

Lebanese artist arrives in Kuwait to present art exhibition

Famous collectors acquire Hrair's paintings

By Betty Lippold
Arab Times Staff

The internationally known Lebanese artist, "Hrair" will present his Art Exhibition, in the Kuwait International Hotel's Terrace Room, beginning April 4th through the 6th from 10:pm until 1:30 pm. under the patronage of Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Salem Al-Sabah and the Sons of Hamed Al-Issa Trading Company's Decorative Materials Division.

Hrair, who arrived in Kuwait on Tuesday, was born in Beirut and studied interior design and art at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA). His first exhibition was held in 1960 in Lebanon after winning the first three prizes in a competition, among 200 artists and decorators, for the design tapestries for the presidential palace in Lebanon. Over the years he has designed seven tapestries on special order from discriminating clients throughout the world.

This is Hrair's third exhibition in

Kuwait, and the first since the liberation, "I offer this exhibition as a gift of peace and love to Kuwait", he said. Hrair will show 37 oil paintings some of which are larger pieces of one and a half square metres or more. "I have always admired the Byzantine and Oriental artists," he explained, "and the horse is very important in my paintings." His works incorporating the human figure are definitely inspired by Byzantine art and his almost mythical paintings of the horse have the aura of the Oriental art. All his works are touched with gold leaf accent or painted on a gold leaf ground, the latter being very Japanese in style.

Since 1966, Hrair has been participating in all the International Biennial Exhibitions of Sao Paulo, Brazil and Venice, Italy. Since 1961 he has held exhibitions in: Greece, Paris, Cannes, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Jordan, Riyadh, Jeddah, Rome, Washington, Skpain, Kaslik, Monte Carlo, Damascus, Aleppo, Marbella and several in his own city of Beirut. He won the Appreciation Prize, Salon

de printemps, Sursock Museum, Beirut in 1965; the Gold Medal at the Biennial Exhibition of Sao Paulo in 1967; and the Gold Medal at the Rousso Gallery in Rome in 1971.

His paintings have been acquired by famous collectors: HRM Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain, HRM King Hussein of Jordan, HRM King Faycal ben Abdel Aziz, HRM King Fahd ben Abdel Aziz, HRH Prince Rainier of Monaco, Sheikha Badria Al Sabbah; Mrs Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis and others. His paintings are priced from \$2,500 to \$10,000, depending on size. He has created large pieces, on special order, which are now displayed in palaces and villas internationally.

In 1975 he participated in an exhibition organized by the Youth Welfare under the patronage of the Emir



Hrair

of Riyadh, HRH Emir Salman ben Abdel Aziz. In 1976 he



Art

exhibited at the Kandara Hotel in Jeddah for the Youth Welfare, and in 1978 he exhibited at the Intercontinental Hotel in Riyadh under the patronage of HRH Emir Faycal ben Fahd. In 1980 his art works were displayed at the Abdullah Al-Salem Al Sabah Hall in Kuwait under the Ministry of Information, and his paintings were shown again at the Intercontinental Hotel in Riyadh, in an exhibition organized under the patronage of the Youth Association in Saudi Arabia and HRH Emir Faycal ben Fahd.

Hrair will be exhibiting his paintings in Morocco during the Summer, in Saudi Arabia in October, and in Los Angeles at the end of this year, and will possibly add other showings in between.

This talented artist keeps a busy schedule creating his oil paintings, between international exhibition, in his two studios located in Paris and Beirut often working on special orders from clients for both residential and commercial display.

Horse sales banned

Turkmenistan has its trials

By James Kyng

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan: For guests at the best hotel in Ashgabat, the "chicken-or-egg" conundrum has become a daily dietary dilemma.

"The choice on the menu is always the same," said a Lebanese construction worker, a guest at the Hotel Nagina.

"Chicken or eggs. That's it."

A delegate from the World Bank called the food "monotonous" and diplomats from the Chinese embassy, temporarily housed in the hotel, have long since cooked in their rooms.

"We are not yet prepared for tourism," said an official at the foreign ministry. "Our hotels are not good. We are building new ones."

Travel off the beaten track in the newly independent former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan has its trials but also some beguiling attractions.

Ancient cities which flourished on the old Silk Road and then perished, put to the sword by the armies of Genghis Khan, stand silent in the desert which is slowly reclaiming them.

Renowned "Bukhara" carpets are

Music



Monument faces uncertain future

Crisis hits Charleston

By Alan Baldwin

Charleston Farmhouse, England — Behind the grey stone walls of this damp and draughty farmhouse is a unique collection of early 20th century art.

Multi-coloured murals, decorated doors and painted mantelpieces in modernist style give the interior a remarkable atmosphere. Works by Picasso, Sickert and Manet adorn the rough walls, lending a Mediterranean feel.

But the old and isolated building, former home of artist Vanessa Bell — sister of novelist Virginia Woolf — reopens after a winter break this week to a dark and uncertain future.

Obtaining money for the arts is difficult at the best of times. Finding cash in a global recession is even harder, particularly for an East Sussex house whose former owners never showed a great deal of respect for social conventions.

"There's still some quite strong establishment antipathy towards Charleston," said Chris Naylor, director of a charitable trust set up in 1978 to restore and run the house.

ducks dabble lazily on the pond close by the house.

But Charleston gets no money from central government arts funding and nothing from the country council either.

"Day to day life is a continual struggle. We're always on a financial knife-edge and towards the end of this year we will rapidly be moving towards a situation of closure unless we find alternative funding," said Naylor.

"The costs of running Charleston have only recently become clear," he added. "We have to spend between £25-30,000 (\$40-50,000) a year just looking after the place."

"The outlook if one looks at it with a realistic business eye is pretty hopeless I think," said Naylor.

A charitable foundation has paid £25,000 a year over the past three years but that end this year.

The "Friends of Charleston", including a branch in the United States, do their best to reduce the deficit as much as possible and the art world has also spoken out.

Nicholas Serota, director of London's Tate Gallery, called the