

# الف

## Alef. magazine

### SUMMER!

#### *SALAAM BRAZIL*

Designers of Mideastern descent  
Milton Hatoum: immigrant odyssey

#### *ISLAMIC GARDEN STYLE*

Blooming for 1,000+ years

#### *CARLOS GHOSN*

A firm hand on the wheel

#### *SUMMER STYLE*

Indispensable items  
Real women, extraordinary clothes

#### *SANA'A*

The soul of Yemen



SUMMER  
2008  
ISSUE 7

UK	4.50 GBP
UAE	30 AED
KW	3 KD
USA	10.99 US
AUS	11.95 AS
JOR	6.500 JD
FR	12.95 Euro
LEB	17.000 LBP
BAH	3.250 BD
IT	9.95 Euro
KSA	35 SR



*Shadi Ghadirian at LACMA*

01 The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has begun to collect contemporary art from the Middle East. So far, the nascent collection includes works by Syrian artist Ali Hassan and Ali Omar Ermes of Libya, but the celebrity of the group is undoubtedly Iranian photographer Shadi Ghadirian, whose 'Qajar Series' of photographs from 1998 were recently acquired by the museum. Two of the photos are currently on view, and the rest will go up in LACMA's Islamic Art galleries in August. They will be taken down shortly after next Norouz (March 2009). LACMA is the first museum in the US to purchase the entire series, consisting of thirty-three photographs shot on 35 mm film and printed digitally.



01. SHADI GHADIRIAN'S SUNGLASSES



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP: ABDUL-KARIM MAJDAL AL-BEIK, WALL (2008), MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS; LOUAY KAY'YALI, THEN WHAT? (1965), OIL ON MASONITE; MOHANNAD ORABI, SELF-PORTRAIT (2008), MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS.

*Ayyam ascending*

Ayyam, Syria's premier modern and contemporary gallery, opened its second space in Dubai's Al Quoz district this May. Its inaugural show 'Contemporary Syria' runs until 30 September, and introduces a roster of artists establishing global hammer-price records at major auction houses and working within a broad spectrum of styles and media. Clients from the UAE have long been drawn to Khaled Samawi's original Damascus space, seduced by Syria's rich culture, past and present, which fuels a dynamic artistic milieu. Ayyam hopes to see Syrian art take off in Dubai and distinguish itself from the more general 'Middle Eastern' category, much as Iranian art has done. As a former investment banker, Samawi has unabashedly described his gallery as a 'bank' and is determined to see a harmonious marriage between business and art, not least the appreciation of the works he sells as sound assets. Set in 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> with soaring ceilings, Ayyam's sister gallery is as high and mighty as its ambition, and with movable walls and hidden rooms for special occasions, it promises a novel experience every time you visit. ZAIN MASUD

[www.ayyamgallery.com](http://www.ayyamgallery.com)

Ghadirian, who was inspired by Qajar photo albums of the nineteenth century, captures women in traditional Qajar dress and includes one modern object: a Pepsi can, a vacuum cleaner, a boom box, etc, a clever commentary on the modern versus the traditional and on the ambiguous place Iranian women occupy in this dichotomy. Her work has garnered praise and attention from collectors and critics alike. When LACMA's curator of Islamic Art, Linda Komaroff, approached museum

director Michael Govan about the series, Govan agreed that it was too important a group not to purchase. When Komaroff visited the British Museum's 2006 exhibition 'Word into Art', she immediately recognised the potential of augmenting LACMA's existing Islamic art collection with work with twentieth- and twenty-first-century Iranian and Arab artists. Finding the budget for this endeavour has not been easy, however. In the case of the Ghadirian photographs, Komaroff says: 'When there's

something you really want, you find a way to get it. So I got funds from a bunch of different sources.' Komaroff is currently the only prominent curator at a major Los Angeles cultural institution actively searching for ways to bring contemporary art of the Middle East to the city. Hopefully, Ghadirian's photos will help generate new audiences – and groups of donors – in Los Angeles and elsewhere. YASMINE MOHSENI  
[www.lacma.org/islamic\\_art/ian.htm](http://www.lacma.org/islamic_art/ian.htm)