

**14th
ISTANBUL
BIENNIAL**



TUZLU SU



SALTWATER

Istanbul, 3 March 2015

Re: LETTER OF REQUEST OF LOAN

Mr. Johnny Mokbel
The Mokbel Art Collection
135 Sursock street, Ashrafieh - Beirut
P.O. Box 175-732, Lebanon
Tel +96 132 26 067

Cc:

Prof. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev
Curator
14th Istanbul Biennial
İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts
Sadi Konuralp Caddesi No: 5
Şişhane 34433 İstanbul, Turkey
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Ms. Manuella Guiragossian
Emmagoss Art Gallery
Ground Floor, street level, Centre Le Baron
Amaret Chalhoub, Zalka, Lebanon
Tel +96 130 44 473

Dear Mr. Johnny Mokbel,

I am writing you in reference to the 14th Istanbul Biennial exhibition, which will take place from 5 September – 1 November 2015 (preview 2-3-4 September), to request the loan of the painting *Départ* (1957) by Paul Guiragossian from The Mokbel Art Collection. Additionally, we informed the Estate of the artist regarding our request to exhibit Paul Guiragossian in the 14th Istanbul Biennial and they are supportive of it.

The 14th Istanbul Biennial of contemporary art is organised by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) under the artistic curatorship of Professor Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts is a non-profit charitable institution founded in 1973 that prides itself with being the largest presenter of performing and visual arts in Turkey. Since its inception in 1987, the Istanbul Biennial has been the driving force of contemporary art and culture in the city and in the region. Its efforts have been instrumental to the growth of new artistic and cultural platforms in Turkey and Middle East and have provided a unique space for international collaborations. Through the thirteen preceding biennials, a variety of different artists, both from Turkey and international, have had the opportunity to develop new artworks, test ideas and experiment social and aesthetic possibilities in relation to the vision of each successive curator or curatorial team.

As a distinctive international art event, the Biennial attracts a wide range of audiences and the openings events are visited by approximately 5,000 curators, collectors, press, museum directors and other art professionals from around the world. Its public programs and educational projects have served scores of local audiences. The 14th Biennial aims, in particular in 2015, to contribute to civic society building and peaceful relations through the potential of art and creativity.

Concerning her vision for this 14th edition of the Istanbul Biennial, titled **SALTWATER: A Theory of Thought Forms**, Christov-Bakargiev has stated, "the 14th Istanbul Biennial will look for where to draw the line, to draw upon, and to draw out through organic and non-linear forms that reconnect the research in art and its processes with other knowledges, including bio-sciences and oceanography, physics, mathematics and environmental studies, as well as story-telling, philosophy and its counterpoint in the brain studies of today's neuroscience. Invisible and visible waves, waves of people, waves of language, waves of history, brain waves and waves of thought shape the vision of the exhibition. This city-wide exhibition will take place in a number of different venues along the Bosphorus. It includes over fifty commissioned new artworks by eminent artists such as Etel Adnan, Francis Alÿs, Anna Boghiguian, Pierre Huyghe, William Kentridge and Sarkis Zabunyan and experimental works by young emerging artists from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas. Significantly, the 14th Istanbul Biennial will also include a select number of historical positions - drawings, paintings, photographs and objects that will historically contextualize the contemporary artworks and themes of the project, providing depth and reference points for the entire exhibition. These historical positions constitute lines of flight and nodes that underpin the exhibition as a whole, ideally ranging from Giuseppe Pelizza da Volpedo's painting *Fiumana* (1895-97) to Annie Besant's *Thought Forms* drawings and paintings (1901-5 ca); from Arshile Gorky's early 1930s drawings to Indigenous Australians' *Bark petitions*. It is within this frame that Christov-Bakargiev intends to present the painting *Départ* (1957) by Paul

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IKSV BIENAL 14°

SALTWATER

Guiragossian we are hereby requesting.

Professor Christov-Bakargiev's motivation for this loan request is the following: "The Biennale of Istanbul is at the forefront of exploring issues of art and society, suggesting that through artistic acts, forms of historical healing may be elaborated and worked through creatively. It is crucial that at this point in time, in 2015, a year that marks one hundred years from what is called *Hayots Tseghaspanutyun*, an exhibition of contemporary art in Turkey, such as the Biennale, focus also on through historical works of art, contemporary projects by Armenian artists and Armenian diaspora artists, artworks by international artists who take part in the biennale, as well artworks by other artists living in Turkey and not of Armenian descent, to come to terms with history in Turkey and worldwide, especially in such critical times as are our own. To address the past only as loss can be unproductive, so the 14th Biennial of Istanbul intends to create a dialogue between the work of exploring a traumatized past and the work of transforming history into a fertile terrain for the future, a culture of "compost" rather than complaint. Worldliness and flourishing, the celebration of life, and the emergence of new forms of life and art, can only meaningfully occur if a parallel recognition of loss and elaboration of trauma occurs. Paul Guiragossian created Modernist works that explore color and form to elaborate what it means to form a community, and to create that community not as a line but as a frontal façade of pictorial marks that stop time, and gaze back at the viewer. Each brushstroke becomes a pillar of humanity, in a community of pillars and marks that suspend history aesthetically, through art and often through the many maternities he also painted, alongside groups of people." Therefore we kindly would like to request the loan from The Mokbel Art Collection of the painting *Départ* (1957) by Paul Guiragossian.



Départ, 1957, 100 x 70 cm

The 14th Istanbul Biennial will take place in a variety of different venues throughout the city and its surroundings, including museums and non conventional spaces. The painting by Paul Guiragossian would be exhibited at the only museum of contemporary art of the city, The Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, also called "Istanbul Modern", which is the main venue of the exhibition, and has the highest standards of security and climate control, and we can assure you that the work would also be physically guarded at all times during the exhibition. Istanbul Modern, Turkey's first museum to organize modern and contemporary art exhibitions, was founded in 2004 and occupies an 8,000 square meter site on the shores of the Bosphorus. Istanbul Modern embraces a global vision to collect, preserve, exhibit and document works of modern and contemporary art and make them accessible to the broadest audiences. We are hereby attaching the museum facility report of the museum for your review.

The period of loan would ideally be 15 August – 15 November 2015, and the painting would be installed and conserved according to the highest standards of conservation for artworks. Should your reply - as I hope - be positive, our IKSV foundation will take care of sending you loan form, and organising insurance and transport of the artwork with the utmost care and we would appreciate learning of any further specific conditions of loan.

Enclosed you will find a brief presentation about Istanbul Biennial including the history of Istanbul Biennials, information about Professor Christov-Bakargiev and images of the biennial venue. We would be honoured if you consider this request favourably, and look forward to receiving your reply. Please do not hesitate to contact Professor Christov-Bakargiev (+90 549 775 4726 and ccb@iksv.org) or me (+90 530 668 5687 and bige.orer@iksv.org) for any further details concerning this request that you may require.

We thank you in advance for your kind collaboration and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience, and to welcoming you to Istanbul next September.

Best regards,



Bigge ÖRER
Director