



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 30, 2023



MSU BROAD ART MUSEUM AND ESKENAZI MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT SAMIA HALABY RETROSPECTIVES IN 2024

The exhibitions will span over 60 years of Halaby's artistic career

East Lansing, MI and Bloomington, IN – After leaving the Midwest more than fifty years ago, the prolific painter and titan of digital art Samia Halaby (b. Jerusalem, 1936) will return to the region for her first two American retrospective exhibitions. Halaby moved to the US from Lebanon in 1954 after fleeing Palestine in 1948. Her artistic education was significantly shaped by American Midwest institutions, including Indiana University and Michigan State University, a lineage recognized through upcoming exhibitions at the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art at Indiana University and the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad Art Museum). *Samia Halaby: Centers of Energy* (Eskenazi Museum of Art) and *Samia Halaby: Eye Witness* (MSU Broad Art Museum) will show audiences the full scope of Halaby's monumental artistic career through paintings, digital work, sculptures, and drawings, including the never-before-seen paintings *Worldwide Intifadah* (1989) and *Six Golden Heroes* (2023).

On the upcoming exhibitions of her work, Samia Halaby commented, "Retrospectives are the accolades of long careers. They take me to my two graduating shows at my two alma maters,

back to my Midwestern home to exhibit in magnificent buildings by internationally known architects. I love it all.”

Samia Halaby: Centers of Energy opens at the Eskenazi Museum of Art on February 10, 2024. The first American survey of Halaby’s work, the exhibition will examine formal and thematic relationships across bodies of her work, considering simultaneously the influence of Halaby’s time spent in the Midwest, her years of teaching, and her analytic approach to generating forms, both on canvas and in computer code. Halaby’s current explorations in large-scale painting will be exhibited alongside her earliest forays into abstraction. Significantly, her kinetic paintings will be reanimated in real time to demonstrate the development of abstract forms into moving compositions of color and texture.

“Bringing the long arc of Samia Halaby’s remarkable career home to where she earned her MFA and taught painting is an extraordinary tribute to one of the greatest living artists. I am honored to work with Halaby to realize this ambitious contribution to art history,” said Elliot Josephine Leila Reichert, Curator of Contemporary Art at the IU Eskenazi Museum of Art.

“Samia Halaby’s dynamic and innovative approach to artmaking will offer IU students new ways of seeing and thinking about contemporary art. This partnership with the MSU Broad Art Museum presents a unique opportunity for student engagement across two Midwest campuses at institutions that value artistic experimentation,” said David A. Brenneman, Wilma E. Kelley Director, IU Eskenazi Museum of Art.

Samia Halaby: Eye Witness will open at the MSU Broad Art Museum on June 28, 2024. The exhibition will be Halaby’s first return to MSU since her graduation over sixty years ago. *Eye Witness* follows Halaby’s creative journey to invent an abstract visual language that conveys her experiences and reflects how she sees the world around her. From 1959 to 1960, Halaby attended MSU and earned her MA. It was at MSU that she began painting in earnest. Halaby’s paintings, which range from miniature to monumental, 2D to 3D, and monochrome to multicolor, were notably shaped by the experiences she had in each place, and shift throughout her itinerant career across the Midwest, the East coast, and the Arab world. *Eye Witness* will bring some of the paintings Halaby made during her time at MSU back to Michigan for the first time, returning the work of one of the most important and prolific painters of a generation, and an esteemed MSU alumna, to the institution where her artistic career began.

“This exhibition is a joyful homecoming for the inimitable Samia Halaby, one which is long overdue,” commented Rachel Winter, Assistant Curator at the MSU Broad Art Museum. “It is an honor to bring the artist and her work back to the place where her painterly journey began: MSU. I hope people will celebrate Halaby and this special moment with us, but also cherish what a unique and rare opportunity it is to see her work.”

“These landmark exhibitions will not only bring back into the spotlight the significant Midwestern roots of the esteemed, internationally regarded artist, Samia Halaby—it is also an important opportunity for the two museums to work together in partnership,” noted Interim Director Steven

L. Bridges of the MSU Broad Art Museum. “These retrospectives intersect to share each institution’s unique relationship to this artist and point to the ways university art museums continue to lead the field as sites of critical engagement.”

The accompanying catalogue, *Samia Halaby: Centers of Energy*, co-published by Hirmer Verlag, spans the works included in the companion exhibitions and Halaby’s creative periods in the Midwest.

Samia Halaby: Centers of Energy (on view Feb. 10–Jun. 9, 2024) is organized by the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art and curated by Curator of Contemporary Art Elliot Josephine Leila Reichert. The exhibition is supported in part by the Jane Fortune Endowment for Women Artists, David Phillips, and the IU Bloomington Public Arts and Humanities Project Grant.

About the IU Eskenazi Museum of Art

Since its establishment in 1941, the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art has grown from a small university teaching collection into one of the most significant university art collections in the United States. A preeminent teaching museum on the Indiana University campus, its internationally acclaimed collection includes more than 45,000 objects representing nearly every art-producing culture throughout history from around the world.

The Eskenazi Museum of Art recently completed a \$30 million renovation of its acclaimed I. M. Pei–designed building. The newly renovated museum is an enhanced teaching resource for Indiana University and southern Indiana. The museum is dedicated to engaging students, faculty, artists, scholars, alumni, and the wider public through the cultivation of new ideas and scholarship.

Samia Halaby: Eye Witness (on view Jun. 28–Dec. 15, 2024) is organized by the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University and curated by Rachel Winter, Assistant Curator, with Thaís Wenstrom, Curatorial Research and Administrative Assistant. Major funding for this exhibition is provided by the Eli and Edythe Broad Endowed Exhibitions Fund, with additional support from the Kathleen D. and Milton E. Muelder Endowment for Kresge Art Museum.

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad Art Museum) connects people with art through experiences that inspire curiosity and inquiry. Presenting exhibitions and programs that engage diverse communities around issues of local relevance and global significance, the MSU Broad Art Museum advances the university values of quality, inclusion, and connectivity. Opened on November 10, 2012, the museum was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Zaha Hadid and named in honor of Eli and Edythe Broad, longtime supporters of the university who provided the lead gift for its creation.

Image: 1 Samia Halaby, *Six Golden Heroes*, 2022. Collection of the artist, New York. Courtesy the artist. 2 Samia Halaby, *The City (Al Quds)*, 1959. Private collection, North Carolina. Courtesy the artist.

###

MSU Broad Art Museum and Eskenazi Museum of Art representatives are available for interview. For more information, please contact Director of Communications Zoe Kissel at the MSU Broad Art Museum (kisselzo@msu.edu, 517-884-4805) or Director of Creative Services Mariah R. Keller at the Eskenazi Museum of Art (kellmari@indiana.edu, 812-855-9132).