

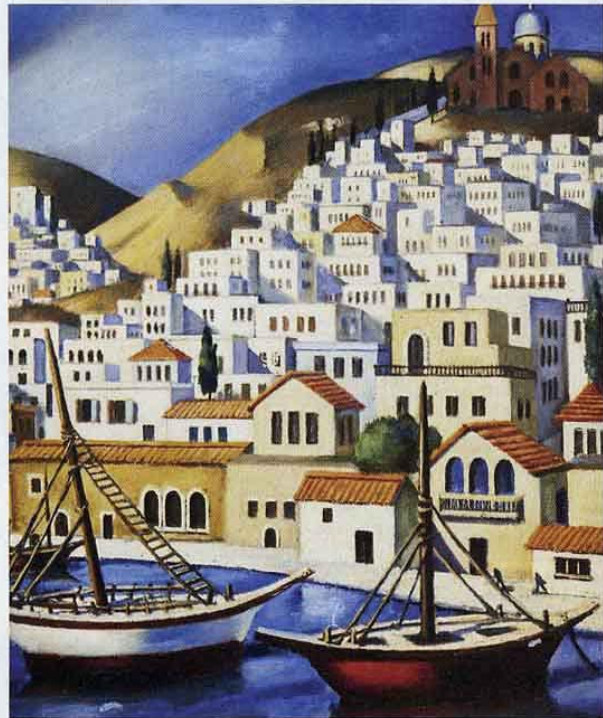
## A study of Middle Eastern art

A new exhibition in DIFC describes itself as a 'constellation' of Arab art's history. Nyree Barrett introduces the stars

'Nujoom: A Constellation of Arab Art' at The Farjam Collection in DIFC is this month's must-see museum-quality exhibition. Compiled from Dr Farhad Farjam's extensive collection, it features more than 40 works by a range of Middle Eastern artists, all of which demonstrate how the region is making its mark in the art world. Here are some of the shining lights. The exhibition is ongoing at *The Farjam Collection, DIFC*



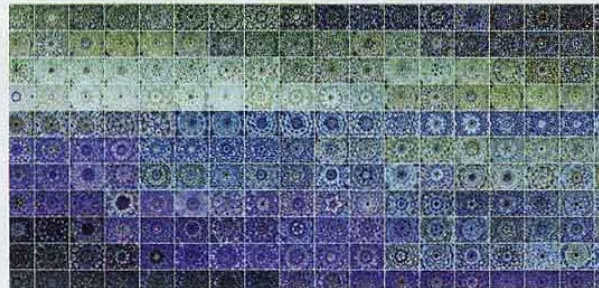
► **Artist: Mahmoud Said, died 1964 (aged 67), Egyptian**  
**Piece: 'View of Sirros' (1949)**  
Said is generally considered the father of modern Arab art; his painting of whirling dervishes sold in Dubai's Christie's auction in October for Dhs9.35 million (Dhs7.85 million more than its top estimate). This work, which depicts the port of Sirros in Greece, is rare: it is one of his few European landscapes (Said was well travelled, but most of his artworks depict Lebanon and Egypt) and sold at a 2008 Christie's auction for Dhs753,000.



◄ **Artist: Youssef Nabil, 38, Egyptian**  
**Piece: 'Maelema, Fifi Abdo' (2000)**  
Youssef Nabil's signature is to hand-paint black-and-white portraits, giving his subjects the same air of grace and immortality as the stars of '40s cinema. This piece was sold at Christie's October auction for Dhs335,317 – Dhs225,000 more than its highest estimate.



▲ **Artist: Maitha Huraiz, 21, Emirati**  
**Piece: 'Behind Closed Doors' (2007)**  
At just 21, Huraiz is the youngest artist in the exhibition, and one of the three Emiratis represented. This haunting work, with its domestic setting and intentionally obscured subject, is an exploration of what it means to be an Emirati woman today.



◄ **Artist: Lara Baladi, 41, Lebanese/Egyptian**  
**Piece: 'Kaleidoscope' (2007)**  
This interactive walk-in kaleidoscope draws from the repetition found in Arabic aesthetic tradition, while also featuring computer technology and human interaction: the viewer becomes part of the large piece, their image reflected and refracted. It must be experienced to be comprehended.

# OVER MY DEAD BODY



◄ **Artist: Mona Hatoum, 58, Palestinian/Lebanese**  
**Piece: 'Over My Dead Body' (1988)**  
UK-based Hatoum is best known for her installation and performance pieces, which invoke mixed feelings in the viewer (her 'Deep Throat' installation is a dinner-table setting featuring a video image on the plate showing footage of an endoscopy – both titillating and nauseating). This billboard-sized piece is a self-portrait.