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Shurooq Amin, Family Potrait 2, 2013, Mixed media on canvas and wood frame. Courtesy: Ayyam Gallery.



SHAFIC ABBLOUD AND MAHMOUD SAÏD AT CHRISTIE'S

WORDS: NOUR HARB

CARNIVALESQUE CHARACTERS

WORDS: JOHN OVANS

'Everyone is pretending.' Remember those words next time you log onto your Facebook account to click through a catalogue of impossibly beautiful, perfectly composed selfies. The social media generation was the inspiration behind this exhibition by Austrian painter Bernhard Buhmann, or more specifically, the way we seek to alter, or 'perform' our image shifting the perception others have of us to something altogether more favourable. Buhmann, who has a Masters in sociology, is seeking to explore the interplay between social systems and personal identities

Characters in *The Pretenders* – his second solo show – are depicted here as strange, surrealist 'creatures', neither one thing nor the other, like illustrations in a headache-inducing children's book. "They are screaming grotesque figures with masks which they don't dare to take off

(maybe they even don't know that they could," asserts Buhmann, "but they are always ready to switch." This constant flux of personality is delineated by abstract figures struggling to control their own shape, aspiring towards uniqueness yet resisting the splintering of sameness. Take a bird-like Elvis, anthropomorphized on two legs with his famous tide of hair, an icon of glamour and success that others are attempting to mirror. In addition to his subjects, Buhmann is also interested in the parallel worlds that come into existence as a result of this social upkeep, manifested in carnivalesque worlds inhabited by masked figures looking to play every role that is expected of us. ●

Bernhard Buhmann, The Pretenders runs 15th September – 28th October at Carbon 12

A particular highlight Christie's Autumn auction in Dubai this will be a series of paintings by Shafic Abboud (1926-2004). Alongside the watches, jewelled pens and numerous art objects being auctioned this October, ten paintings from the respected Lebanese modernist will be shown, coming from the exceptional private collection of Viviane & Robert Debbas, held in Beirut. The works from the Debbas collection are predicted to raise \$2 million between them and will be auctioned at their own sale, separate from the separate owners sale and the fine watches sale. Abboud is quoted as having said, in 1982, "I only stop when both colour and light match. I cannot escape from colour, it is my fate and nature – my eyes have been dazzled forever." Such sentiment can be found in the luminosity of his works, even the most abstract, of which some will be available at Christie's.

Other artworks will appear by notable artists including Mahmoud Saïd, Fateh Moudarres, Parviz Tanavoli, Hamed Owais,

Mahmoud Mokhtar, Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, Paul Guiragossian and Sohrab Sepehri. Three spectacular paintings by the father of modern Egyptian art, Mahmoud Saïd (1897-1964) will be of particular interest to certain collectors. These canvases include *Bergère à Alamein* which was originally in the private collection of Dr. Tharawat Okasha, Egyptian Minister of Culture from 1959 to 1964. Here Saïd manages to reflect the distinctive colours of El-Alamein, the Mediterranean town in the Matrouh Governorate in Egypt. The *bergère* or shepherdess embodies one of Saïd's recurring subjects, that of the Egyptian fellaha or peasant. This painting is expected to sell for \$400,000-600,000. ●

The sale of Modern and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art will be held by Christie's at the Emirates Towers Hotel on 21st October

Shafic Abboud
Untitled 1986



Carbon 12 Dubai-Bernhard Buhmann-Gudrun-Oil and acrylic on canvas- 200x150cm- 2014-Copyright Bernhard Buhmann, courtesy of Carbon 12