Middle Eastern art.

"We are delighted to be able to feature Khalifa's recent pieces," said Ms. Heller from New York. "His evolution as a serious artist, grappling with both important themes, and working in a variety of groundbreaking techniques - including his unique convex canvases in lacquer and chrome - place Khalifa in the top tier of contemporary Middle Eastern artists"

Khalifa's abstract, enamel work, show a highly honed sense of composition and technique, and add a further dimension to the artists we will be exhibiting,"

This year, Heller will bring a wonderful selection of work, encompassing a wide range of themes, styles, and mediums, showing the range of what many incorrectly lump together as MENASA art.

Works on view range from the stylish, slick and regal portraits by Nigerian photographer, **Ike Ude**, (including one of Heller herself)! -- to spare and haunting photographs -- evoking dislocation and diaspora --by Iranian-born photographer, **Mitra Tabrizian** -- to lyrical, dancing new compositions in oil, embroidery and sequins by Turkish artist, **Kezban Batibeki**.

Finally, the eye-popping, new graphic **“Petrol Pumps”** incorporating Islamic floral, Iznik tile design and calligraphy in a water-colour twist on “Pop”, by versatile Iraqi artist, **Ayad Alkhadi** round out the offerings at the Heller booth.

“What is also wonderful,” Heller recounts, in her signature ebullient and rapid-fire style of talking when discussing her passion for art,

“Is that when we put the booth together and chose which of Khalifa’s works to include, it occurred to us that his work was actually a fascinating 21st iteration of the iconic drip painting made famous by master Contemporary art icon Jackson Pollock -- whose 1951 graphic black and white screen prints, we are showing, Pollock’s works will be exhibited alongside oil and collage abstract works from the 1980s by Pollock’s wife, Lee Krasner, done just before her death in 1984”.

“Khalifa’s reduction of color to monochrome, in his contemplative, “reflective” chrome convex canvas: ***I See It White***; and his controlled vertical drip technique in the large, colorful: ***Fabric of Society***, are “Pollock-esque” -- yet very different as Khalifa’s “drip” technique - whether employed in a rainbow of primary colors, or in monochrome- are actually applied in an extremely deliberate four part vertical matrix - as opposed to Pollock’s signature drip works, which are far more Expressionistic in intent and application.

-ends-