

Transcript

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

My name is Eugene Rogan, and as director of the Middle East Center, it is a pleasure and an honor to be welcoming you to an exceptional event tonight.

00:00:15 Speaker 1

We have all witnessed a week that we would hope would never happen, and it culminates 1/4 century in which the region that we have all been drawn to out of

00:00:26 Speaker 1

love for the people and the culture and fascination with the politics and the economics.

00:00:32 Speaker 1

This world that we love has been torn apart.

00:00:36 Speaker 1

And it feels as though in so much of what we do, we focus on the political with all of the catastrophes that accompany the political in the Middle East in the past 25 years.

00:00:52 Speaker 1

And yet,

00:00:55 Speaker 1

If one looks to the society of the region and the creative dynamic that has been a constant threat in Middle Eastern societies, whether Arab, Iranian, Turkish, or Israeli, and a very different Middle East emerges, a Middle East that is an absolutely central part of world culture in the 21st century.

00:01:18 Speaker 1

I look at the way in which Iranian film takes the global stage by storm.

00:01:24 Speaker 1

and say, sit up and take notice.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

I look at the way in which more and more of the Arabic novel is being translated into the languages of the world to be appreciated by the readers, not just of Spanish or French or German or English, but of Bengali and of Lithuanian and of Portuguese and so many other languages too.

00:01:44 Speaker 1

The novel is alive and vital and dynamic.

00:01:48 Speaker 1

And when it comes to the world of the plastic arts,

00:01:51 Speaker 1

I think that the role that the Middle East plays has been, in the past quarter century, brought to the attention of the art-loving public in an unprecedented way, through the major exhibitions that have been held around the world in major venues, of the proliferation of books about the phenomenon of art in the Middle East, in the Arab world, in Iran, Turkey, and Israel.

00:02:20 Speaker 1

The ways in which the art produced by the region is continuing to reach new highs in the auction houses, which unfortunately in this sort of neo-conservative age of ours is the way in which value is recognized in the art world.

00:02:38 Speaker 1

There's a better way to recognize value in the art world.

00:02:41 Speaker 1

And that is through the ways in which those who study art write about art for the region.

00:02:47 Speaker 1

And of those, none has been more influential

00:02:50 Speaker 1

no more broad-reaching than Syed Einar.

00:02:54 Speaker 1

Syed brings many lives to the lecture theatre tonight.

00:02:59 Speaker 1

He has, of course, made a very successful name for himself in the world of finance.

00:03:06 Speaker 1

He is, after all, the Chair of the Dubai Financial Services Authority.

00:03:10 Speaker 1

So he knows about the real world, but he has a passion for the world of art that

00:03:20 Speaker 1

When it comes to the art of the Middle East as a whole, he has himself been an active collector.

00:03:26 Speaker 1

But beyond collecting, his passion has driven him to study the art and the creators of that art, and to catalog his findings in a series of very influential books, San de Silicon, the only one I've really spent time with myself, is Art by the Middle East.

00:03:47 Speaker 1

And now we get to celebrate

00:03:49 Speaker 1

Artists of the Middle East, 1900 to now.

00:03:54 Speaker 1

As a senior advisor to the British Museum, as one who has been active in the curatorial side of celebrating word into art, Salad has really been able to take knowledge of the art of the region and share it with the broader public in a way which is value not determined by the auction block,

00:04:15 Speaker 1

but by the discerning eye of the reader, on the museum goer, on the art order.

00:04:21 Speaker 1

And it's with that that I say we are so thrilled to have you to speak to our audience tonight and to share your reflections on artists in the Middle East, 1900 to now.

00:04:31 Speaker 1

Will you all please join me in warmly welcoming Sae Bahn--?

00:04:42 Speaker 2

Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, goodness, yes, very kind.

00:04:50 Speaker 2

This is somewhat daunting sitting here with all of you, the experts on what I'm going to be speaking about.

00:04:58 Speaker 2

You've got here some most extraordinary individuals, curatorially, directors of museums, curators of museums, and indeed artists.

00:05:07 Speaker 2

I'd like to 1st thank you, Jane, for this wonderful idea.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

And I want to thank everybody who's worked on it.

00:05:15 Speaker 2

Jenny, Isabel, and Chiara worked on this.

00:05:19 Speaker 2

of my talk today.

00:05:20 Speaker 2

I want to thank Marian, Alimzadeh, Dr.

00:05:24 Speaker 2

Marian, for her assistance on the Farsi literature, which Mora has moved forward.

00:05:32 Speaker 2

And of course, I want to thank all of you for being here.

00:05:36 Speaker 2

I want to thank particularly some of the people who will have a small performance.

00:05:41 Speaker 2

You know, the Middle East is known for many things, including literature and poetry, singing, acting.

00:05:49 Speaker 2

I think singing and acting might be a stretch for us to perform for you today.

00:05:52 Speaker 2

I think poetry that we may be able to give you some things more.

00:05:57 Speaker 2

But Venetia Porter, Dr.

00:05:59 Speaker 2

Porter sitting here in the front row, is the one who curated, put together one of the most extraordinarily groundbreaking exhibitions on the subject we're going to talk about.

00:06:11 Speaker 2

That's Worlding to Art, the curator of the British Museum, her reputation

00:06:17 Speaker 2

of course precedes her and I had the huge pleasure of working with her on parts of it.

00:06:23 Speaker 2

And that's how I met Isabel, my curator, long-suffering curator of something, from 20 years when I first met her.

00:06:32 Speaker 2

I want to also thank Dunia for coming and your team from the British Museum.

00:06:36 Speaker 2

She's the chair of the British Museum and release committee.

00:06:40 Speaker 2

Francesca Leoni from the Ashmolean.

00:06:43 Speaker 2

Thank you to you and Chair for a lovely lunch today.

00:06:47 Speaker 2

for the Shahabbas small exhibition.

00:06:49 Speaker 2

If you haven't been to that small, you need to see it.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

It's a lovely exhibition of this very rare painting from the Shahabbas.

00:06:58 Speaker 2

My wife always...

00:07:02 Speaker 2

Edward Sotheby, thank you.

00:07:05 Speaker 2

Edward, of course, was another expert on Islamic...

00:07:10 Speaker 2

Particularly, I would say, if you're interested in manuscripts and antiquity, but also now contemporary.

00:07:17 Speaker 2

Modern Art and his team for being here.

00:07:22 Speaker 2

Your competitors are conspicuously absent.

00:07:27 Speaker 2

I believe we have colleagues from Modern Art Oxford, from the Pitt Rivers Museum, from the Tate, the V&A, the BM, and Solace, which is, of course, wonderful.

00:07:40 Speaker 2

It's a particular pleasure to have the great Diazell

00:07:46 Speaker 2

one of our greatest artists of the art world with us today, and of course, Hannah Malala.

00:07:58 Speaker 2

Hannah Malala, and more on that later, whom I've just given a daffodil if you've noticed, and a very good purpose for my heavenly counsel.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

It's especially nice for me and for my wife, Fariba, my clustered reader and huge critic.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

Who I hope, and Patrick Winter, who's sitting next to her, Patrick, you won't get away.

00:08:31 Speaker 2

When I first met Patrick, someone introduced us, we had a chat after a while, and I said, Sorry, what was your name?

00:08:39 Speaker 2

He said, Patrick Winter.

00:08:42 Speaker 2

Frigo was there, she hadn't heard his name first time, and so I said, he said, Patrick Winter, she turned around and he said, Patrick Winter?

00:08:49 Speaker 2

You're a legend.

00:08:51 Speaker 2

Patrick is the political editor of The Guardian, of course, and she is trying to steer him back to the death.

00:09:01 Speaker 2

Ongoing.

00:09:03 Speaker 2

And Abishle, what a pleasure and honour, honestly, to have you with us today and for you to make the time to come with us today.

00:09:09 Speaker 2

And we can agree on the Guardian's direction.

00:09:15 Speaker 2

There are many people whom I want to thank, and I know that I'll forget some of them.

00:09:19 Speaker 2

And I think there's some of them in the back.

00:09:21 Speaker 2

Tracy, who worked with me on my first book out of the Middle East.

00:09:25 Speaker 2

I'd love to have you with us, Tracy, also today.

00:09:30 Speaker 2

It is fitting that we're here, Regent, in this wonderful auditorium designed by my very dear friend, Zaha Hadid, the late Zaha Hadid, an extraordinary figure from the Middle East, an Iraqi.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

Muslim woman in exile, who made Britain her home and fought hard to achieve the remarkable legacy that she left behind.

00:09:54 Speaker 2

But quite a lot of Iraqis, I would say.

00:09:56 Speaker 2

I was playing Iraqi, Leah, Hannah, in the Zaha theater.

00:10:05 Speaker 2

Yesterday, someone who lives in Oxford wrote and said to me, you know Oxford's the oldest university in Dubai?

00:10:11 Speaker 2

I said, well, not really.

00:10:12 Speaker 2

I said, I'm sure you mean Bologna.

00:10:13 Speaker 2

I said, well, no, it's not exactly eight years.

00:10:16 Speaker 2

I said, but Carawin and Fes, which is 257 years older than Oxford.

00:10:21 Speaker 2

And it is indeed on Carawin that Oxford, Bologna, Cambridge set up their college systems and their universities.

00:10:28 Speaker 2

And we do miss these things, supper, but true, and meaningful, I would say.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

And now I've got 45 minutes.

00:10:37 Speaker 2

So my brain is in two halves.

00:10:39 Speaker 2

There is a western part of it, Austrian, British, rather timely, and an eastern part of it, which is from my mother's side.

00:10:49 Speaker 2

Her late mother was from Lebanon, which does not do very well with timekeeping.

00:10:53 Speaker 2

But I will try to keep to time and finish on time today for your Q&A.

00:11:00 Speaker 2

I just wanted to check on the audience, and I'm not going to ask this to the front row because I know the answer, but how many from our audience actually know something about Middle East, Northern and contemporary art?

00:11:14 Speaker 2

Oh, great.

00:11:18 Speaker 2

Wonderful.

00:11:19 Speaker 2

How many are Arabic speakers in the room as a whole?

00:11:23 Speaker 2

And Farsi speakers?

00:11:27 Speaker 2

Wonderful.

00:11:27 Speaker 2

Great.

00:11:28 Speaker 2

Mariam, you didn't put your hand up.

00:11:29 Speaker 2

I assume.

00:11:34 Speaker 2

Having done our thanks, and I wrote them down in order not to miss anybody, we move straight to the subject.

00:11:40 Speaker 2

The first thing I'd like to say, and you are right to spot it, the book is more than about the Middle East as a region.

00:11:47 Speaker 2

So the Middle East doesn't include North Africa or Sudan.

00:11:50 Speaker 2

And the book is the Arab-speaking world in Iran.

00:11:52 Speaker 2

So you are right absolutely to wonder why.

00:11:55 Speaker 2

And these are the pressures that you said, commercial pressures of auction houses and sales.

00:12:00 Speaker 2

There are publishing pressures as well.

00:12:01 Speaker 2

So my first book, *Out of the Middle East*, also had the same point.

00:12:06 Speaker 2

It did have the Maghreb in North Africa and Sudan.

00:12:10 Speaker 2

It was felt by the publishers predominantly that for the public at large, the Middle East is all that region.

00:12:18 Speaker 2

Of course, everything is wrong.

00:12:19 Speaker 2

But we did that.

00:12:21 Speaker 2

We put a subtitle to say it's the Arab-speaking world in Iran.

00:12:25 Speaker 2

And we've done that again here and explained it.

00:12:27 Speaker 2

So for those that rightly say, why do we say the Middle East and it's wider than the Middle East.

00:12:33 Speaker 2

The world into art indeed, the Misha's exhibition, also had the Middle East, where it is the Arab speaking world than Iran, and included Turkey and Israel.

00:12:43 Speaker 2

In my book, Turkey is not included in Israel, and for many reasons, space, but largely, they have their own actually art.

00:12:53 Speaker 2

and modern and contemporary art movements, which are very important, and I couldn't just cover them in either book.

00:13:00 Speaker 2

Having covered this, we can go to the map now, and you can correct me there too, but we'll go to the map to just ensure what we're talking about.

00:13:08 Speaker 2

We're talking really from Morocco all the way to Iran.

00:13:12 Speaker 2

The cities that we cover with dots are all of the cities from which artists in the book either were born in,

00:13:20 Speaker 2

passed away in, worked in, and had studios in.

00:13:24 Speaker 2

And you see the magnitude of the area.

00:13:28 Speaker 2

Just to explain to you, over time, for example, first the map was done based on 1900, and then we added borders.

00:13:36 Speaker 2

We didn't put borders first.

00:13:37 Speaker 2

We just had cities, and we had loosely kind of titles of countries.

00:13:41 Speaker 2

I didn't want borders, particularly.

00:13:43 Speaker 2

Why?

00:13:44 Speaker 2

Because borders change so much.

00:13:47 Speaker 2

Everywhere I go, I mean, if I go to here,

00:13:49 Speaker 2

Sudan and Egypt were one, as you all know, many of you studied the region and know it, was one administrative area.

00:13:56 Speaker 2

It was three and a half million, 3.5 million square kilometers, 16 percent of the African continent, 17, 18 percent of its population in one administrative area.

00:14:10 Speaker 2

Can you imagine its country Iran, for example, included in that way Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, I think I got that one right.

00:14:18 Speaker 2

And Iran today, just from a magnitude, is seven times the U.K.

00:14:24 Speaker 2

and three times France from a size perspective.

00:14:28 Speaker 2

It's a third of the Middle East in size.

00:14:32 Speaker 2

It used to be 44 percent of the Middle East at the turn of the century before last.

00:14:38 Speaker 2

Just to give you an idea of space and area, and of course, many of the countries didn't even exist.

00:14:47 Speaker 2

And the first in the Gulf, for example, if we look in terms of independence, Saudi Arabia in 1932, then Kuwait was the next, and then all of these countries, traditional states here as well in 1971.

00:15:02 Speaker 2

So just to give you a quick on what the update of what we're going to talk, and then we get into the heart of the subject.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

We start with the importance of script and scripture and the written word.

00:15:15 Speaker 2

Before Islam, of course, there was the Arabic language, but it was recited.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

It was recited through Rawis, and Rawis were people who recite, and it was not a written language as such.

00:15:26 Speaker 2

And the Quran codified the language, in order to codify the Quran itself.

00:15:32 Speaker 2

And this is amongst the first known leaves of the Quran, carbon dated,

00:15:39 Speaker 2

which means you can't get it exactly to the year.

00:15:42 Speaker 2

It's generally accepted.

00:15:43 Speaker 2

It would have been written in the last decade of the prophet's life, but that was the beginning of Arabic script as we know it today.

00:15:55 Speaker 2

I move to the right, the Blue Quran, and that's where we start to see manuscripts, as we have in the Bible illustrated manuscripts, and you start to see the beautifying the word of God.

00:16:11 Speaker 2

And now we move straight to the contemporary and modern times, using, again, words that have a religious connotation, philological connotation.

00:16:22 Speaker 2

We start from the right with the Lebanese artist Samir Sahir and the word Allah.

00:16:28 Speaker 2

So this is Allah in his stylistic.

00:16:31 Speaker 2

And on the left, Khun, whom I discovered during Word into Art at the British Museum by Nasser Hansour,

00:16:38 Speaker 2

Kun, it's probably extraordinary.

00:16:40 Speaker 2

It's a very simple word, be.

00:16:44 Speaker 2

Kun.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

Kun.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

And he has two of them.

00:16:52 Speaker 2

And I remember there was a four or five year gap.

00:16:54 Speaker 2

And I asked, what is the difference?

00:16:57 Speaker 2

Because I had both.

00:16:58 Speaker 2

And he said, it's all to do with the dot.

00:17:01 Speaker 2

And I said, right, you worked four years.

00:17:03 Speaker 2

He said, yes, getting the dot exactly right was very important.

00:17:09 Speaker 2

And I can be corrected, I think it was Neil at the time who said, oh, it's like in an article, he said that Michelangelo is seeing kind of a revelation.

00:17:20 Speaker 2

And in the set in the middle is Ahmed Mustafa from Egypt.

00:17:26 Speaker 2

Here is this wonderful piece, again, that artist I did a talk with in Riyadh not long ago, Ahmed Mater, who's Saudi from Abha.

00:17:35 Speaker 2

And he said at the beginning of the talk, he said, normally artists work all their life, and then they're in the British Museum.

00:17:41 Speaker 2

He said, my first work was at the British Museum, which is how Venetia discovered him.

00:17:49 Speaker 2

And this is, of course, Mecca.

00:17:52 Speaker 2

These are magnetic shavings rotating in the way that the pilgrimage rotate around Mecca.

00:18:01 Speaker 2

And I start now in the 1900s.

00:18:03 Speaker 2

I start with a terribly important person who was the first real patron of the arts as we know it today, of modern art.

00:18:13 Speaker 2

And during that time, during Kik Foad's time, Kik Foad's father, he set up the first school of fine art.

00:18:23 Speaker 2

Himself personally set up the school.

00:18:26 Speaker 2

And many of the artists that we will see, and many of the most important Egyptian artists,

00:18:30 Speaker 2

went to the school on scholarships, and the school then sent them to Paris, to Rome, largely to study.

00:18:40 Speaker 2

And this artist, although of the same name, it's not the same as Prince Youssef Kamal, Youssef Kamal was among the first class to graduate from the fine art school in Egypt.

00:18:53 Speaker 2

And the reason I show this is I wanted to just give you a glimpse of the beginning of patronage.

00:19:00 Speaker 2

in the Middle East.

00:19:02 Speaker 2

Of course, there were patrons earlier, royal patrons, going back from the 9th century onwards.

00:19:08 Speaker 2

But this in modern art, the first modern art, although his collection is not modern art, but he set up the first fine art school to develop and do modern art.

00:19:19 Speaker 2

I put this one here just to show you some of the students who were sent and supported the first Bears, Mahmoud Makhtar, in the exhibition.

00:19:27 Speaker 2

Again, he went to the school

00:19:29 Speaker 2

The school sent him overseas, and he did amongst his first evolution.

00:19:35 Speaker 2

These are groupings, because his friend is here, who lives in Oxford, Ibrahim Salahi, at the slave schools in the UK in 1956.

00:19:49 Speaker 2

And again, on the left, no, on the left of it is Jawad Saleem.

00:19:56 Speaker 2

in 1954, and of the same period at that time, also Selva Ravdashkir, all of them sponsored in order to go to the schools that they went to.

00:20:08 Speaker 2

We're going to cover these today.

00:20:10 Speaker 2

These are not all the featured artists in the book.

00:20:12 Speaker 2

There are 93 featured artists, 252 artists in total, but we're going to today very quickly skim through in order to keep to time, and you will see I'll get much faster

00:20:24 Speaker 2

as I come to the end, because I realize I'm running out of time.

00:20:28 Speaker 2

But these are all the artists that we are covering with us today.

00:20:35 Speaker 2

We'll start with Bahmud Makhtar, and we'll start with his monumental piece, which is in pink granite here.

00:20:44 Speaker 2

And it's called Nahdat Masr.

00:20:46 Speaker 2

It is the kind of Renaissance of Egypt.

00:20:49 Speaker 2

And in this one, you will see the Sphinx.

00:20:52 Speaker 2

And you see to the left of the sphinx a falaha, a peasant woman, kind of also emancipation of the female subject in his culture.

00:21:02 Speaker 2

And that was very important at that time in the early part of the 20th century.

00:21:09 Speaker 2

And on the far right, Khamasin, Khamasin is a wind, and Khamasin means 50, and Khamasin means a very hot wind.

00:21:20 Speaker 2

and it blows across the Middle East and now throughout the snow.

00:21:24 Speaker 2

And this is a kind of Brancusi-like sculpture, which I love personally very much, one of my favorites of Mahmoud Mukhtar's works.

00:21:36 Speaker 2

And Mahmoud Mukhtar supported many artists.

00:21:38 Speaker 2

Many of the great artists actually support many of the artists.

00:21:43 Speaker 2

And this is a wonderful thing.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

They taught them, they invited them to their studios, and Mahmoud Mukhtar

00:21:49 Speaker 2

was one such artist.

00:21:55 Speaker 2

We'll move on to, in the same country, so I'm covering a bit of Egypt now, is Mahmoud Said, who also-- largely, most of his paintings are of aristocracy.

00:22:06 Speaker 2

I picked this one, Peasant Girl.

00:22:08 Speaker 2

I love her kind of image, kind of defiant, I would say, defiantly looking, where most of his paintings are of very elegant,

00:22:18 Speaker 2

a high society, aristocracy, princesses like this one, and others.

00:22:31 Speaker 2

Inja of Latun, aristocrat by herself, but all of her paintings ended up, so she would be what the guardian would call left of the guardian.

00:22:42 Speaker 2

So she is, although she is a total aristocrat,

00:22:47 Speaker 2

She went, and all she wanted to do is paint everyday Egypt.

00:22:53 Speaker 2

And she was imprisoned by Nasser a couple of times because she was such a rebel.

00:23:00 Speaker 2

And she continued to do art, even while she's in prison, which she did drawings, lots of them.

00:23:07 Speaker 2

And they were smuggled out of prison.

00:23:10 Speaker 2

And that's her in prison during that time.

00:23:15 Speaker 2

We go now, really contemporary, and that's my first book.

00:23:20 Speaker 2

And that's an Armenian-Egyptian artist, Sean Abidusian, of course, depicting the great diva, the Middle East singer, Umm Kalthum, and a song that I heard always.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

My mother was an author, writer, and we'd be sitting in London

00:23:38 Speaker 2

And every morning, she'd wake up at 5 o'clock.

00:23:40 Speaker 2

I'm not sure why.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

She'd have her Turkish coffee, and she would put it in her soup.

00:23:44 Speaker 2

So I know all her songs by heart.

00:23:47 Speaker 2

And I was born in the year that she sang maybe her most famous song, Anda Amri, which I also know by heart, and my mother didn't show that I did.

00:23:56 Speaker 2

And that's all in London, which was wonderful.

00:24:02 Speaker 2

Shawn, kind of a bit of an Andy Warhol-ish.

00:24:06 Speaker 2

figure type thing.

00:24:07 Speaker 2

He did the silk screens and he loved Egypt and cinema.

00:24:11 Speaker 2

Although his first work started actually in textile, which he also was excellent with.

00:24:16 Speaker 2

And if you see the background here, it's of Ottoman textiles, the background of these works.

00:24:21 Speaker 2

These are all the grain of their time, singers, actors of Egypt.

00:24:28 Speaker 2

And on the top center you'll see Umm Karthoum called Kaukab al-Sharq, Planet of the East, followed by

00:24:35 Speaker 2

all the other famous, very famous singers.

00:24:39 Speaker 2

And at the bottom, you will see those two hugging.

00:24:43 Speaker 2

Falid al-Atrash and Abdelhayim Prophet Falid al-Atrash and his sister Ismahad, who is just under Ukhartu, died at the very own age.

00:24:52 Speaker 2

Both are Druze, both princes.

00:24:56 Speaker 2

They escaped Lebanon during the time that Mount Lebanon was being shelled and bombed, so they escaped.

00:25:02 Speaker 2

went to Egypt.

00:25:03 Speaker 2

She was born on the, her parents escaped, sorry.

00:25:05 Speaker 2

She was born on the road and sadly passed away in a car crash.

00:25:10 Speaker 2

And both of them became huge singers.

00:25:12 Speaker 2

She was the biggest competitor at the time of her two.

00:25:16 Speaker 2

And had she survived, she would be the big singer.

00:25:21 Speaker 2

Now we have someone with us here, usually that he's sitting

00:25:25 Speaker 2

in the front of the room.

00:25:28 Speaker 2

I hope you like the photo.

00:25:30 Speaker 2

Louisa ensured that we had the best photos.

00:25:36 Speaker 2

And this painting is, you know, for those that don't know, studied archaeology, is an archaeologist, worked in archaeology.

00:25:50 Speaker 2

described as the most influential living artist of today, and I totally kind of say it all the time, somewhat embarrassingly in front of you, maybe not, but they are really not only because of the art, but because of what he does for artists.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

And we go back again to people who have sponsored, mentored, worked with, supported artists on multiple levels.

00:26:15 Speaker 2

A scream really is a testament to his own, if I may say, of your own conscription to the army and serving Kurdistan.

00:26:24 Speaker 2

I know this was a particularly difficult time.

00:26:26 Speaker 2

And it's kind of an Arab vanquish.

00:26:30 Speaker 2

It's kind of the scream of the Arab world, if I were to put it, kind of do it in a Western way.

00:26:37 Speaker 2

It's just the anger of it all and the scream of it all.

00:26:40 Speaker 2

And it's a painting that I know very well.

00:26:44 Speaker 2

And I think it just embodies many things, especially in today's time.

00:26:52 Speaker 2

The next one is, I would call, Darag World's Guernica.

00:26:58 Speaker 2

It's in the Tate.

00:27:00 Speaker 2

It's Sabra and Shatila.

00:27:02 Speaker 2

And it's a monumental piece.

00:27:05 Speaker 2

And it's really good that it's at the Tate, actually, because it can be seen by such a wide audience, and it is safe, one hopes.

00:27:15 Speaker 2

but it is one of these works that explains the horrors of war, and just as Guernica has and does.

00:27:29 Speaker 2

Arabic texts, and specifically poetry, holds an important part of Azdawi's work, and many of his silk screens, many of his works, and the next work that we're going to see commissioned by the Bishop Water,

00:27:44 Speaker 2

in reference to the Tigris River, Les Tigris, which is a monumental piece in the great home of the British Museum.

00:27:58 Speaker 2

And on this one, Les Tigris, we're going to ask, and I'm delighted, honored, that Dear Azawi is going to read to us the poem that is on the sculpture.

00:28:13 Speaker 2

in Arabic, for those that speak Arabic, and will be responded to in English by Venetian.

00:28:22 Speaker 2

Please, sir.

00:28:29 Speaker 3

This poem, composed by Giovanni, when he was in Aqsa.

00:28:35 Speaker 3

I met him many times during 60s when he was in Baghdad.

00:28:40 Speaker 3

And the last time I met him in London, in '89,

00:28:45 Speaker 3

when I published a portfolio of his work, and the initial part of 89.

00:28:52 Speaker 3

But he was unfortunately unhappy with me because of the number, because he thought he was younger than 89.

00:29:02 Speaker 3

The poem is one of the most important of his work.

00:29:13 Speaker 3

”

00:29:13 Speaker 3

Ya ummalbasatini.

00:29:16 Speaker 3

Hayatu sha **** an pamanan aloozubihi, nobdal kamaemi bainan maa, walpini.

00:29:24 Speaker 3

Ya digital firm, ya naban ufarikuhu, alal karahati bainal hain, walpini.

00:29:32 Speaker 3

Ini, waltu ayumnal maa'i safiatan, naban, panaban, pama kanak liturumini.

00:29:47 Speaker 4

Thank you, Sav, for asking me to read the English.

00:29:52 Speaker 4

I have to say it brings back very, very happy memories of Word into Art, and I'll never forget the arrival of this.

00:30:00 Speaker 4

enormous sculpture in the middle of the night.

00:30:03 Speaker 4

And we all stayed up all night waiting for the crate to be opened.

00:30:09 Speaker 4

So thank you.

00:30:10 Speaker 4

This is good.

00:30:11 Speaker 2

And the BBC did a film on it, which Kiara found.

00:30:16 Speaker 4

Oh, good.

00:30:17 Speaker 4

Anyway, so it's lovely just to read the English following you, Dia.

00:30:22 Speaker 4

And the translation is by Hussein Hadawi.

00:30:27 Speaker 4

I greet you from afar.

00:30:29 Speaker 4

O greet me back, O blessed Tigress, giver of gardens green.

00:30:33 Speaker 4

I greet your banks, seeking to quench my thirst, like doves between water and clay
aflutter seen.

00:30:41 Speaker 4

O blessed Tigress, oft have I been forced to leave, to drink from springs which didn't my
thirst relieve.

00:30:49 Speaker 4

O blessed Tigress, what inflames your heart inflames me, and what grieves you makes
me grieve.

00:30:57 Speaker 4

O wanderer, play with a gentle touch, caress the lute softly and sing again, that you may
soothe a volcano seething with rage and pacify a heart burning with pain.

00:31:10 Speaker 2

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

00:31:18 Speaker 2

We move to Jawad Salim, born in Ankara, in Turkey, at a very young age.

00:31:26 Speaker 2

He was

00:31:27 Speaker 2

He received his first scholarship and went to Paris and went to Rome.

00:31:33 Speaker 2

And like Azawi, he too worked at the Directorate of Antiquities in his earlier times.

00:31:41 Speaker 2

He and his pupil, the celebrated Shakar Hassan, who was the teacher of Hana Malala, formed the Mandad Group in 1951.

00:31:53 Speaker 2

In this work, in the next work,

00:31:57 Speaker 2

We're going to, in this work, I wanted to show in 1953, Baghdad, this beautiful modernist, simplistic work, a mixture of anything that we would see or the very best that we could see in the West.

00:32:11 Speaker 2

In this one, Baghdadiyat, it shows the influence that Baghdad also had during its 12th century and 13th century.

00:32:28 Speaker 2

He's best known probably for a monumental work, huge work in Baghdad, which was completed sadly after he passed away, with 25 very large figures on this very monumental.

00:32:44 Speaker 2

This one is a reference to the 13th century, I had said earlier.

00:32:49 Speaker 2

We're going to still stay in Iraq and move on to now the wonderful Hannah Malala.

00:32:56 Speaker 2

Like her teacher, Shaker Hassan, she's greatly influenced by complex heritage and modern history of her country.

00:33:03 Speaker 2

And her style and symbolism speak of the violent times following the U.S.

00:33:09 Speaker 2

invasion of Iraq and the burning of Iraq and of Taqda, her city.

00:33:16 Speaker 2

On her latest project will be an exhibition at the Ashmolean, curated by Nancy, sitting next to her on her left.

00:33:25 Speaker 2

And some of you may have noticed I've given red after them as I walked in.

00:33:29 Speaker 2

And it's in reference to a project to do with Iraq and its colonial times, and particularly of Gertrude Bell, whose desk is here upstairs, I've been told by Eugene.

00:33:41 Speaker 2

And I look forward to sitting at this desk.

00:33:45 Speaker 2

But I just want to thank Hannah for being here.

00:33:49 Speaker 2

I know it was a surprise to come.

00:33:55 Speaker 2

But I thank you.

00:33:56 Speaker 2

I know you made an effort, so I understand that, from the north of England.

00:34:00 Speaker 2

And on this, her next work on Gertrude Bell, Hannah is going to have a performance with Eugene himself.

00:34:13 Speaker 2

And Eugene is going to now read as Gertrude Bell in Baghdad, if I may.

00:34:19 Speaker 2

to be responded to by Hannah today.

00:34:21 Speaker 1

And will you all witness just how outrageous it is that not only is this not making me perform in my own center, but he's making me do it in Arabic?

00:34:32 Speaker 1

Do you want this with a British accent?

00:34:36 Speaker 2

Gertrude Bell?

00:34:37 Speaker 2

I'm Irish to stop.

00:34:47 Speaker 1

I'm Arab.

00:34:48 Speaker 1

Thank you, sir.

00:34:51 Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:34:52 Speaker 1

And in English.

00:34:55 Speaker 1

Really?

00:34:55 Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:34:57 Speaker 1

The next bit's a little tough because I'm not so practiced in English, but maps are my passion.

00:35:17 Speaker 1

I like to see the world with which I'm dealing.

00:35:20 Speaker 1

And everyone comes round to my room for geography.

00:35:40 Speaker 5

Thank you.

00:35:47 Speaker 5

And in English, the , maps are my passion in art.

00:35:54 Speaker 5

I like to recreate the world which I have lost.

00:35:59 Speaker 5

And everyone comes around to my studio to see the cruded my country map artwork.

00:36:12 Speaker 2

We move on to Lebanon.

00:36:13 Speaker 2

We move on to

00:36:17 Speaker 2

Born in the United States to immigrant parents who moved from Mount Lebanon to Pennsylvania.

00:36:26 Speaker 2

And at the age of 22, she decided to go back to Lebanon to try to rediscover her countries.

00:36:32 Speaker 2

She got there.

00:36:33 Speaker 2

She married a very famous journalist, colonist, thinker, Youssef Khal, and had two boys, Tariq and Jawad.

00:36:47 Speaker 2

Unfortunately, they divorced, and she lost the two boys at the hands of a religious court, which devastated her.

00:36:55 Speaker 2

She went through a very difficult, terrible time.

00:36:59 Speaker 2

She was particularly close to many of Lebanon's artists, Araf Arrez, Shafiq Amboud, and many.

00:37:05 Speaker 2

We'll see some of them now later on.

00:37:07 Speaker 2

And she, in her own word, went to Lebanon

00:37:10 Speaker 2

because of the light and the landscape.

00:37:13 Speaker 2

Greatly influenced by Rothko, as she says herself.

00:37:17 Speaker 2

And I remember in the beginning, people say, oh, she's copying Rothko.

00:37:20 Speaker 2

But when you read actually the notes and you read the letters she wrote, she said, greatly influenced by him, but he could have never painted what I painted because he wasn't in Lebanon.

00:37:31 Speaker 2

So it's the light of the sea and the mountains that really have hugely, hugely influenced.

00:37:38 Speaker 2

She was at the heart of Lebanese culture.

00:37:40 Speaker 2

She opened the first gallery in the region, Gallery One.

00:37:44 Speaker 2

She wrote a wonderful book about Lebanese and Arab female artists, and she also was a lecturer.

00:37:56 Speaker 2

Shafiq Abboud, who some you may have met, is a wonderful artist on multiple fronts, generous, kind, had friendships with many artists, not a commercial person,

00:38:09 Speaker 2

He is, I believe, one of the greatest Ashrafi artists of the Middle East.

00:38:15 Speaker 2

And I love the story of the next work.

00:38:20 Speaker 2

He had a gallery called Waddah Faris.

00:38:24 Speaker 2

And Waddah Faris did a beautiful exhibition for him in Paris.

00:38:28 Speaker 2

And he always told him paint, you know, ideally, one by one, color, they will sell well.

00:38:34 Speaker 2

And Shafiq hated this.

00:38:35 Speaker 2

He didn't like to be told what to paint, what to do, what colors.

00:38:39 Speaker 2

Anyway, he did.

00:38:40 Speaker 2

He went in, saw 10 paintings on the wall, and two of them he particularly liked, this one and another one, which was red.

00:38:48 Speaker 2

And he told Shafiq he did a mistake.

00:38:50 Speaker 2

He said, these are perfect.

00:38:51 Speaker 2

They're 120 by 120.

00:38:53 Speaker 2

One is beautiful red.

00:38:55 Speaker 2

It will sell immediately.

00:38:56 Speaker 2

And I love this one.

00:38:57 Speaker 2

It's going to sell immediately.

00:38:59 Speaker 2

And overnight, Shafiq, I was so upset, he painted the red one black, and then a little red in the center.

00:39:07 Speaker 2

And I went to the

00:39:08 Speaker 2

Mathaf Museum in Qatar, and I saw this painting, and I had already heard the story.

00:39:15 Speaker 2

And I went, and the wonderful curator was explaining to me this lovely painting, and I said, What was it?

00:39:21 Speaker 2

What is it?

00:39:22 Speaker 2

And he said, Oh, it's a forest, and this is a fire in the forest.

00:39:28 Speaker 2

And the lovely curator from Birmingham, actually, and I stood there and just stared.

00:39:35 Speaker 2

And of course, my critique said to me, come on, tell him what you want to tell him.

00:39:39 Speaker 2

Get on with it.

00:39:40 Speaker 2

So then I explained to him the story of the painting.

00:39:42 Speaker 2

He said, all year round, I've been telling them it's a forest and there's a fire.

00:39:49 Speaker 2

And the other painting that he disrupted was this one.

00:39:52 Speaker 2

He decided, therefore, that he'll put his hand in gold because he wants to make so much money, his gallerist, and he put his hand in the painting.

00:40:01 Speaker 2

So this is his DNA in that painting.

00:40:04 Speaker 2

So there we go.

00:40:05 Speaker 2

I thought this is a lovely kind of story of Shafid, who I did not meet, but from what everyone tells me, he is this just wonderful person.

00:40:16 Speaker 2

And as I told you, I now will get much faster as we move towards the end.

00:40:23 Speaker 2

Luay Kayani, one of the great Syrian artists, I picked this in particular because these are three subjects he painted.

00:40:30 Speaker 2

He painted a lot of figures, particularly of those working on the streets, selling lottery tickets, cleaning shoes, making coffee.

00:40:38 Speaker 2

He also loved flowers.

00:40:41 Speaker 2

That's a daffodil, Hannah.

00:40:43 Speaker 2

And he loved Maalula, the Christian village in the mountains in Syria.

00:40:48 Speaker 2

And in this painting, he has the three subjects in one.

00:40:52 Speaker 2

And there is a letter and there is a drawing of this one.

00:40:56 Speaker 2

in which he wrote that he's putting all three into that one building.

00:41:00 Speaker 2

And I thought it's kind of poignant.

00:41:06 Speaker 2

The other, if you tell me, two out of two great Syrians, I would say.

00:41:09 Speaker 2

There are many, to be honest with you.

00:41:11 Speaker 2

And in the book, we have 252, so you will see many of them.

00:41:15 Speaker 2

And is the other one.

00:41:18 Speaker 2

And in this one, which I picked for today, it's actually Jesus in the center, St.

00:41:24 Speaker 2

John the Baptist below.

00:41:26 Speaker 2

and the 12 apostles.

00:41:30 Speaker 2

And I think it's one of his just most beautiful and so important in Sumerian faces.

00:41:38 Speaker 2

We move now to Palestinian artist, Mona Saoudi.

00:41:42 Speaker 2

This is an homage to Brancusi.

00:41:45 Speaker 2

Mona was a lovely person, very kind.

00:41:47 Speaker 2

Some of you would have known her and known her daughter, both sadly passed.

00:41:57 Speaker 2

And the next one, Samia Halabi, which is the cover of my book.

00:42:02 Speaker 2

And this is a photograph taken of her by Monessa Udi when they were together in Jordan.

00:42:12 Speaker 2

And Samia Halabi has always worked, even on the first computer that ever came out, she did works of art.

00:42:21 Speaker 2

And it was something that

00:42:25 Speaker 2

She did on her IBM in the early days as they first came out and continues to do and loves doing.

00:42:32 Speaker 2

And she loves music and she loves dancing.

00:42:35 Speaker 2

She lives in New York.

00:42:40 Speaker 2

We move now to the Maghrib all the way, and we'll have two artists from the Maghrib.

00:42:44 Speaker 2

We'll have Ferid Belkakra, who's a good friend of Leah, of course.

00:42:49 Speaker 2

And in this monumental piece, this is Jerusalem.

00:42:52 Speaker 2

And this monumental piece, which is in a house in Marrakesh, is his Oman to Jerusalem.

00:43:00 Speaker 2

It's on animal skin, which he is very well known for.

00:43:07 Speaker 2

And again, in the art schools, Casablanca School, amongst others, he was very influential and important and helped many of the artists at this time.

00:43:18 Speaker 2

Rashid Qureshi is the other one.

00:43:22 Speaker 2

a hugely spiritual person who has built one of the large cemeteries in Tunisia for all of the immigrants that die in the boats on their way between Africa and Europe and get washed ashore and he's built the cemeteries for them so that everyone has a place and he built it himself with his own funds

00:43:51 Speaker 2

in North Africa.

00:43:54 Speaker 2

I mentioned Sudan earlier.

00:43:56 Speaker 2

One of the happiest times of my life was 14, 15 in Sudan.

00:44:01 Speaker 2

I used to go on holidays from the UK.

00:44:03 Speaker 2

It sounds very odd, but my father used to enjoy sending me to all these places.

00:44:07 Speaker 2

I learned how to drive at 14.

00:44:09 Speaker 2

Didn't lead a life.

00:44:10 Speaker 2

So it's in the south of Sudan on the River Nile.

00:44:13 Speaker 2

And the other country I love is Tunisia, where I went and I celebrated my 21st birthday picking cockles on the beach

00:44:20 Speaker 2

south of with the local ladies.

00:44:23 Speaker 2

I used to go every morning with cockles and I thought I'd make a until I realized that I cooked it.

00:44:30 Speaker 2

We all opened it and they were all full of sand.

00:44:33 Speaker 2

Anyway, I never cooked again.

00:44:38 Speaker 2

Russia is a good friend.

00:44:40 Speaker 2

We moved to the Gulf briefly because there aren't many art schools, there are no really art movements, but there are small flickers of light in Qatar.

00:44:50 Speaker 2

Yusef Ahmed, who works a lot with parchment and with paper, Japanese paper, in particular.

00:44:59 Speaker 2

I'm really going as quick as I can.

00:45:02 Speaker 2

Dubai, regarded as one of the great watercolorists of his generation.

00:45:08 Speaker 2

Saudi, two Mohammed Salim were sent and studied in Rome, both of them.

00:45:13 Speaker 2

The next one studied also in Spain, and he used very much sentences from the Quran

00:45:20 Speaker 2

in creating his minimalist paintings and works.

00:45:23 Speaker 2

And Abdel Rahim Radwi, and this is Mecca, and this is the pilgrimage.

00:45:30 Speaker 2

And I could spend an hour explaining the painting.

00:45:32 Speaker 2

We don't have an hour, so I will just move on.

00:45:35 Speaker 2

But those two were great early influencers in the '50s and '60s.

00:45:40 Speaker 2

And indeed, Radwi is the one who mentored Ahmed Mater, who we saw in the beginning with the Kaaba

00:45:49 Speaker 2

magnetic works, for example.

00:45:51 Speaker 2

That's why the support of artists and patrons.

00:45:54 Speaker 2

We now move to the great Iran, of course, and we start with the influence of not as much religion as in calligraphy and scripture, and that Muhammad Hassar is one of them.

00:46:08 Speaker 2

In this one, you have two.

00:46:09 Speaker 2

You have one, Al-Sabur, one of the 99 names of God, and on the right, you have Mahabbat, which is not religious, of course, to do with passion.

00:46:19 Speaker 2

and loved.

00:46:21 Speaker 2

The great Bahman Mohasses, one of Iran's greatest, maybe greatest, or one of the very greatest artists who crossed away in Italy, and destroyed most of his works.

00:46:32 Speaker 2

So his works are very difficult and very brave to get to his large paintings.

00:46:37 Speaker 2

Parviz to Napoli, the wonderful Parviz, hij in a cage.

00:46:41 Speaker 2

Hij means, originally, everyone used to say nothing, but it is more than nothing, it is nothingness.

00:46:48 Speaker 2

And he is this great artist who worked on many mediums, including textiles and talismans were very important in Iran.

00:47:00 Speaker 2

We don't have time to talk about the Sahkhani and the importance of this art movement and period.

00:47:05 Speaker 2

But he was one of its leaders, and poetry were very important to ..

00:47:15 Speaker 2

I mean, where's Kara?

00:47:16 Speaker 2

Kara, you need to tell me when the poetry is online.

00:47:18 Speaker 2

Someone needs to tell me, put their hands up so I know what to stop.

00:47:23 Speaker 2

Oh, Sohrab Seferi, of course.

00:47:25 Speaker 2

Now I know.

00:47:26 Speaker 2

I've got it here, of course.

00:47:28 Speaker 2

So Sohrab Seferi, a great poet of Persia.

00:47:30 Speaker 2

One of the great, maybe four or five, if I am correctly, but I would say one of the great four or five modern poets of the 20th century.

00:47:40 Speaker 2

Also a great artist and a wonderful

00:47:45 Speaker 2

painter, and this is very typical of his work, .

00:47:51 Speaker 2

And at that point, I think I am going to now go quiet, and something is going to happen.

00:48:02 Speaker 5

Thank you for the opportunity.

00:48:03 Speaker 5

I'm going to be reading out a poem by Sohrab Zuberi, and then Sam will be reading out the translation.

00:48:14 Speaker 5

Door khaaham shud atil khaake gareed, kedaran hich kasi niist, kedar bi shayeh ishk, kehramanan rabi dal kunal.

00:48:23 Speaker 5

Khaya kastur tohi padilaz aar zoo ye mur wareed, hum chanaan khaaham raan.

00:48:29 Speaker 5

Naabi aabi haadil khaaham bast, naabi dar ya paryaani kesaras aab bidar niyarad.

00:48:34 Speaker 5

Wadar aan taabi shetan hai yeh maahi giraan mi feshaan, pusoon as sareki suhaishan, hum chanaan khaaham raan, hum chanaan.

00:48:44 Speaker 5

Khaham Khand Door bayatshud, Door Mardayaan Shar Asatib Nadash Zanayaan
Shahar Besa Shaari Yeh Khushe Yangoor Nabu Hich Aine Talari Sar Khushihara Tekrar
Nakar Chaalaya Vehatta Mash Alira Naanamukh Door bayatshud, Door Shabsuruda
Sha Khand Panjarey Nobate Panjareyas Hum Chanan Khaham Khand Hum Chanan
Khaham Ran.

00:49:14 Speaker 5

Pushte dar yaha shahreest, kedar aan panjreha roo be tajalli baazas.

00:49:19 Speaker 5

Bamha jaye kabutar hais, ke befabwaare yeh hooshe bashari meenegaran.

00:49:25 Speaker 5

Das tehar kuda kedeh saali yeh sar, shahe ye marfatis.

00:49:29 Speaker 5

Mardum me shahr be yeh chine chanaan meenegaran, ke be yeh sholay be yeh kha be latikh.

00:49:35 Speaker 5

Khaq Muzikiye eh saa se tora mee shanavar, wasedaaye bhare murgaan e ya saateed mi ayadarbar.

00:49:46 Speaker 5

Thank you.

00:49:47 Speaker 5

And I'm going to read the English version of that beautiful poem.

00:50:08 Speaker 6

I will build a boat and cast it into water.

00:50:11 Speaker 6

and I will sail far away from this strange land, where no one awakens the heroes.

00:50:17 Speaker 6

In the glade of love, a boat with no nets, and a heart with no desire for pearls.

00:50:23 Speaker 6

I will keep sailing, and will lose no heart to the blue of the sea, or to mermaids, emerging out of water to cast the charms of their locks upon the glowing solitude of the fishermen.

00:50:36 Speaker 6

I will keep sailing, I will keep singing, away should we sail,

00:50:40 Speaker 6

Men of that town had no myths.

00:50:43 Speaker 6

Women of that town were not as full as a bunch of grapes.

00:50:47 Speaker 6

No hall mirrors reflected joy.

00:50:49 Speaker 6

We should sail away in a way.

00:50:52 Speaker 6

Night has sung its song.

00:50:53 Speaker 6

It is now the window's turn.

00:50:56 Speaker 6

I will keep singing.

00:50:57 Speaker 6

I will keep sailing.

00:50:59 Speaker 6

Beyond the seas there is a town, where windows are open to epiphanies.

00:51:04 Speaker 6

The rooftops are inhabited by pigeons, gazing at the fountains of human intelligence.

00:51:10 Speaker 6

Every 10-year-old child holds a bow of knowledge.

00:51:14 Speaker 6

The townsfolk see in a brick row aflame, or a delicate dream.

00:51:20 Speaker 6

Dusk can hear the music of your feelings.

00:51:22 Speaker 6

The fluttering wings of mythical birds are audible in the wind.

00:51:26 Speaker 6

Beyond the seas there is a town, where the sun is as wide open as the eyes of early risers.

00:51:34 Speaker 6

Poets are the inheritors of water, wisdom, and life.

00:51:38 Speaker 6

Beyond the seas there is a town.

00:51:40 Speaker 6

So one should build a boat.

00:51:42 Speaker 2

A very timely poet, I would say.

00:51:57 Speaker 2

Beautifully, both of you.

00:51:58 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:52:01 Speaker 2

Shirin Shahid, one of Iran's great photographers and cinematographers of our time.

00:52:09 Speaker 2

here with her son.

00:52:13 Speaker 2

And she lives in New York.

00:52:19 Speaker 2

And .

00:52:22 Speaker 2

Farad Mushiri, who I knew very well, uses poetry again here.

00:52:26 Speaker 2

A beautiful poet, , O Good Morning, by .

00:52:39 Speaker 2

And in this most beautiful of paintings, it's made of Swarovski crystals, and it's from his town of Shiraz, and this is cherry blossoms.

00:52:49 Speaker 2

And when you see it, it glitters, and behind it you see Shiraz's mountains, and he believed in hope.

00:52:56 Speaker 2

He sadly passed away, as did his beautiful wife.

00:53:04 Speaker 2

These are works which are going to be shown at the Ashmolean rotating.

00:53:08 Speaker 2

There's a number of works, not only these, but I just wanted to show the work that Francesca and the Ashmolean are doing, building on the work that's being done on the Lily Star and the importance of having it on the Lily Star.

00:53:22 Speaker 2

So this is Farhad Mushiri that you saw earlier, the cherry blossoms.

00:53:26 Speaker 2

And that is his wife there with the bubble gum and to the right.

00:53:34 Speaker 2

This I'm now coming to an end, and typically I am, yes, as I'd expect, a few minutes late, but not much.

00:53:42 Speaker 2

This is a beautiful work in St.

00:53:44 Speaker 2

Martin's in the Field.

00:53:46 Speaker 2

If you haven't been to see it, I'd really recommend you see it at any time of day.

00:53:50 Speaker 2

And St.

00:53:50 Speaker 2

Martin's in the Field, of course, is in Trafalgar Square.

00:53:53 Speaker 2

And this is a most beautiful work.

00:53:56 Speaker 2

And if you see it in the morning, you see the sun coming up, and you see it

00:54:01 Speaker 2

in the evening.

00:54:02 Speaker 2

And people say that when you stand there, there is something almost so surreal about it.

00:54:07 Speaker 2

You almost see a crucifixion in the church through the work.

00:54:10 Speaker 2

And that's an Iranian artist who did the work.

00:54:18 Speaker 2

We close on an artist whose work I love.

00:54:23 Speaker 2

And at this point, I believe, Maryam, you're going to give us a great privilege and honor.

00:54:29 Speaker 2

This is Iran.

00:54:33 Speaker 2

I chose this, actually, I hadn't this piece, I chose it after Saturday.

00:54:38 Speaker 2

And this is the purpose.

00:54:40 Speaker 2

I changed the closing to this work and to this poem, which Marie Monagh chose.

00:54:47 Speaker 7

Thank you so much, Saad.

00:54:49 Speaker 7

This is a poem by Ahmed Chandu, which he wrote in 1954, I believe, when he was imprisoned under

00:55:00 Speaker 7

the Palavi Shah as a leftist activist.

00:55:04 Speaker 7

The Persian, as I explained to Sahib, is kind of different from Shamblu's usually epic prose.

00:55:14 Speaker 7

It is like more folksy, almost like a lullaby.

00:55:19 Speaker 7

Here it goes.

00:55:27 Speaker 7

Dareh ba dareh sahra ba sahra un jokesh shabba, push to bisheha, yeh pari miat tarsun olarzun, pasha mizareh tua ba cheshme, shuna mikkone mu yeh parishun.

00:55:38 Speaker 7

Yeh shabba mahtub, mah miyat tuhab, manu ni bareh taha un dareh, un jokesh shabba, yeh kew tanha, taqteraht de bid, sha dukhur omig, mikone naas, dasta shuderas, ki yeh setareh, becheke mesaye chikke borun, bejoi mibash, sariya shahash beshaabi zun.

00:55:57 Speaker 7

Yeshaba Mahtok, Mahmiah to Hob, Mana Mi Bareas to Ye Zendun, Meste Sha Pare Bahadashbirun, Mi Baarong Jo, Keshaba Sio, Khoda Mesahar, Sharidawi Sha, Khobi Mobidor, Sharidawi Sha.

00:56:24 Speaker 7

I will read it in English.

00:56:28 Speaker 7

Thank you.

00:56:28 Speaker 2

On the moonlit night, moon is in my dream.

00:56:46 Speaker 2

It takes me with it, alley to alley, into the vineyards, into the plum trees, valley to valley, meadow to meadow.

00:56:56 Speaker 2

Behind the thickets where a night fairy, fearing and trembling, steps into the spring.

00:57:03 Speaker 2

Her unruly hair, she begins, comb.

00:57:08 Speaker 2

On a moonlit night, moon is in my dream.

00:57:11 Speaker 2

It takes me to the end of that valley, where at night the sole, weeping willow tree, with her grace and charm, stretches out her hand so that drips a star

00:57:26 Speaker 2

like a raining drop hanging from her branch.

00:57:31 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:57:38 Speaker 2

On that note, we end today.

00:57:43 Speaker 2

I did, though, have another very quick poem that I'd like to read, which Khalil Gibran wrote in 1906.

00:57:54 Speaker 2

Khalil Gibran is a Lebanese immigrant who went to the United States.

00:57:59 Speaker 2

He wrote it in Arabic.

00:58:01 Speaker 2

I'm going to read it in English.

00:58:04 Speaker 2

From the depth of this depth, we call you, O liberty, hear us.

00:58:09 Speaker 2

From the corners of this darkness, we raise our hands in supplication.

00:58:16 Speaker 2

Turn your gaze towards us.

00:58:18 Speaker 2

On the expense of these snows, we lay ourselves prostrate before you.

00:58:24 Speaker 2

Have compassion on us.

00:58:27 Speaker 2

From the sources of the Nile to the estuary of the Euphrates, the wailing of swords surging with the scream of the abyss rises.

00:58:37 Speaker 2

From the frontiers of the peninsula to the mountain of Lebanon, hands are outstretched to you, trembling in the agony of death.

00:58:47 Speaker 2

From the coast of the gulf to the ends of the desert, eyes are uplifted to you with pinning hearts.

00:58:55 Speaker 2

Turn, O liberty.

00:58:57 Speaker 2

and look upon us.

00:58:59 Speaker 2

Listen to us, O liberty.

00:59:01 Speaker 2

Have compassion on us, O daughter of Athens.

00:59:05 Speaker 2

Rescue us, O sister of Rome.

00:59:08 Speaker 2

Save us, O companion of Moses.

00:59:12 Speaker 2

Come to our aid, O beloved of Muhammad.

00:59:16 Speaker 2

Teach us, O bride of Jesus.

00:59:19 Speaker 2

Thank you.

