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Feb. 02, 2015 | 12:06 AM

Wealth of surprises at APEAL's Beirut auction



Jamil Molaeb's 2014 canvas was estimated at \$10-15,000, and sold for \$32,000

Summary

In the final week of January many among the city's art aficionados awaited the fundraising dinner and auction held by the Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon (APEAL).

There were 22 lots in total – the auction catalog's 21 being augmented by "Burnt Book," a canvas by Jean Boghossian.

Bidding for the first

The Daily Star

BEIRUT: In the final week of January many among the city's art aficionados awaited the fundraising dinner and auction held by the Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon (APEAL).

Staged Friday evening, the event's proceeds will support the association's plans to acquire a collection for the Lebanese capital's first contemporary and modern art museum.

When a strike among Casino staff made that facility inaccessible Thursday, Friday evening's gala event was relocated to the Habtoor Hilton.

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three lots, all late-19th and early-20th-century oils, was reported to be lively. Omar Onsi's "Landscape," circa 1935, sold at the high estimate of \$12,000, while Cesar Gemayel's "Portrait of a Woman," circa 1940, and Habib Srour's "Nu Academique," circa 1885, went for nearly double their high estimate.

APEAL members noted further surprises over the course of the event, presided over by Christie's London veteran Hugh Edmeades, as several of the works put under the hammer were purchased for well over the price estimates in the auction catalogue.

The sale's numbers surpassed expectations, nearing the million dollar mark. Successful bids were taken from London Dubai, New York and Beirut. There were 22 lots in total – the auction catalog's 21 being augmented by "Burnt Book," a canvas by Jean Boghossian.

Bidding for the first three lots, all late-19th and early-20th-century oils, was reported to be lively. Omar Onsi's "Landscape," circa 1935, sold at the high estimate of \$12,000, while César Gemayel's "Portrait of a Woman," circa 1940, and Habib Srour's "Nu Academique," circa 1885, went for nearly double their high estimate. Two of the three works were bought by UAE bidders.

Several highlights marked the sale. Estimated at \$80,000-120,000 Lot 5, the first of two untitled works by Shafic Abboud sold for \$150,000. Abboud's second work, estimated at \$40,000-60,000, sold for \$80,000.

Jamil Molaeb's Arabic-titled 2014 canvas (White Village's Environment, being one translation) is said to have excited many bidders, who were seeing the work for the first time. Estimated at \$10,000-15,000, the piece sold for \$32,000.

Made especially for the museum benefit, Marwan Sahmarani's canvas "Crying Man" proved one of the surprises of the evening. Bidding opened at \$15,000 and a private collector, bidding though an adviser, bought the piece for \$48,000, more than double its high estimate.

The last lot in the catalog, Ayman Baalbaki's "Parliament," 2014, provoked the highest bids of the evening, selling for \$170,000. "Parliament" marks the first piece in this series by the artist – who is best known for his portrayals of Civil War detritus and portraits of Palestinian fedayeen, with floral backdrops and phrases in neon lighting.

For more information, please see <http://www.apeal-lb.org>.

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on February 02, 2015, on page 11.

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


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