

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Nabil Nahas, *Untitled*, 2010, acrylic on canvas, 152.4 x 243.8 cm. (60 x 96 in.)

NABIL NAHAS

PHOENIX DACTYLIFERA

13 OCTOBER – 14 NOVEMBER 2014

PRIVATE VIEW: 15 OCTOBER, 6-8PM

Phoenix Dactylifera at Ben Brown Fine Arts will be the most significant exhibition of Lebanon's foremost contemporary artist, Nabil Nahas, to be held in the UK to date. Opening on 15 October 2014, the exhibition takes its title from the Date Palm (*Phoenix Dactylifera*), a species of palm tree native to the Middle East, and will present a series of vibrant new landscapes that reconnect the artist with the Lebanon and Egypt of his childhood.

With an evocative palette of gold, ochre, black and a dazzling Mediterranean sky blue, Nahas' landscapes masterfully combine elements of abstraction and realism. These monumental and expressive paintings are closely cropped by the artist, lending them a portrait-like quality; the subjects are cacti, cedar, olive and palm trees, which are particularly symbolic of the Middle East.

The Lebanon of Nahas' youth, rich with natural beauty, has long been a source of inspiration for the artist and the tree, in particular, is a recurring motif. Created specially for this exhibition, these new works represent the ongoing evolution of Nahas' landscapes. The tree portraits share the same enigmatic quality as Nahas' more abstract paintings, and all of the works in this exhibition

demonstrate the finely honed mastery of colour and inventive surface manipulation that the artist has become renowned for.

Nabil Nahas is one of the most fascinating artists whose work links Eastern and Western culture. In a climate that places an increasing focus on the Middle East, he acts as a compelling bridge between Lebanon and New York.

About the artist

Nabil Nahas lives and works in New York but still spends significant amounts of time in his native Lebanon. Born in Lebanon in 1949, Nahas grew up in Cairo and Beirut. He attended university in the United States, earning a BFA from Louisiana State University in 1971 and an MFA from Yale University in 1973. Encounters with contemporary painters at Yale influenced Nahas to move to New York after graduation.

Nahas has exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad over the last three decades. 2010 marked Nahas' first major museum retrospective at the Beirut Exhibition Center. Curated by the eminent American art critic Vincent Katz, it was the inaugural exhibition at the museum. His work is included in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art amongst other international institutions. In 2013 Nahas was awarded the National Order of the Cedar, for services to Lebanese culture, an honour rarely bestowed to visual artists.

About Ben Brown Fine Arts

Founded in 2004, Ben Brown Fine Arts is located on Brook's Mews in the heart of Mayfair. The gallery has prominently positioned itself on the contemporary art scene with the sole UK representation of artists such as Ron Arad, Miquel Barceló, Vik Muniz, François-Xavier and Claude Lanne, Gavin Turk, Not Vital, Heinz Mack, and the Estate of Keith Haring. Also renowned for its strong expertise in 20th Century Italian Art, the gallery has been exhibiting the work of Lucio Fontana, Alighiero Boetti and Mimmo Rotella, amongst others, since its inception. In 2009 Ben Brown Fine Arts took their first step in an international expansion with the opening of an exhibition space in Hong Kong.

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Monday to Friday: 11am - 6pm

Saturdays: 10.30am - 2:30pm