

Preface

THE BARAKAT GALLERY

By Selma Holo

A CATALOGUE OF THE COLLECTION

Volume I

The art world is made up of art historians, critics, museums, the art market, the taste of the times, and above all, the objects themselves. Those art objects, which both effect and are affected by all of these factors, most often come to light of day by way of the art dealer. There are, however, all kinds of art dealers, ranging from those whose only concern is selling to those who truly love art and are scholars in their own right. Throughout my professional career, which included being a curator of the Norton Simon Museum and now finds me directing the Fisher Gallery of the University of Southern California and training young people for museum careers in our Museum Studies Program, I have learned to value the scholar-dealer for his or her insights into the nature of the works of art that fall into their special areas of interest.

Living and working in Los Angeles as I have for many years, I am anxious to encourage the evolution of our community into a major center in the art world. To be such a center, a city has to know and appreciate, to sell and buy, not only contemporary art, but ancient and old master art as well. That is, of course, well on the way of happening, and it is clear to me that Mr. Barakat is going to be an important part of that evolution. The art that he brings to our city is of startling quality. His sense of aesthetics is so highly developed and so refined that I am looking forward to their inevitable movement from collection to museum in order that they may become a part of our common experience.

Not only is Mr. Barakat bringing beautiful pieces of art to our attention, but he is already sharing them with us in noncommercial ways. No sooner did I ask him to lend a number of objects, including his beautiful Alexander head and a major Judaic relief to an exhibition at the Fisher Gallery, than he responded that "anything we needed" that he still owned would be available to us. Such generosity will help spread knowledge about the art of the ancient world in a city that can only profit by this kind of enrichment of its cultural memory bank. It is therefore, in the spirit of mutual cooperation that I welcome Mr. Barakat to Los Angeles and wish him the best in his new home.

May 1983

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