

# CREATIVE BOOM

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### ENCHANTING EXHIBITION OF UNSEEN ARTWORKS BY PIONEERING PAINTER AND POET, MANOUCHER YEKTAI

by Katy Cowan



Manoucher Yektaï, *Summer Still Life 3*, 1982

A traditional Persian poet and a Modernist American painter, Manoucher Yektaï's heavily-impastoed oeuvre stands out as a vivid fusion of cultures.

Now you can see the first solo exhibition dedicated to the artist in the UK since the 1970s, 'The Night is Your Day', with eighteen unseen works from sixty years of practice in Sotheby's New Bond Street galleries from 26 – 30 April.

Born in 1921 in Tehran, Iran, Yektaï fell in love with the mystical poetry of Rumi, miniature paintings and deeply-rooted local art of cooking. Moving to New York in the pivotal year of 1948, the artist was then radically exposed to Abstract Expressionism – one of the first Iranian artists to be confronted with this new highly experimental form of painting.

Leo Castelli, the influential Italian-American art dealer, introduced him to a number of artists, which led to enduring friendships with Mark Rothko, Mark Tobey and Philip Guston to name a few.

Yektaï's profile continued to rise, and by the mid-1950s he was invited to exhibit at the Stable Gallery for a group show that included the likes of Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman and Franz Kline.

Yektai's bright, voluptuous, almost sculptural, paintings set him apart as the only 'Abstract Expressionist' to keep working through the classical genres of portrait, landscape and still-life – often merging the three, interlaced and interdependent, on a single canvas.

Yektai patiently made a life's work of his own distinct synthesis of Persian poetry and Action painting, Figuration and Abstraction. This extensive survey puts the spotlight on the highly cosmopolitan artist's striking and unique aesthetic revolution. 'The Night is Your Day' will take place between 26 – 30 April at Sotheby's New Bond Street galleries.