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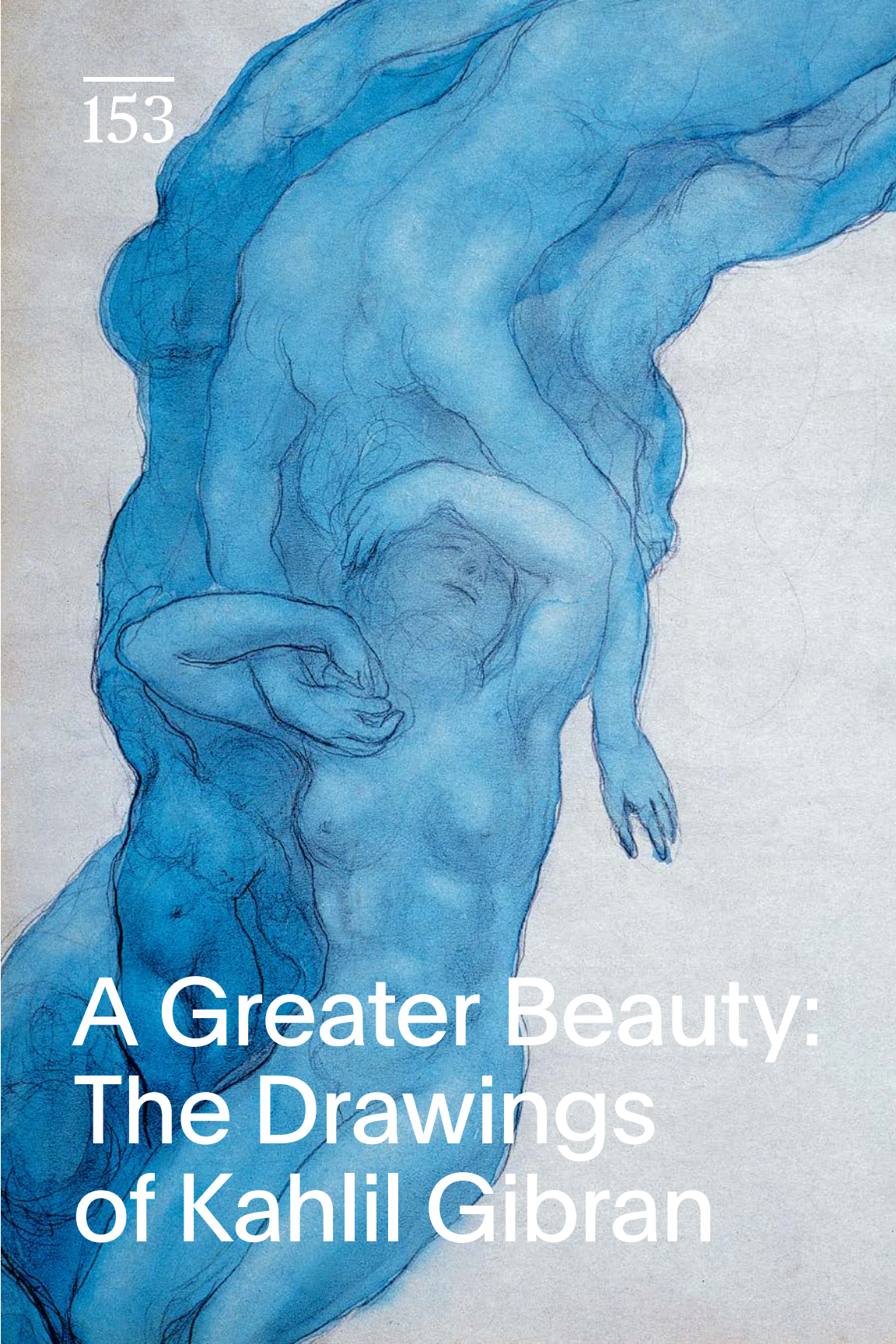
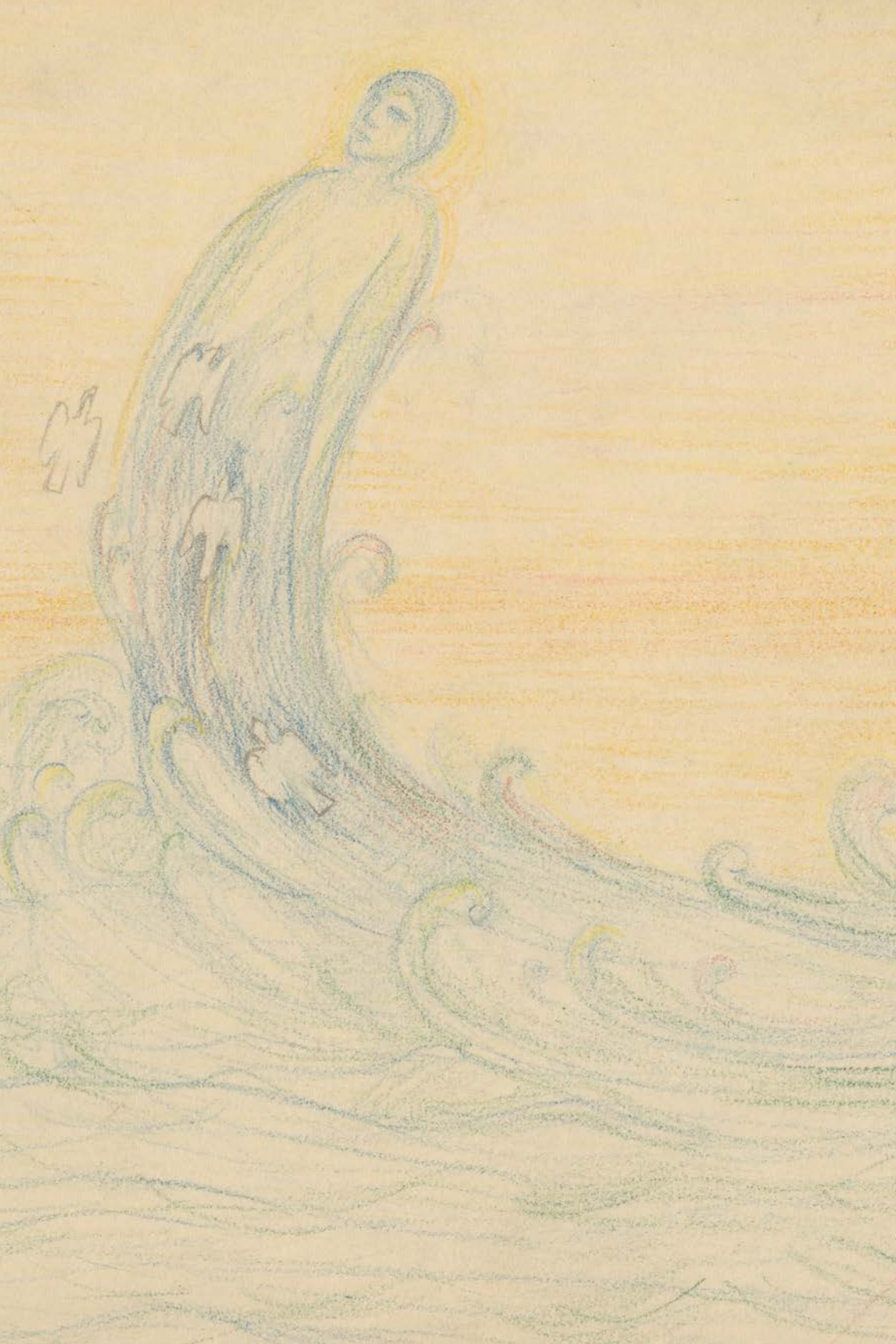
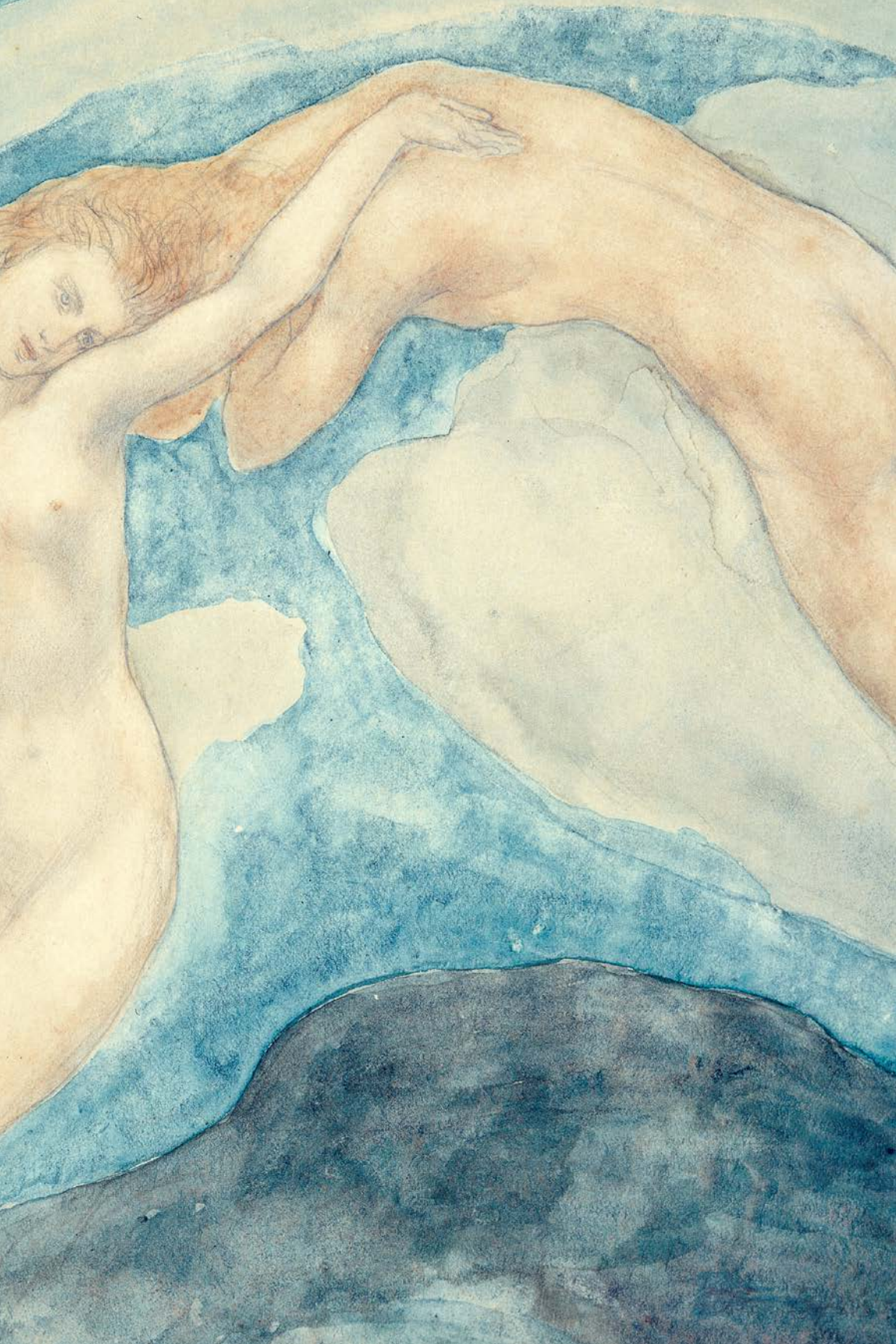


A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran





A Greater Beauty:
The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran

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The Drawing Center

A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran

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Claire Gilman
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Isabella Kapur
Anneka Lenssen
Jordan Nassar
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Director's Foreword

Laura Hoptman

During my first meeting as Executive Director with Claire Gilman, The Drawing Center's longtime curator, she told me about an exhibition she hoped to do on the works on paper of Kahlil Gibran. I knew that Gibran was a popular poet whose book *The Prophet* (1923) was a classic of its genre, the sweetness and muzzy spirituality of its lyrical lines making it the source of countless wedding vows for the better part of the twentieth century. Like many though, I didn't know Gibran was a visual artist. My surprise at his oeuvre piqued my interest; I likewise didn't know that Victor Hugo was an accomplished artist until I saw an exhibition of his magnificent watercolors at The Drawing Center in 1998. Such a show, of visual art by a well-known literary figure, was in The Drawing Center's DNA, so I enthusiastically green-lit the project.

That was almost four years ago. After several trips to Gibran's home city of Beirut, hours of research and consultation, and the collegial generosity of the Gibran Museum in Bsharri, Lebanon, the Museo Soumaya in Mexico City, the Telfair Museum in Savannah, Georgia, and numerous public and private collections in the United States and abroad, *A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran* and its eponymous catalog arrive at The Drawing Center.

Gibran (1883–1931) was one of the twentieth century's best known literary figures, a "tragic dualist" who was outspoken in his support for a greater Syrian and even pan-Arab state while at the same time accused in his work of "self-orientalizing." Described as a "non-sectarian mystic" with "a foot in" both Arab and Euro-American culture, he was a proud Arab and Maronite Christian, a Syrian patriot who spent most of his life on the urban East Coast of the United States and wrote in English as well as Arabic. His literary output drew on his knowledge of both Eastern

and Western literary traditions, and his hybrid style appealed to his readers' curiosity about the mysterious East while speaking to them in a romantic but colloquial style. *The Prophet* was the best-selling work of its time, and exactly 100 years after its publication in 1923 by Knopf in New York, it has been translated into over 100 languages and sold over ten million copies worldwide.

Gibran had made visual art since he was a teenager, but by 1916 he was drawing intensely and often, a practice he would follow for the rest of his life. The works he produced are clearly influenced by French and British artists of the nineteenth century, from William Blake to Pierre Puvis de Chavannes. There is also something Pre-Raphaelitic in his drawings of luscious, otherworldly female bodies and a clear strain of Symbolism in his misty atmospheres created by his signature use of bright, sky blue watercolor that delicately tints the thin paper he favored. But, as this exhibition argues, Gibran was as singular in his visual art as he was in his literary one. Accessible but also mystical, Gibran's works on paper display an astonishing graphic talent coupled with the finesse of a great storyteller. As known as Gibran's writing might be, his body of work on paper will be a surprise to most of our audiences.

The Drawing Center owes huge thanks to Claire Gilman, whose love of visual art and literature has often produced surprising and moving exhibitions by hyphenate visual artists who are also poets, writers, and illustrators. Claire was more than ably assisted by Isabella Kapur, our Curatorial Associate, who is also a crack researcher and a brilliant writer. Colleagues with expertise in Arabic and the art of the Arab world were also key to this project, as were contemporary artists from the region where Gibran was born. Their fascinating accounts of the artistic milieu that created Gibran or their reflections on the impact of his work on present-day artistic endeavors are included in this volume. For its beauty and its coherence, thanks are due to our editor, Joanna Ahlberg, and our designer, Peter Ahlberg.

An exhibition of this ambitious scale could not have been undertaken without the vision and support of our lead funder Dominique Lévy. We thank the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Karim F. Tabet and Family, Sandra and Tony Tamer, the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, Zaza and Philippe Jabre, Tony and Elham Salamé, Carla Chammas and Judi Roaman, Joumana Rizk, and Sara and Hussein Khalifa for their contributions to this exhibition and its attending publication. Furthermore, we are deeply grateful for the generosity of The Drawing Center's Board

of Directors, particularly Isabel Stainow Wilcox, Frances Beatty Adler and Allen Adler, Dita Amory, Jane Dresner Sadaka and Ned Sadaka, Harry Tappan Heher and Jean-Edouard van Praet d'Amerloo, the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, and Waqas Wajahat, who have all contributed meaningfully towards this project.

To display art that is rarely exhibited and to tell its story with love and scholarship is a great privilege, and those of us who now work at The Drawing Center are thankful to do so, as others have done for almost five decades. Exhibitions like *A Greater Beauty* are the products of passion coupled with expertise, and they are made possible by an audience of artists and art lovers in a city that gets its energy from diverse visions, consummate abilities, and that little sprinkling of genius present in all great works of art. We welcome Kahlil Gibran's work with joy and with the unmatched excitement of sharing it with a panoply of new people, as well as myriad lovers of Gibran's artistic efforts, both literary and visual.

PL. 1
Self-portrait, 1908

Acknowledgments

Claire Gilman

Working on this exhibition for the past four years has been a deeply enriching experience. I have learned not only about the fascinating figure that is Kahlil Gibran, but also, much about the global world in which he lived and worked, a world with complexities that seem both far away and ever relevant. In this endeavor, I had the assistance of many people to whom I owe immense gratitude. First, I must give huge thanks to the miraculous Anneka Lenssen—and to the equally miraculous Hannah Feldman for introducing me to her. Anneka's expertise in the art of the Arab world was essential to the realization of this project, and I am so grateful to her for answering my questions with grace and patience as she helped us untangle Gibran's prolific output and granted us essential insights into the Arabic language half of his career.

Thanks also to the individuals and institutions who have lent not only their artworks but also their knowledge to this exhibition. Thanks above all to Joseph Geagea at the Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum. Joseph has been unfailingly generous and hospitable throughout this process, and I am in awe of his peerless knowledge on all things Gibran. He received me at the museum with enthusiasm and kindness, and it was a true privilege to see Gibran through his eyes. Thanks also to the entire team at the Telfair Museum—particularly Benjamin Simons, Executive Director and CEO; Crawford Alexander Man III, Director of Curatorial Affairs and Chief Curator; and Jennifer Levy, Chief Registrar—for their support of this project. I am also incredibly appreciative of the hard work of the team at Museo Soumaya—Ana Paula Robleda Betancourt, Communications; Maribel Avendaño Reyes, Control de Obra (Registrar); Virginia Gómez; Pablo Berrocal Navarro, Acervo y Fototeca (Document and Photo Archives); Alfonso Miranda Márquez, Director; and in

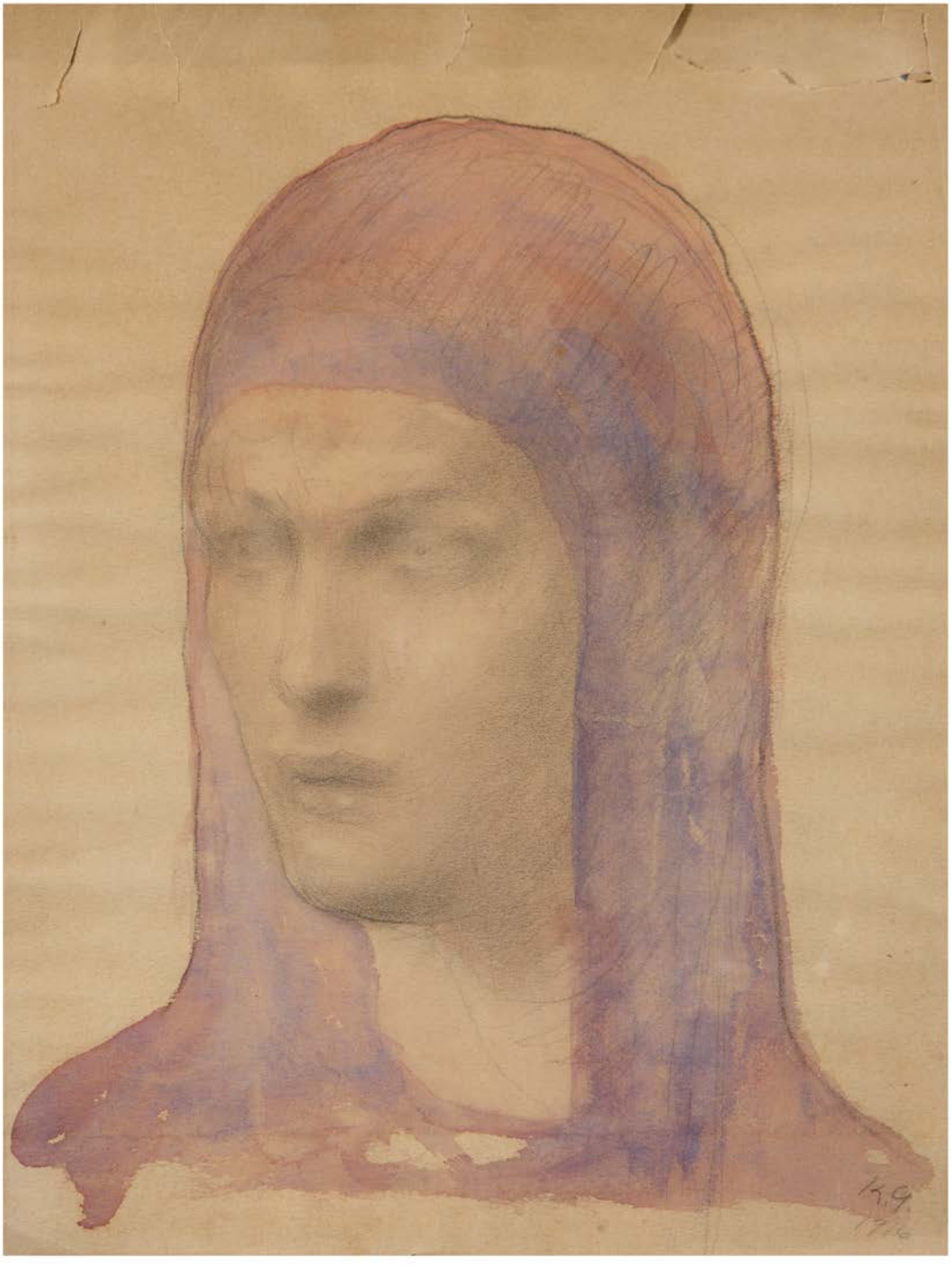
particular curator Laura González Eguiarte, who was always willing to answer our questions and dig deeper. My appreciation also goes to Chaitra M. Powell, Sarah Graham Kenan Curator of the Southern Historical Collection, and Matthew Turi, Manuscripts Research and Instruction Librarian, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, for their help wading through the rich diaries of Mary Haskell. Finally, special thanks to Tom Hyry, fellow Carleton College Alum and Associate University Librarian for Archives and Special Collections and Florence Fearrington Librarian, Houghton Library, for helping me navigate Harvard's massive library system and getting the loan process started.

My gratitude extends to all the lenders to the exhibition. Thank you to: Jordan Nassar; Caitlin Corrigan, Senior Associate Registrar, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Max Hollein, Marina Kellen French Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Sarah Adamson, Registrar and Collections Manager, Barjeel Art Foundation; Richard A. Haykel; Chirine Habbous; Saleh Barakat; Carol A. Chehab, Director, Saleh Barakat Gallery; Stuart Denenberg, President, Denenberg Fine Arts, Inc.; Ardys Kozbial, Widener Library, Harvard; Michael Hopper, Widener Library, Harvard; Elizabeth Barrett Sullivan, Curator of Exhibits, Arab American National Museum; Rima Zalghout, Librarian, Arab American National Museum; Matthew Stiffler, Research & Content Manager, Arab American National Museum; David Haberstich, Curator of Photography, Archives Center, National Museum of American History; Jawad Adra and the Nabu Museum team; Anne-Marie Eze, Associate Librarian for Collections and Programs, Houghton Library; Carie McGinnis, Preservation Librarian and Registrar, Houghton Library; Leslie Morris, Curator of Modern Books and Manuscripts, Houghton Library; Alexander Garcia, Associate Registrar for Loans, The New York Public Library; Janet Moore, Registrar for Loans from the Collection, MFA Boston; Peter Bae, Assistant University Librarian for Scholarly Collections, Princeton University Library; and Michel S. Moushabeck, Founder/Publisher/Editor, Interlink Publishing.

Additional thanks go to the scholars who have been invaluable in helping me understand Kahlil Gibran's life, work, and beliefs. Paul Gordon Chandler, Todd Fine, Waïl Hassan, Glen Kalem, Tanyss Carol Ludescher, Francesco Medici, Alexandre Najjr, Tania Sammons, and Stephen Sheehi deserve particular credit in this regard. And of course, no study of Gibran would be possible without the pioneering work of Jean Gibran and Kahlil G. Gibran, who in their biography of Gibran have written not only a thorough document of a life but

of the world in which Gibran moved and worked. Their research is exceptional. I am equally grateful to the catalog contributors who put their heart and soul into this project. I thank Lenssen and Hassan for their expert scholarship and Geagea, Ali Cherri, Jordan Nassar, and Mounira Al Solh for their heartfelt tributes.

As always, thank you to the entire staff of The Drawing Center for their dedication to this exhibition. In particular, thank you to former Registrar Kate Robinson for wrangling hundreds of works in the name of understanding the true scope of Gibran's work and to Registrar Sarah Fogel for taking over from Kate with grace and dedication. Thank you also to Olga Valle Tetkowski, Deputy Director, and Laura Hoptman, Executive Director, for allowing me to embark on this somewhat unorthodox project and supporting me along the way. Finally, enormous thanks to the people at The Drawing Center who helped gather the tremendous research that went into this project: curatorial interns Claire Corridon and Concetta Luise and last but not least Curatorial Associate Isabella Kapur, who took to the challenges of this project with her usual mixture of equanimity, rigor, and dedication.



PL. 2
Untitled (A Vestal), 1916

Kahlil Gibran: Formlessness with Formations in It

Claire Gilman

In March of 2019, during a trip to Lebanon to do research on artist Huguette Caland for an upcoming show at The Drawing Center, I had the privilege of visiting the breathtaking Nabu Museum situated on the coast of the Mediterranean in the village of El-Heri. Designed in collaboration with Iraqi-Canadian artist Mahmoud Obaidi and Iraqi artist Dia Azzawi as a simple open cube with a weathered steel façade, the museum brings together works of ancient art with modern and contemporary art from the region in a fluid exchange. Perusing the works on the walls, I was drawn in particular to a small image of a woman's veiled head [PL. 2]. Executed in soft pencil outline with barely-there features, the face set off from the thin brown paper by a simple watercolor veil in subtle pinks and blues, the drawing struck me as at once timeless and strangely contemporary. Timeless because of its quiet, hieratic aspect; contemporary because this quietude was invaded by a kind of restlessness as the face appeared to hover and dissolve simultaneously, much like the pooling watercolor surrounding it. Shifting imperceptibly from soft shading to feathery lines extending purposelessly over the watercolor veil, the pencil lines seemed to have a life of their own, infusing the stillness with energy. The image struck me as outside time not because it existed in a static universe but because it appeared to occupy an unlocatable non-space, full of internal movement and irresolution.

Approaching the wall label, I read the name of its author: Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān (1883–1931). The name was familiar but, I must confess, not as familiar as it probably should have been. I knew Gibran vaguely as the author of *The Prophet*, a book that had achieved near mythic status at the time of its publication and since but which I had never read. Later that day, in the bookstore of the Sursock Museum

in Beirut, I discovered a French-language book on Gibran's art.[1] I was surprised to learn that while many of his drawings were in Lebanon, there was also a huge amount of work at the Telfair Museum in Savannah and the Museo Soumaya in Mexico. Intrigued, I decided that I needed to find out more about this person—not only about Gibran the writer and Gibran the artist but Gibran as an individual in the world. And so I read and looked and researched and began to piece together a life.

That life, I discovered, was an embattled one, responsible for widely divergent reactions both within Lebanon, among the Arab American diaspora, and beyond. There are many who revere the Arab American immigrant who came to Boston's South End in 1895 as a child and raised himself from poverty to become a best-selling author and a kind of spiritual guide for those finding solace in his egalitarian blend of romanticism, pantheism, and non-sectarian spirituality infused with Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian elements. Deeply critical of secular and religious authority, Gibran proposed a non-traditional view of divinity, championing freedom of thought and rejecting absolutist principles in a way that resonates far beyond his own time. Others have difficulty looking beyond Gibran's complicated biography, deeming him an opportunist who made a name for himself by capitalizing on the lure of the East for the West. These same writers often fault Gibran for eschewing political realities, especially in his later work, and taking refuge instead in a mystical realm beyond borders and real-world disputes.

There is undoubtedly a certain truth to these claims. As Anneka Lenssen observes in her essay in this volume, "It is true that Gibran's appeals to mist, smoke, and transubstantiation seem to act at odds with his (and our) desire for active revolution." And yet it is also true that for the majority of his life, Gibran was deeply engaged in the debates about the future of his home country. He was from the beginning staunchly anti-imperial, opposed first to the Ottoman control of his native region and then to its instrumentalization by the United States and Europe as controversy reigned over what to do with the area comprised of modern-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. He worked tirelessly for much of his life to combat dissension among the various religious factions both in his home region and among Arab Americans, arguing forcefully for Syrian unity, independence, and spiritual strength in the

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1 Alexandre Najjr, *Gibran* (Beirut: L'Orient des livres, 2018).

face of Western dominance. As Tanyss Carol Ludescher lucidly demonstrates in her 2010 dissertation, the situation in the Levant was ever precarious and Gibran's allegiances shifted as he tried to determine the best course of action. At times he sided with Lebanese nationalists; at others, he advocated for a greater pan-Syrian or even Arab identity.[2] But what is beyond doubt is that Gibran felt the pain of colonization deeply and, as someone who had left Syria for the United States, a responsibility to preserve the integrity of his homeland while making his way in a new world.[3]

According to scholar Stephen Sheehi, it is in this context that we must understand the rise of the Arab Romantic movement–of which Gibran was part–as well as his and his peers' deliberate cultivation of the myth of the "East" against the ideals of the "West." Alongside Arab American intellectuals Ameen Rihani, Mikhail Naimy, and Nasib Arida, who together founded the influential Arab-language journal *al-Funūn*, Gibran cultivated an aesthetic of mutability and interior flux inspired by Symbolist writers like Maurice Maeterlinck and artists Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and Eugène Carrière, whom he interpreted through an "Eastern" lens. In Sheehi's words, the deliberate rejection of modernism for a Symbolist aesthetic in art and literature was not "the result of some 'idealistic' philosophy of beauty and art but historically and ideologically contingent," rooted in Arab American intellectuals' need to assert subjective presence in the face of Western claims of superiority and internalized racism.[4] Sheehi observes: "Self-Orientalizing provides the 'backward' Easterner with a position of privilege within a universal history in which the colonial subject otherwise finds itself imminently lacking (lacking progress, modernity, democracy, 'civilization,' etc.). In other words, the self-Orientalizing tact, rather than being innocent and reactive, was a

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2 Tanyss Carol Ludescher, "The Orient is ill": Kahlil Gibran and the Politics of Nationalism in the New York Syrian Colony, 1908-1920" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 2010).

3 For more on Gibran's deep investment in the political issues of his day see, in particular, Jean Gibran and Kahlil G. Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran: Beyond Borders* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2017); Anneka Lenssen, *Beautiful Agitation: Modern Painting and Politics in Syria* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), 25-73; and Adel Beshara, "A Rebel Syrian: Gibran Kahlil Gibran," in *The Origins of Syrian Nationhood: Histories, Pioneers, and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2011), 143-62.

4 Stephen Sheehi, "Modernism, Anxiety and the Ideology of Arab Vision," *Discourse* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 74.

crucial means for Arab Romantics to assert subjective presence in the age of colonialism."[5] In this way, as scholar Waïl Hassan has observed, Arab Romanticism recalled the Négritude movement, developed primarily by Francophone intellectuals of the African diaspora during roughly the same period as a way of reclaiming the value of Black culture against colonial domination.

Framed this way, Gibran's mysticism—his quest for an expansive self at one with god and nature—assumes a kind of political imperative. Equally to the point, his work resists simplification into some kind of utopian blend of religions and philosophies celebrating spiritual unification. Rather, I would argue that what gives Gibran's work its lasting appeal—and its relevance—is the felt alienation and ever-present sensation of longing that permeates his best writing and art. This is what moved me upon seeing his drawing in the Nabu Museum, and it is the opinion of renowned literary critic Eugene Paul Nasser of Gibran's most lyrical passages. Nasser observes: Gibran "wants desperately to trumpet a Humanism with absolutist foundations, but at the center of his vision (a center he keeps trying to shroud in mist), he is a tragic dualist whose exultation is fixed only in the idea of an ever-upwards-striving human spirit."[6] Manifesting "the pangs of cultural discontinuity,"[7] "Gibran's lyric cry for connection reveals his most authentic voice."[8] This same irresolution and striving radiates from his strongest drawings regardless of subject matter or medium.

In fact, one could reasonably make the claim that Gibran's sense of alienation fueled his boundless creative drive and sustained dissatisfaction with his own production. "I don't want to be just a painter of pictures, or a writer of poems. I want to be more," Gibran told his longtime friend and editor Mary Haskell.[9] Notably, Gibran's efforts in drawing and writing developed simultaneously, and he never considered himself to be more invested in one medium than the other. He did however abandon painting circa 1912, recognizing that drawing was more suited to his sensibility. As Lenssen points

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5 Sheehi, "Modernism," 75.

6 Eugene Paul Nasser, "Cultural Discontinuity in the Works of Kahlil Gibran," *Oxford University Press and The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* (MELSUS) 7, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 24.

7 Nasser, "Cultural Discontinuity," 21.

8 Nasser, "Cultural Discontinuity," 23.

9 Kahlil Gibran to Mary Haskell, June 7, 1912, in *Beloved Prophet: The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and Her Private Journal*, ed. Virginia Hilo (New York: Knopf, 1985), 81.

out, Gibran chose thin bond typing paper deliberately, manipulating the support to create pooling wash drawings that have a sense of movement and transparency his heavy oil paintings never attain.[10] His drawings, then, rather than his paintings, come closest to achieving his stated goal: "I hope that I shall always be able to paint pictures that will make people see other pictures out beyond the left or right edge. I want every picture to be the beginning of another unseen picture."[11] In this sense, we can think of his decision to illustrate his books as manifesting a legitimate desire to see his drawings in another form—just as including images undoes the singularity of his poetic voice by adding an alternate form of expression. Gibran is supposed to have closely supervised the photography and engraving of the drawings reproduced in *The Prophet*, for example, making sure the warm cream-colored paper complimented the text's tone. He observed to Haskell: "The work of these pictures, finishing them, has been very difficult for me. Every stroke had to be with a double consciousness—of the reproduction and of the picture as a picture. And I have been unwilling to spoil the picture for the sake of the reproduction."[12] In other words, the drawing, text, and future iteration of the drawing existed for Gibran simultaneously, each supplementing and undoing the other.

Gibran's earliest drawings date to circa 1900 when he was working in Boston as book-cover designer for the publishing house Copeland and Day, and they show him exploiting the potential of the medium in ways that counter the stylized, Orientalizing aesthetic he adopted for his book designs as well as for the illustrations he produced for Rihani's *The Book of Khalid* published by Dodd, Mead and Company in 1911. It must have taken courage for Gibran to continue his private drawing practice given that his book designs were lauded precisely for their Eastern sensibility. Reporting on Gibran's portfolio in the April 2, 1898, issue of the literature and art journal *The Critic*, the author remarks: "They are certainly striking and remind one, not unnaturally, of the designs of oriental stuffs. Only one was Americanized, and that was the least successful."[13] In contrast to the heavy outlining, interlocking patterns, and ornamental motifs Gibran employed in *The Book of*

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10 Lenssen, *Beautiful Agitation*, 60.
11 Gibran to Haskell, October 20, 1911, in *Beloved Prophet*, 47.
12 Gibran to Haskell, June 16, 1923, in *Beloved Prophet*, 412.
13 *The Critic: a weekly review of literature, fine arts, and the drama* 29, 841 (April 2, 1898), 232, quoted in Gibran and Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran*, 54.

PL. 3
Fifteen-year-old Gibran's illustration of the title poem from Duncan Campbell Scott's *Labor and the Angel*, c. 1902

Khalid and in his cover designs [PLS. 12, 13, 26], Gibran's private images were made with soft graphite, chalk, or crayon that he wielded with swift open strokes, resulting in striated, airy compositions [PLS. 22, 23]. He also made extensive use of the eraser, brushing it over the surface to create dappled effects and to render motifs like halos and orbs in negative. As Lenssen has explained, in this, Gibran was inspired by strategies of Pictorialist photography as practiced by his first mentor Fred Copeland Day who used special lenses to produce hazy, porous tones.[14] As early as 1898, in a drawing fifteen-year-old Gibran made for the title poem of Canadian writer Duncan Campbell Scott's *Labor and the Angel*, Gibran strove to find a way to suggest multiple orders of existence within a single image [PL. 3]. Here, the angel is executed in thin, broken pen lines, which delicately cross the thick, ink contours that define the farmer and his wife.

From 1908 to 1910, Gibran went to Paris to study art, where, sponsored by Haskell, he enrolled in the Academy Julian before abandoning formal training and pursuing independent study. Although Gibran's fame as a writer ultimately eclipsed his stature as an artist, Paris marked the beginning of a deep commitment to his visual craft, which he pursued until the very end of his life. Ultimately, Gibran's work in drawing settled into three or four distinct phases—watercolor and pencil sketches of solitary or groups of figures on empty grounds (c. 1914–19); detailed pencil sketches intended as illustrations for the first books he wrote in English: *The Madman* (1918) and *The Forerunner* (1920); and between 1921 and 1931, all-over watercolor compositions depicting figures in nonspecific landscapes (many of which were used to illustrate his later English-language books). Throughout, Gibran made numerous portraits of his friends and acquaintances, including cultural luminaries whom he was able to convince to sit for him. Depicting figures as wide-ranging as French artist Auguste Rodin; American artist Albert Pinkham Ryder; Blanche Knopf, president of Alfred K. Knopf and wife of publisher Alfred Knopf; British poet Francis Butler Yeats; Bengali polymath Rabindranath Tagore; leader of the Bahá'í faith Abdu'l Bahá; Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung; and Egyptian poet May Ziadeh, these drawings offer a fascinating portrait of the eclectic, culturally and spiritually diverse milieu in which Gibran lived and worked. They are not, however, experimental in technique. Ranging

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14 Lenssen, *Beautiful Agitation*, 40–43.

from quick impressions to highly finished renderings, the goal is to capture a life and, in this, they aim for clarity and veracity.

Gibran's watercolor and pencil sketches are different, whether intended as illustrations for his books or executed independently. (In many cases, it is difficult to determine whether the drawings that appear in Gibran's books were made expressly for them or whether they were selected after the fact.) Gibran's first concentrated period of drawing came on the heels of a time of focused political activity when he had little time for his own work. He was deeply preoccupied with reports of widespread atrocities perpetrated by the Turkish government in Syria and with the conflict between his support for war as a means of liberation and the pacifist inclinations of his American friends. During this time, Gibran served as secretary to the Syrian-Mount Lebanon Relief Committee where he sought funds to alleviate famine and impoverishment in his home country, and he published numerous appeals in the Arab American press. In the November 1913 issue of *al-Funūn*, Gibran penned "An Open Letter to Islam," addressed "To Muslims from a Christian Poet," in which he beseeched Christians and Muslims to work together to defy Ottoman forces;[15] and in 1916 he contributed to a special edition—"Syria in Distress"—with drawings and a poem entitled "Dead Are My People."[16] One drawing showed a profile of his mother captioned, "Face of My Mother, Face of My Nation," accompanied by the following statement: "This is a world born from the heart of Gibran. It is incumbent upon us, every Syrian, to adopt it like a constitution—so as to give purpose in these days brimming with strife and adversity" [PL. 4].[17] Of this drawing executed with Gibran's signature striated pencil marks, Lenssen observes: "Heavy outlining without shading the interior gives the head a messianic quality as if its skin were destined to be abandoned by its spirit."[18] Indeed, this drawing is very much like a watercolor-and-pencil portrait of his mother dated 1916 that Gibran titled *Towards the Infinite* because, he explained, "It portrays her in the last moment of her life over here and the first moment of her life over there."[19] Head thrown back

15 *Al-Funūn* 1, no. 8 (November 1913).
16 *Al-Funūn* 2, no. 5 (October 1916).
17 Statement translated by and quoted in Lenssen, *Beautiful Agitation*, 63.
18 Lenssen, *Beautiful Agitation*, 63.
19 Kahlil Gibran to May Ziadeh, January 28, 1920, in *Gibran: Love Letters*, trans. and ed. by Suheil Bushrui and Salma Haffar Al-Kuzbari (London: Oneworld Publications, 1983), 55.

وجه أمي وجه أمتي

جبران خليل جبران

هذه كلمة ولدت في قلب جبران وعندنا انهُ يجب على كل سوري ان يتخذها دستورا لاميالهِ ومقاصده في هذه الايام المفعمة بالمرارة والشدائد

PL. 4
Page from *Al-Funūn*, "Syria in Distress," October 1916

FIG. 1
Auguste Rodin, *Femme nue, genou en terre et bras levé*, n.d.

"upon a white background which is yet not exactly white,"[20] the mottled face (is it pink, yellow, or some shade of gray?) seems both to vibrate from within and to be strangely bloodless, so cool are its tones and indistinct its features [PL. 58].

This work was part of an intense interval in the studio circa 1916 as Gibran retreated from his political activities to prepare for an upcoming exhibition at Knoedler Gallery. According to his biographers, Gibran's periods of public action were often followed by immersion in his home and studio, drawing and writing being ways to relieve the stress of his efforts on behalf of his homeland, even as these pressures remained undiminished.[21] What registers above all in these drawings, consisting primarily of images of nudes and mythological figures, is conflict as pencil and watercolor do battle on the surface of the paper. Scholars have noted the influence of Rodin's watercolors on Gibran's work from this period, and it is true that Gibran was very taken by the French artist whom he met in Paris and convinced to sit for a portrait. But comparing Rodin's work with Gibran's reveals important differences. In Rodin's nudes, watercolor and pencil act together, pencil serving primarily as a structural guide and direct record of bodily gesture while wash pigment works to extend the animated graphite marks [FIG. 1]. In the words of Rodin scholar Tilman Osterwold, "The watercolors expand the physical rhythm of motion, permeating the substance of the body and rendering three-dimensional volumes transparent."[22]

In Gibran's drawings by contrast, pencil and watercolor are on two separate paths, each connected to the figure but not to each other. Consider an untitled watercolor of a figure wrapped in a self-embrace dated 1917–20 [PL. 5]. Here, sepia wash weighs down the pencil marks through saturation while, simultaneously, swirling graphite lines soften the body's heavy pencil contour resisting containment. Even as they define the figure, the pencil marks are engaged in their own tumultuous journey, resulting in a chaos of lines that seem to want to leave the body behind: "I, a human chaos, a nebula of confused elements, I move amongst finished worlds,"

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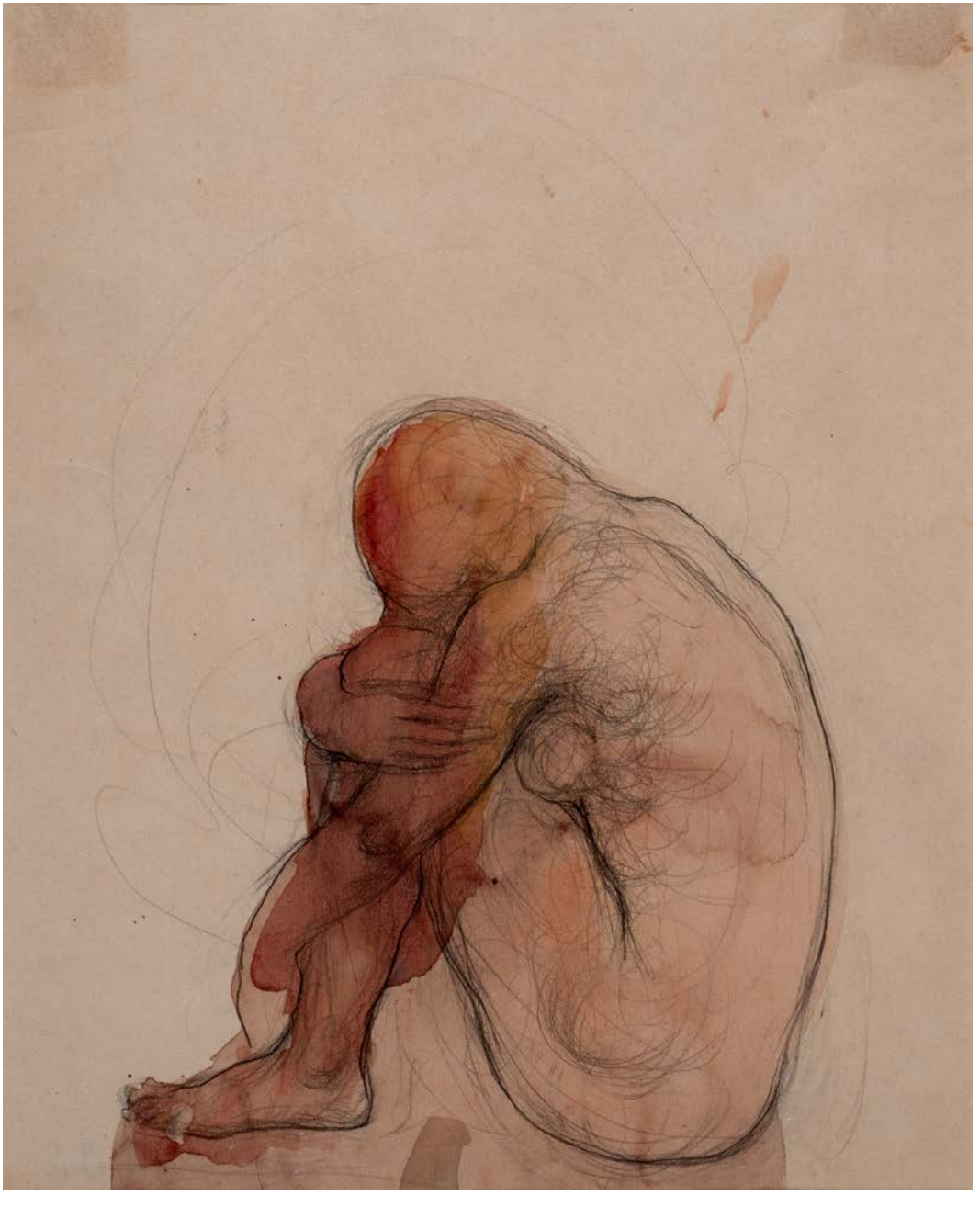
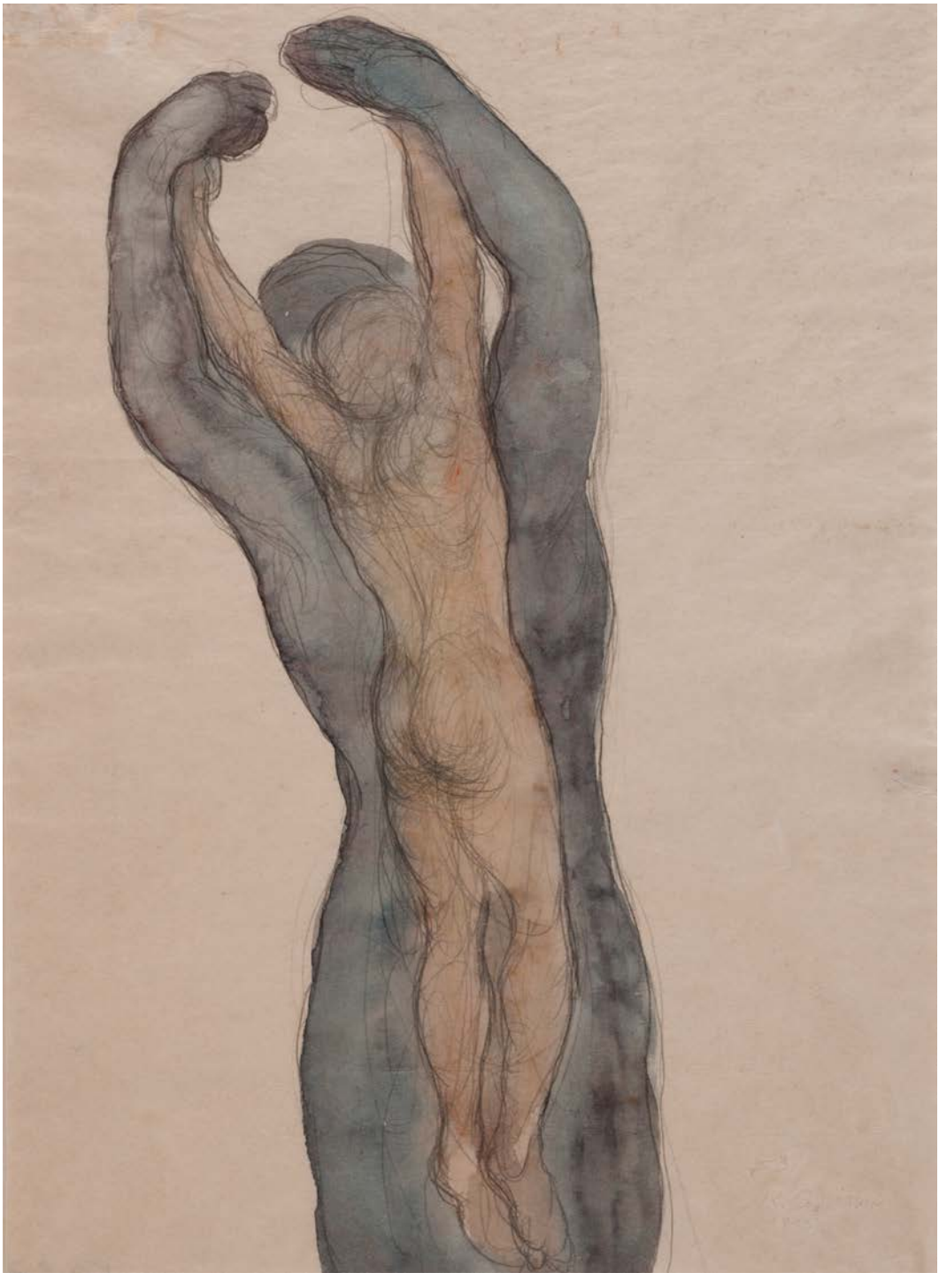
20 This quotation is from Alice Raphael's review of Gibran's exhibition at Knoedler Gallery in 1917: "The Art of Kahlil Gibran," originally published in *The Seven Arts* (March 1917): 531-34; republished in Kahlil Gibran and Alice Raphael, *Twenty Drawings* (New York: Knopf, 1919), 13.

21 Gibran and Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran*, 270.

22 Tilman Osterwold, "Those are no longer lines, and that is no longer floor; they are movement and life," in *Auguste Rodin: Watercolors* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2005), 26.



PL. 5
Untitled, 1917-20



PL. 6
Uplifted Figure, 1915

PL. 7
Untitled, c. 1900–31

wrote Gibran in *The Madman: His Parables and Poems* (1918).[23] Author and Jungian scholar Alice Raphael explored the ambiguity and contradiction in these images in an insightful 1917 essay, which Gibran incorporated two years later in his book *Twenty Drawings*. Of his more saturated compositions Raphael observes: "The level of his painting is very delicate—plane suggesting another plane in the most subtle gradation so that at first there seems to be but little color, and then comes a swift realization that it is all color, only imperceptibly diffused."[24] There is no modelling in a work like *Uplifted Figure* (1915), for example, just a pooling and mottling of color, as if the skin is invaded by movement [PL. 6]. Conversely, a sketch showing a figure visited by a spirit is all pencil save for a thin wash stain that differentiates human from divine [PL. 7]. The figures resemble a combustible ball of energy on the point of either exploding or imploding; it is unclear which.

Gibran worked on this series of drawings while he was writing his first English language publications, *The Madman* and *The Forerunner*, published in 1918 and 1920 respectively. But they were not intended as illustrations. Aware that these, his first English-language books, would be published in black-and-white, he set about creating a series of graphite compositions executed in a finished manner reminiscent of his portrait heads. In these drawings, however, we see Gibran pushing the medium as he explores the possibilities and limitations of graphite. Gibran's 1920 drawing for the poem "The Dying Man and the Vulture" in *The Forerunner* is a case in point [PL. 8]. The poem describes a man grappling with death who finally calls upon a vulture to assist in wresting his spirit from his body.[25] Gibran's effort to hold different states of being in suspension is immediately apparent in this at once awkward and lyrical composition. His rendering is emphatically literal as the man raises his hand to the bird, his departing spirit outlined behind him in white while an androgynous godhead leans down from the sky. By contrast, the method of depiction is boldly experimental with soft shading alternating with heavy cross-hatching interrupted by wide swaths of erasure. Pencil and eraser both define and undo

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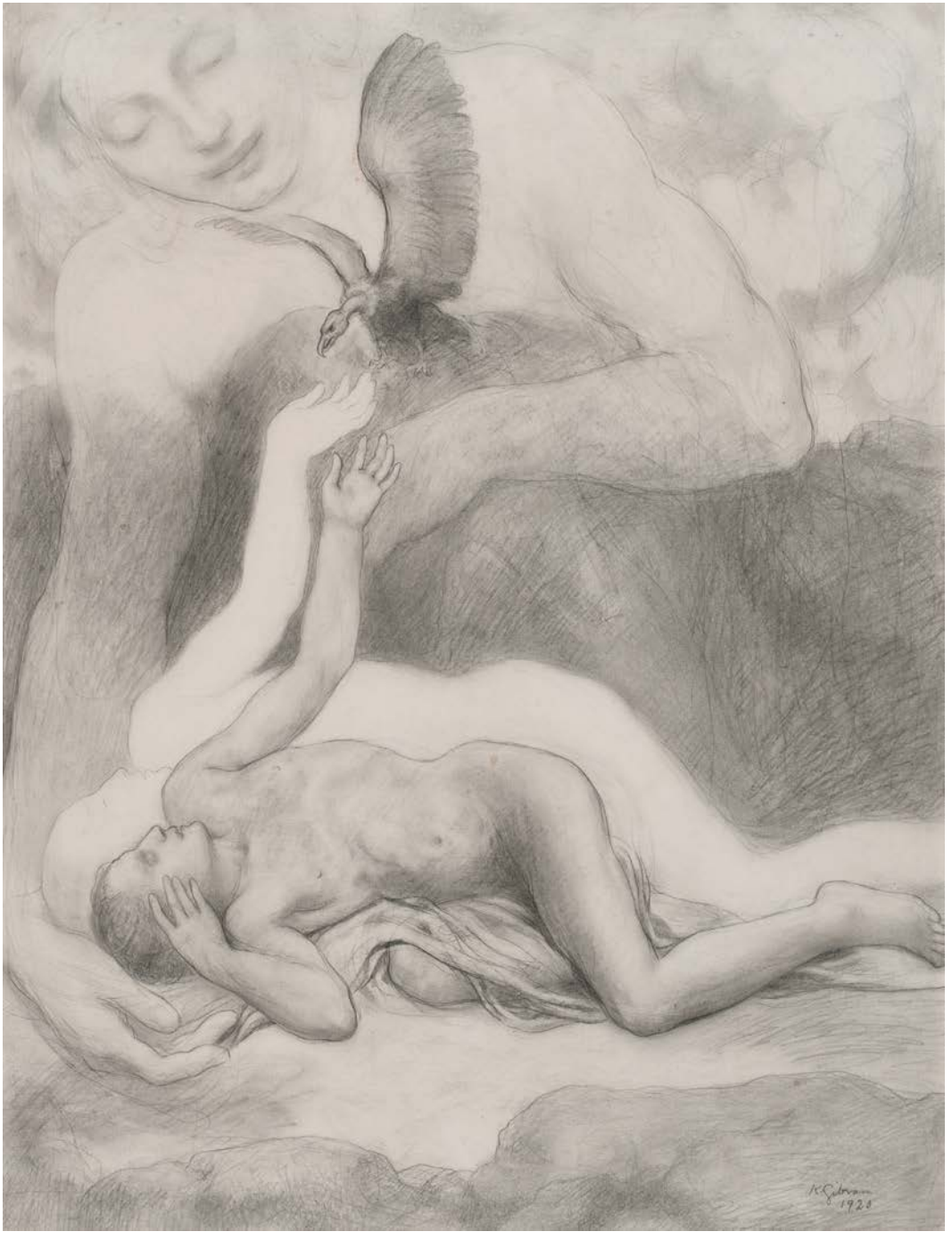
23 Gibran, "The Perfect World," in *The Madman: His Parables and his Poems* (1918) in *Kahlil Gibran: The Collected Works* (New York: Everyman's Library, Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 47.

24 Raphael, "On the Art of Kahlil Gibran," in *Twenty Drawings*, 12. See also note 20.

25 Gibran, "The Dying Man and the Vulture'" in *The Forerunner* (1920) in *Kahlil Gibran: The Collected Works* (New York: Everyman's Library, Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 83-85.



PL. 8
The Dying Man and the Vulture, 1920

simultaneously, aligning presence and absence, fullness and void, construction and dissolution. The overall affect is of different, irreconcilable modalities comprised of the same stuff and substance. As Lenssen observes, "These were drawings that had a life in reproduction, where the colorless greys and moiré patterns associated with the printing process make for still more porous images of outlines and hollows."[26]

Around 1921, Gibran set about finishing *The Prophet*, a book he had conceived many years prior, and, in the drawings he made for the publication, he changed his technique yet again in what would be the final shift of his artistic career. He began to paint almost exclusively in a watercolor palette of bright blues and greens and hazy purples, placing his figures in abstract landscapes occupying the entire paper surface. He understood that his drawings could have a dual life, both as black-and-white reproductions in his books and as luminescent images in their own right. Haskell celebrated the change during a 1920 visit to his studio proclaiming, "Oh! So beautiful; so full of that planetary completeness that is blazing out in all of his present work."'[27] Indeed, if any of Gibran's drawings achieve his aspiration to transmutation and mystical union it is these. "Art is mist carved into an image—a step from nature towards the infinite," he famously proclaimed.[28] But what did "mist," a term he used repeatedly throughout his writings, mean to Gibran? What would mist carved into an image look like? What, for Gibran, is completeness? Like most everything with Gibran, the term is shot through with contradiction. On the one hand, it carries with it the idea of spiritual homecoming: "O mist, my sister, my sister Mist, / I am one with you now. / No longer am I a self. / The walls have fallen."[29] On the other, it implies an irresolvable separation. In a letter to May Ziadeh dated November 3, 1920, Gibran proclaims: "I am mist, May, I am mist that cloaks things but never unites them. I am mist unchanged into rain water. I am mist, and mist is my loneliness and my being alone, and in this lies my hunger and my thirst."[30]

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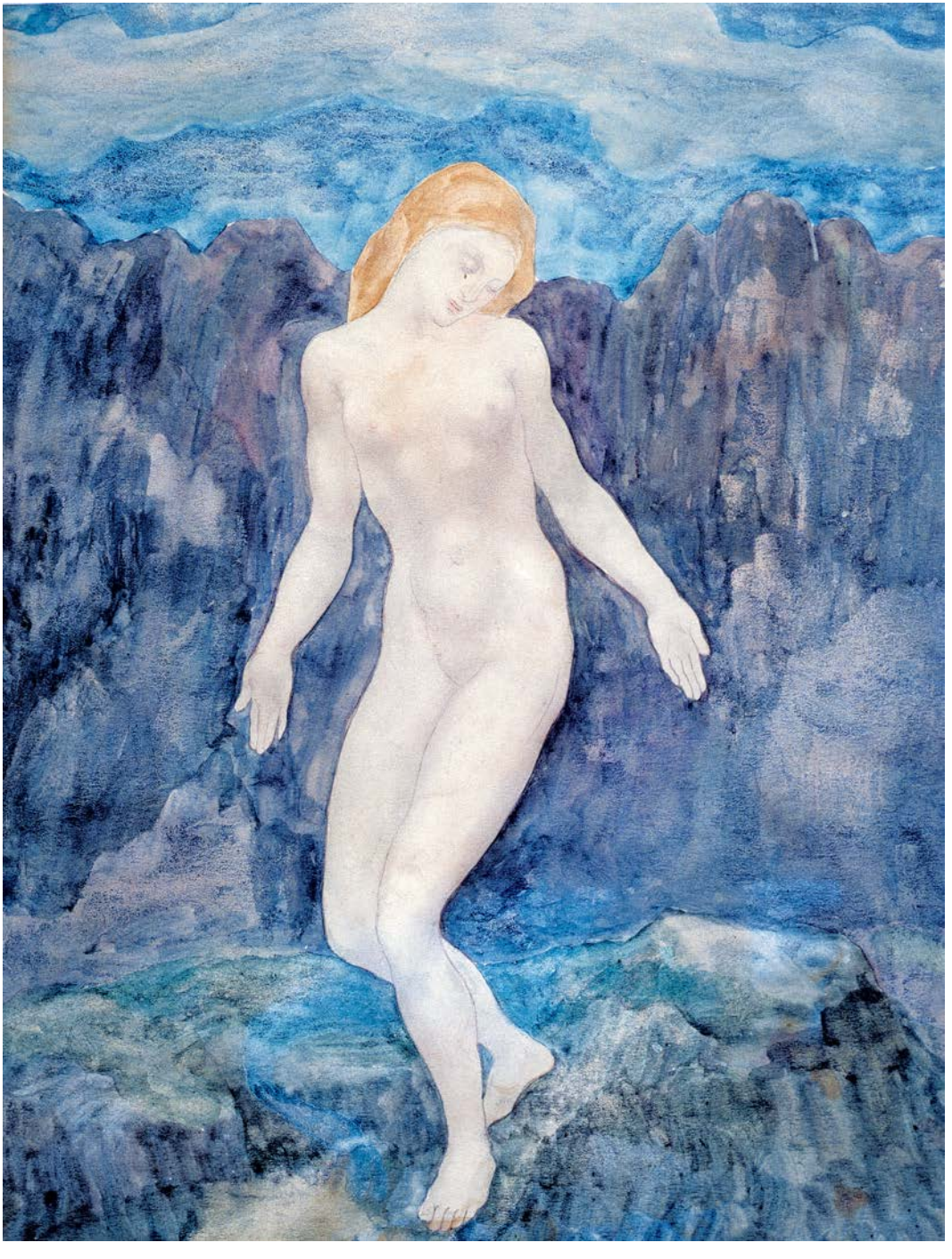
26 Lenssen, *Beautiful Agitation*, 25.
27 Quoted in Tania Sammons, "Kahlil Gibran: The Artist," in *The Art of Kahlil Gibran* (Savannah, GA: Telfair Books, 2010), 24.
28 Kahlil Gibran, *Sand and Foam* (1926), in *The Collected Works*, 227.
29 Kahlil Gibran, *The Garden of the Prophet* (1933), in *The Collected Works*, 557.
30 Gibran to Ziadeh, November 3, 1920, in *Gibran: Love Letters*, 67.



PL. 9
The Gift, 1923

Gibran's mature watercolors exploit this irreconcilability in multiple ways, especially in the relationship between the figures and their settings. Gibran's landscapes are gorgeous explorations of voluptuous color and tone with overlapping watercolor passages producing shadows and hollows that appear to shield unseen beings. By contrast, his figures are nearly colorless, standing out against ground in a way that recalls Gibran's erased pencil drawings, their alabaster skin indicating absence more than flesh. Writing on the 1923 drawing accompanying the chapter "The Gift" from *The Prophet*, conceptual artist and theorist Jalal Toufic imagines an unnamed holy-man encountering the image [PL. 9]. Striated rocks—"reminiscent of those in Chinese art or in Chinese-influenced Persian art"—transform before the saint's eyes into feathers while, Toufic observes, the humanoid figure becomes a wayward angel both of the earth and disconnected from it: "While the halo of the angel delineated him from everything else in the landscape, it did not do so from the mountain."[31] What Toufic is getting at is the peculiar back-and-forth that takes place in this image and others as Gibran's figure appears to be both of the landscape and inherently outside it, the figure's smooth body acting as a kind of breach in space.

In the late '20s and early '30s, Gibran's palette became darker and more monochrome and his drawings more abstract. In a 1930 landscape, the blue-gray figures are scarcely visible emerging from a similarly smoky ground [PL. 10]. And yet, their presence is fundamental, a rebuke to Gibran's dream of unitary oneness and selflessness. Their outlines synonymous with shadow or chasm, these figures are temporary crystallizations of matter both indelibly part of and separate from the nondescript space in which they find themselves.

The contradiction and duality inherent in these drawings gives visual testament to Gibran's penchant for paradox: "Formlessness with formations in it";[32] "How can one be indeed near unless he be far";[33] "If I stay here, there is a going in my staying; and if I go there is a staying in my going";[34] "Let there be spaces in your

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31 Jalal Toufic, "Kneeling Angel with Mountainous Wings (aka Toward a Title for a Gibran Watercolor Left Untitled," *Discourse* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 23-37.

32 Gibran wrote this phrase to accompany a drawing he penned in Haskell's journal. Mary Haskell Diaries, Volume 42, December 22, 1911, Minis Family Papers, 1739-1948, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

33 Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (1923), in *The Collected Works*, 158.

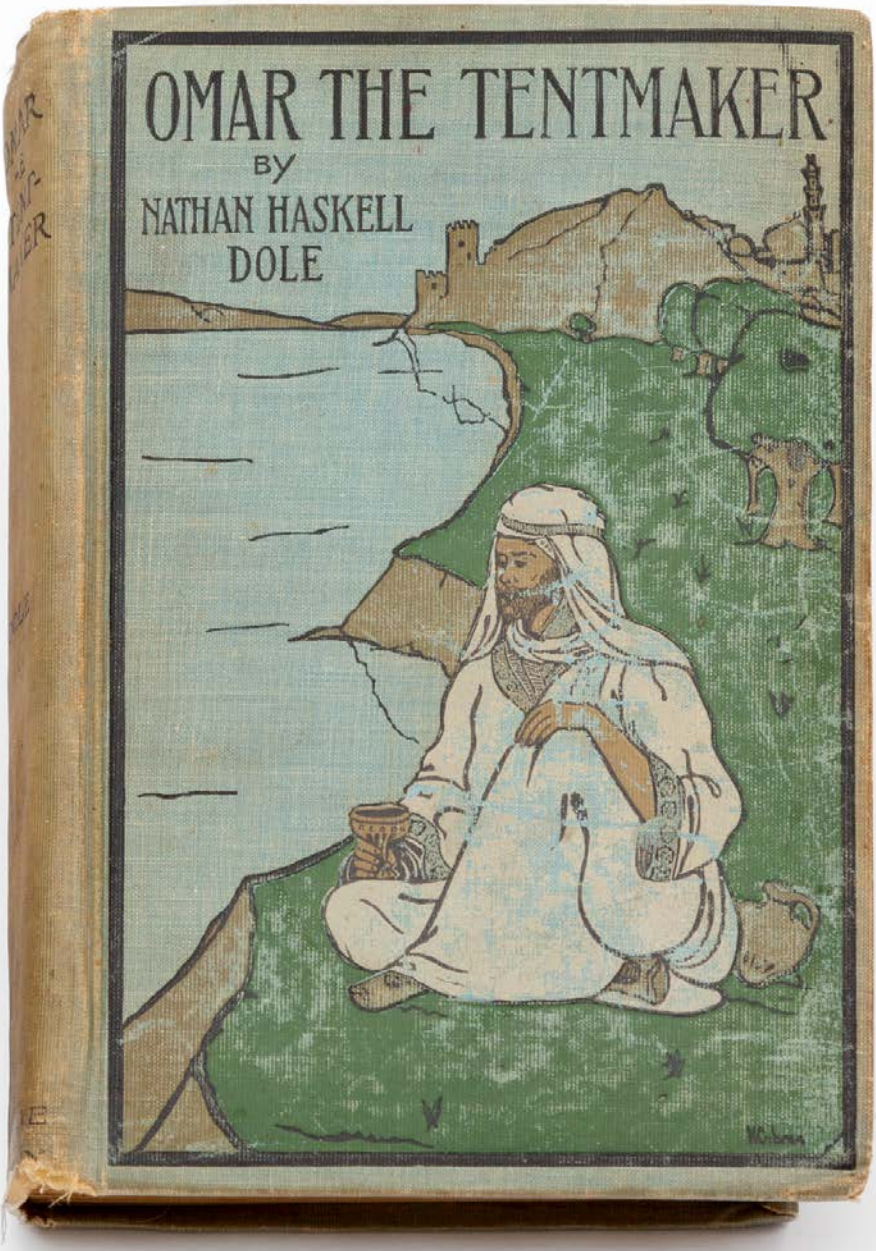
34 Kahlil Gibran, *Sand and Foam* (1926), in *The Collected Works*, 170.

PL. 10
Human Figures Spread Out Below a Dark Landscape, 1930

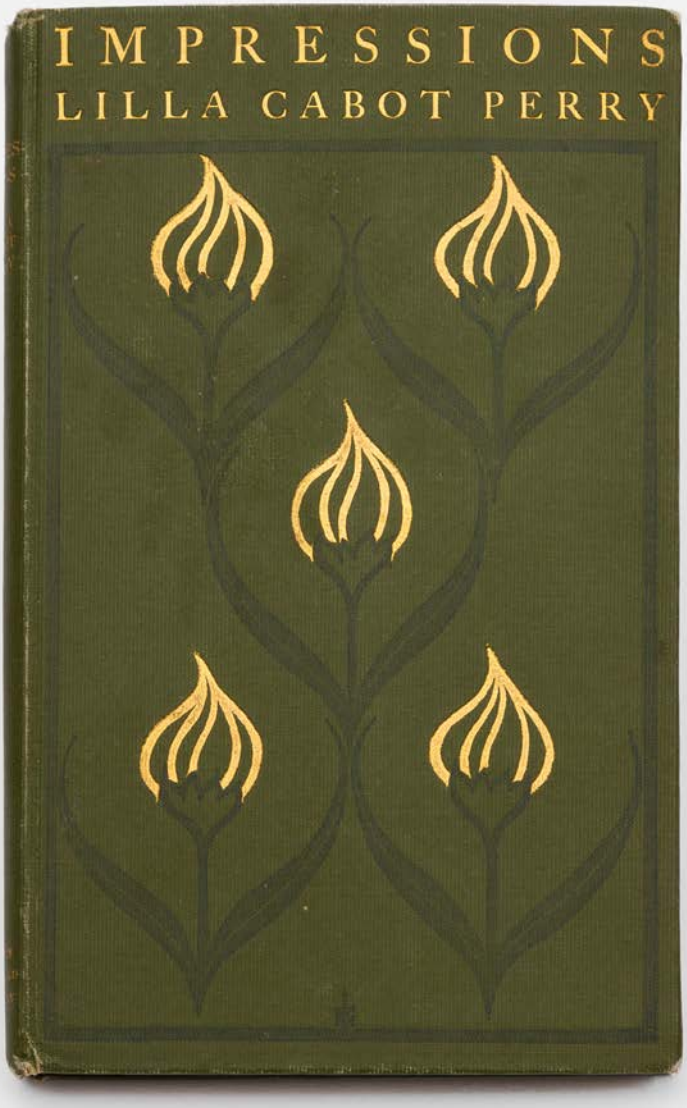
togetherness."[35] Phrases like these reflect precisely what Gibran's enthusiasts adore in the writer, and what his detractors deplore. In her 2008 piece on Gibran in *The New Yorker*, Joan Acocella observes of these oppositional statements: "They appeal not only by their seeming correction of conventional wisdom but also by their hypnotic power, their negation of rational processes."[36] But what if these statements resonate not because of what they deny but because of what they illuminate in the process? No matter how willfully irrational, Gibran's words and images register a deep uncertainty, a distrust of absolutist thinking, and a conviction that things might be otherwise. They are the statements of someone who was never at home in the world and whose political and cultural insecurity informs everything he wrote and everything he created. This insecurity and a concomitant aspiration to a world not subject to the laws that regulate our society is what feels so urgent today.

35 Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (1923), in *The Collected Works*, 105.

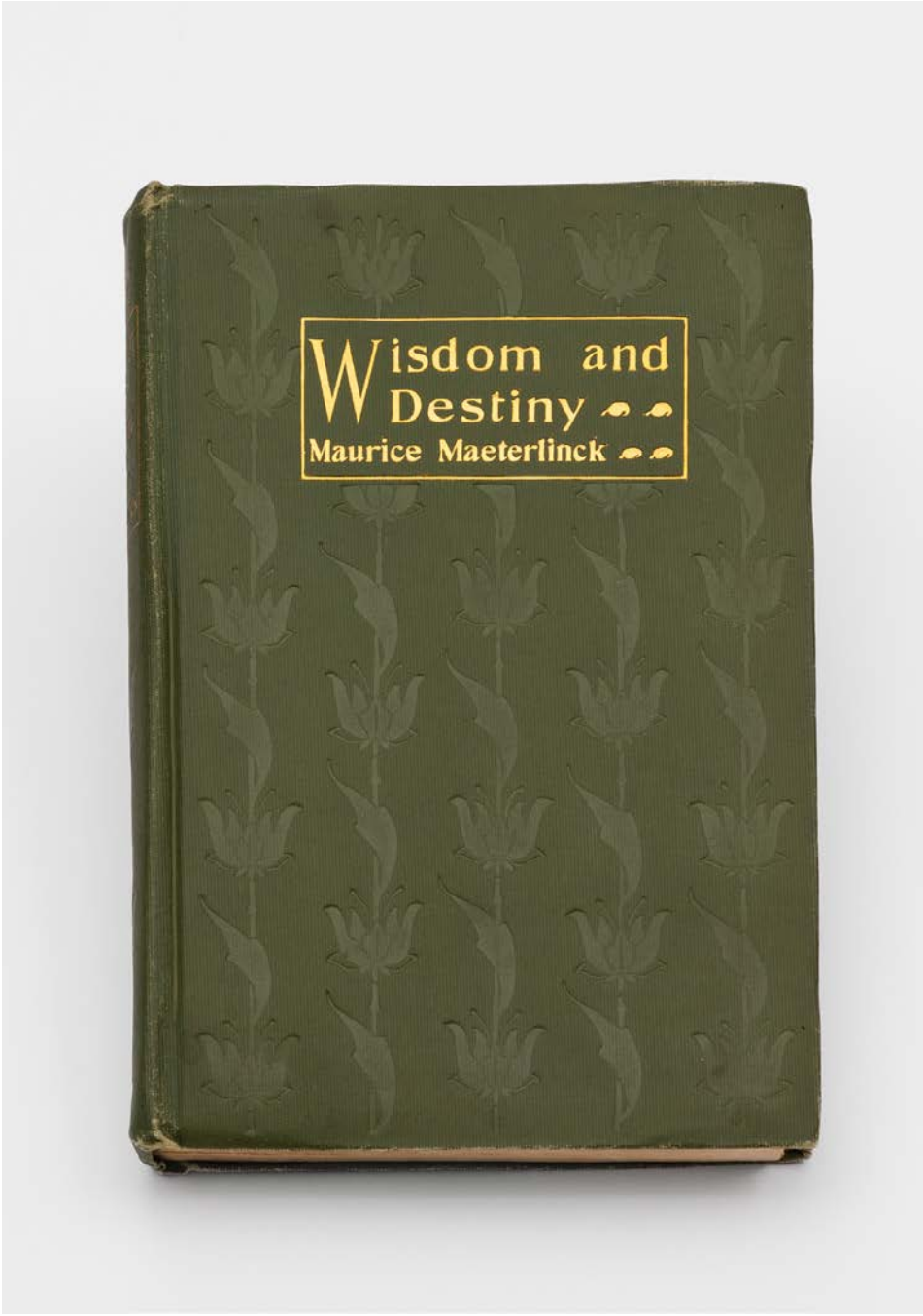
36 Joan Acocella, "Prophet Motive: The Kahlil Gibran Phenomenon," *The New Yorker*, December 30, 2007, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/01/07/prophet-motive.



PL. 11
Nathan Haskell Dole (author), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator), *Omar the Tentmaker*, 1898



PL. 12
Lilla Cabot Perry (author), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator), *Impressions*, 1898

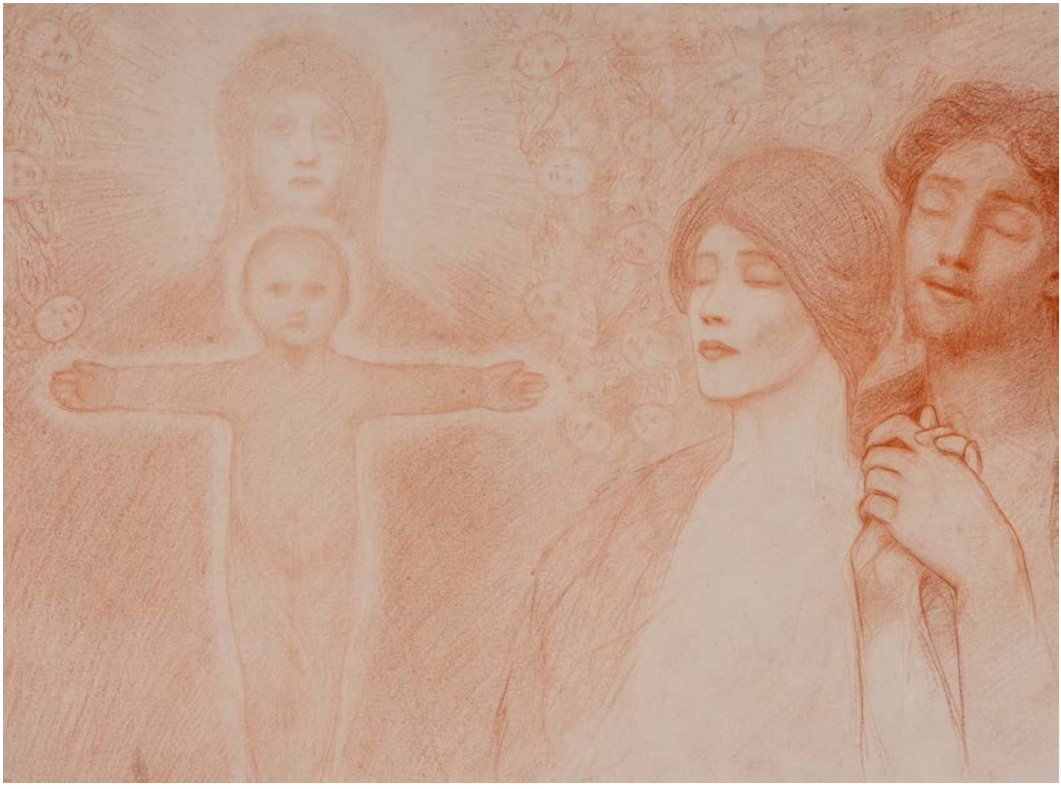


PL. 13
Maurice Maeterlinck (author), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator), *Wisdom and Destiny*, 1902

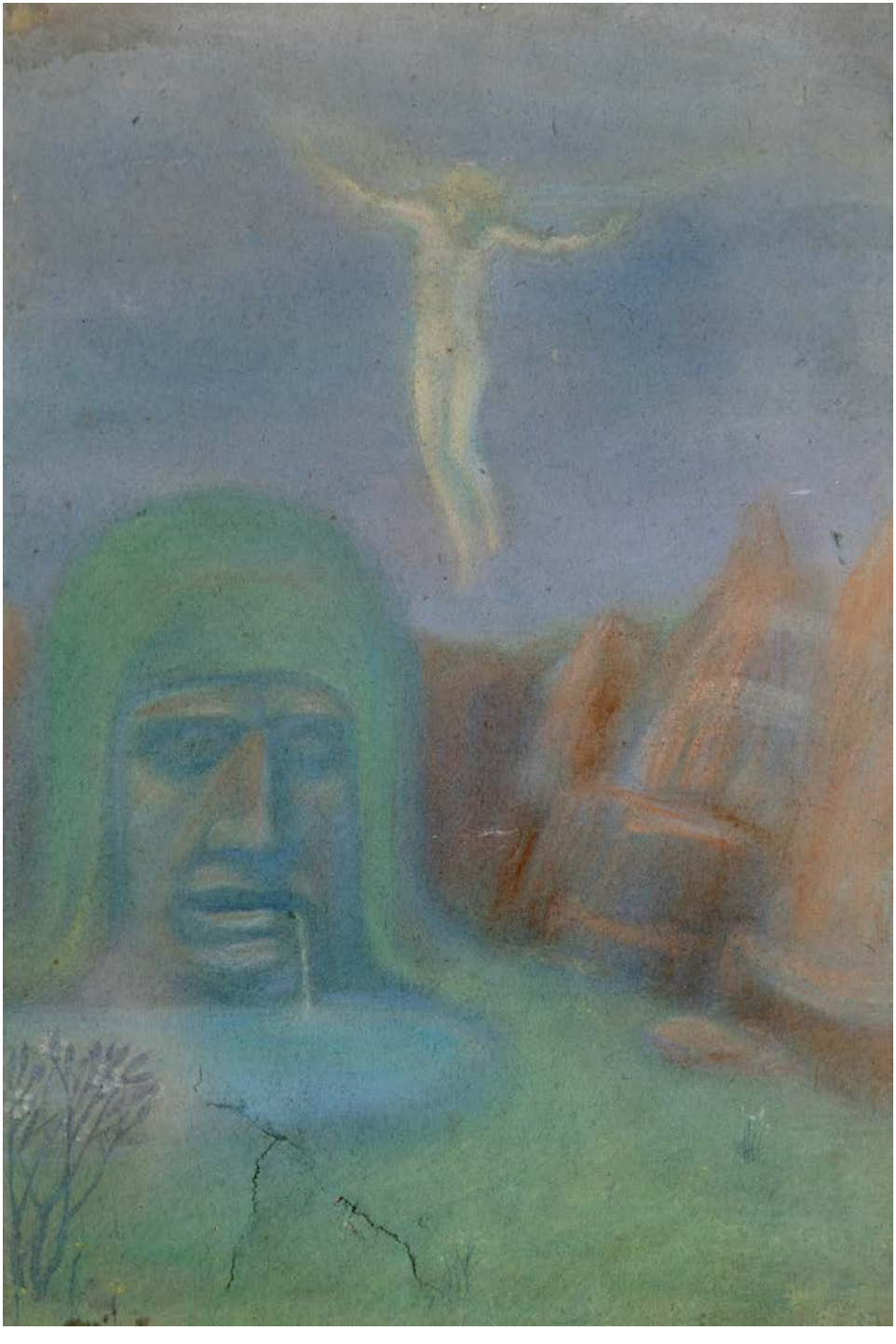
PL. 14
Untitled, 1907

PL. 15
Fille en Prière, 1902

PL. 16
Person with Angel, 1902



PL. 17
The Vision of Adam and Eve, c. 1904



PL. 18
Untitled, 1907

PL. 19
Untitled, 1903

PL. 20
Untitled, 1903

PL. 21
Untitled, before 1908

PL. 22
Untitled, 1903

PL. 23
Untitled, 1903

Kahlil Gibran: A Biographical and Intellectual Sketch

Waïl S. Hassan

Early Life

Jubrān Khalil Jubrān (1883–1931) was born in the village of Bsharri, in Mount Lebanon, then part of the Ottoman province of Greater Syria, to Khalil Saad Jubrān and Kamila Rahme. Little is known about his childhood in Lebanon, except that he seems to have been a dreamy, withdrawn child who loved to draw and spend time outdoors in the scenic hills that would later inspire his writings about nature [PL. 24]. He had an older half-brother, Buṭrus, from his mother's first marriage, and two younger sisters, Sultana and Mariana. His father disliked tending the walnut grove he owned and worked instead as a tax collector. A gambler and heavy drinker, he was arrested for embezzlement and his property was confiscated. Destitute, Kamila took her four children to Boston in 1895, settling in the immigrant slums of the South End. They were part of a large wave of Arab immigrants who left Greater Syria for the Americas in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In Boston, Kamila worked as a pack peddler until she was able to open a small shop that Buṭrus operated, while Sultana and Mariana worked as seamstresses. Only Khalil was sent to the Quincy School, where a clerk misspelled and shortened his name to Kahlil Gibran, by which he became known beyond the Arab world. He began to learn English at Quincy and to attend art classes at the nearby Denison House, where he soon met avant-garde photographer and publisher Fred Holland Day, who became interested in Gibran's drawings. Day would have a profound and lasting impact on the twelve-year-old. As Gibran's nephews and biographers Jean Gibran and Kahlil Gibran put it, Day photographed young Kahlil "in mysterious Arab burnooses, just as he dressed Armenians in turbans, blacks in Ethiopian regalia, Chinese with flutes, Japanese

PL. 24
Drawings from untitled sketchbook (Cedars of Lebanon/Man with fez), c. 1895

FIG. 2
Fred Holland Day, *Kahlil Gibran with Book*, 1896

in kimonos. … [T]hrough Day's lens ghetto waifs became 'Armenian Princes,' 'Ethiopian Chiefs,' and 'Young Sheiks.' Day's titles infused the children with an unexpected sense of privilege and dignity. Kahlil, in particular, fortified his self-image and sought to overcome the reality of a poverty-stricken childhood with a vision of nobility and lineage. With Day's lofty labeling, he was no longer a slum child who lived in a dark alley; the silvery image of himself which he saw on Day's platinum-coated plates showed far more. Within a year, he was striving to live up to the grand illusions which Day had caught."[1]

Day was also Gibran's first publisher, using several of the promising boy's drawings to illustrate Copeland and Day publications. Day's influence on Gibran must have been worrisome to his mother, for she decided to send the fifteen-year-old back to Lebanon to attend a Maronite school and learn Arabic, which he could speak but neither read nor write. By the time Gibran sailed for Lebanon, he had managed to sell an entire portfolio of his drawings to an editor at Scribner's. The writer who reported the event in the April 2, 1898, issue of *The Critic* goes on to say that the drawings "remind one, not unnaturally, of the designs of oriental stuffs. Only one was Americanized, and that was the least successful. Now I wonder why more Syrians, Turks, and other Orientals with whom New York abounds have not tried their hands at this sort of work before."[2] Perhaps unwittingly, this writer pointed the way to success for "Oriental" writers and artists in the United States: they can thrive so long as they cater to the perceived public taste for exotica but not when they address "Americanized" topics. Gibran learned this lesson all too well.

He returned to Boston in 1902, shortly after Sultana's death of tuberculosis. The following year, Buṭrus died of the same disease and Kamila of cancer. Gibran looked after the shop until its debts were paid and then lived on Mariana's earnings. Day arranged an exhibit for Gibran's work in 1904, at which Gibran met Mary Haskell, a school principal who would become his patron, friend, and editor of the English-language books he wrote in the second phase of his writing career, from 1918 onwards [PL. 93]. His first, Arabic phase, however, began in this early period with a weekly column in *al-Muhājir* (The Immigrant), one of several Arabic-language newspapers published in New York. The paper also published his

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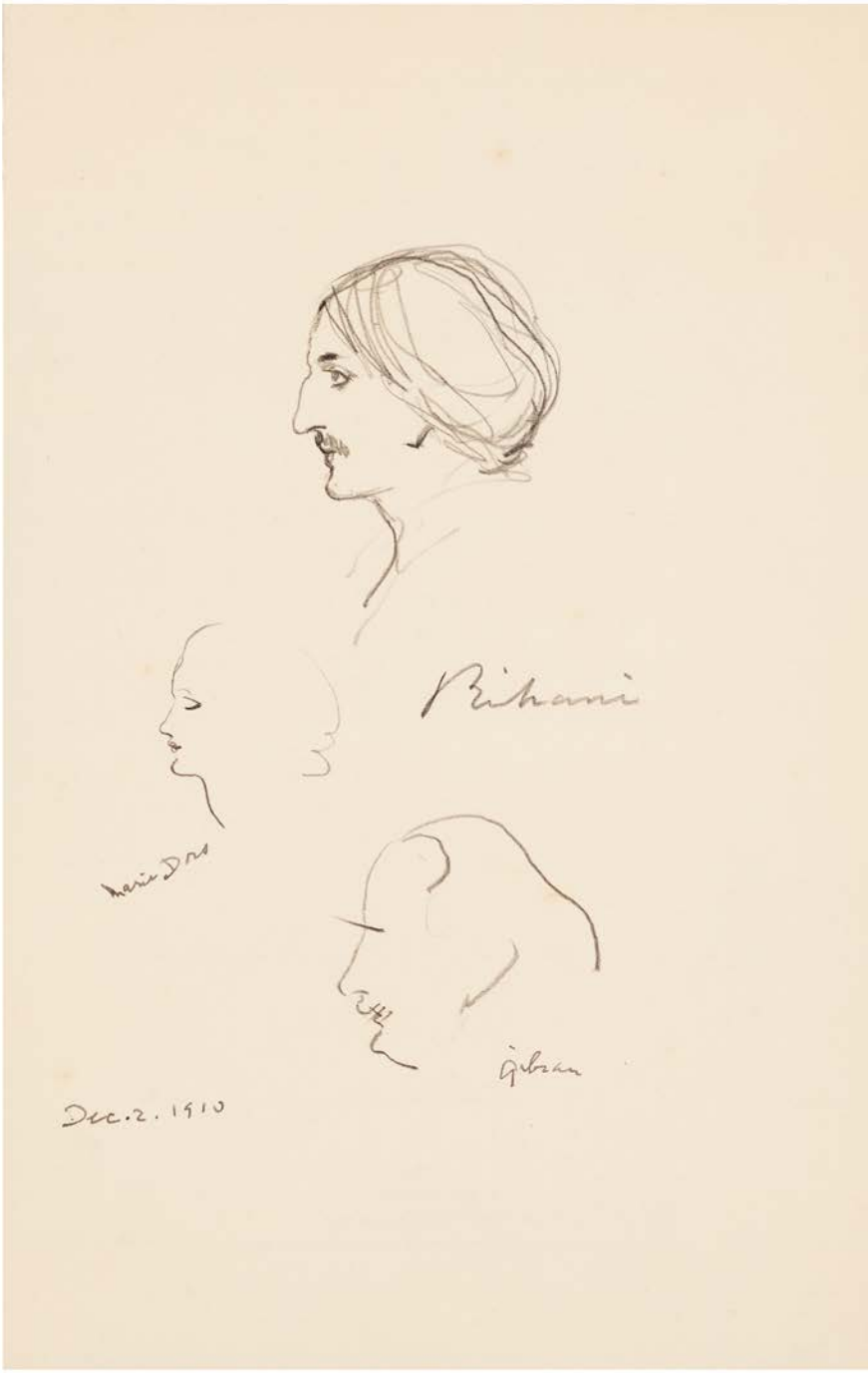
1 Jean Gibran and Kahlil Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran: His Life and World* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1974), 54–55.

2 Quoted in Gibran and Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran*, 65.

early Arabic-language books: a short treatise on music (1905), three short stories in a volume entitled *ʻArāʼis al-Murūj* (1906, Spirit Brides, later translated under the whimsical title *Nymphs of the Valley* in 1945), another short story collection called *al-Arwā al-Mutamirrida* (1908, *Spirits Rebellious*), the novella *al-Ajniḥa al-Mutakassira* (1912, *The Broken Wings*), and finally his collected columns under the title *Damʻa wa Ibtisāma* (1914, *A Tear and a Smile*). Largely sentimental, these works criticize social conditions in Lebanon, patriarchal conventions, restrictions on personal freedom, and the corruption of Maronite clergy. From 1908 to 1910, Haskell sponsored Gibran's art studies in Paris, where he was first exposed to works that would leave a clear mark on his own: the paintings of William Blake and Eugène Carrière, the sculptures of August Rodin, and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Back in the United States, he moved to New York City.

Mahjar Writer

Although Gibran's Arabic-language works won recognition in the Arab world, he was not the only or the first Arab American writer. That latter distinction belongs to Ameen Rihani (1876–1940) [PLS. 25, 98, 99], prolific writer in Arabic and English and the author of the first Arab American novel written in English, *The Book of Khalid* (1911), for which Gibran provided the cover and in-text illustrations [PL. 26]. The protagonist of Rihani's novel also seems to have served as a blueprint for the titular character of Gibran's *The Prophet* (1923). Rihani and Gibran met in Paris in June of 1910 and traveled together to London that summer. Gibran admired his elder compatriot, with whom he shared similar ideas about art, literature, and politics, and who had in 1905 already introduced Arabic prose poetry, a genre that Gibran would also use. Rihani spearheaded a group of Lebanese writers in New York who came to be known in Arabic as the Mahjar (immigrant) school, which included Mikhail Naimy, Elia Abu Madi, Nasib Arida, Nadra Haddad, and Rashid Ayyub. They rejected the time-honored conventions of classical Arabic poetry, conventions that had recently been infused with new vigor by leading poets in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Mostly self-taught, by contrast, the Mahjar group of New York lacked the formal Arabic education expected of poets, and their knowledge of European literature was also eclectic. Looking for a freer, more fluid poetic medium to express their social and political criticism, they were captivated by European Romantics and American Transcendentalists like Rousseau, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelly, Emerson, and



PL. 25
Profiles of Rihani, Gibran, and Marie, December 2, 1910

TO GOD[1]

In the religious systems of mankind, I sought thee, O God, in vain; in their machine-made dogmas and theologies, I sought thee in vain; in their churches and temples and mosques, I sought thee long, and long in vain; but in the Sacred Books of the World, what have I found? A letter of thy name, O God, I have deciphered in the Vedas, another in the Zend-Avesta, another in the Bible, another in the Korân. Ay, even in the Book of the Royal Society and in the Records of the Society for Psychical Research, have I found the diacritical signs which the infant races of this Planet Earth have not yet learned to apply to the consonants of thy name. The lisping infant races of this Earth, when will they learn to pro-

[1] Arabic Symbol.

PL. 26
Ameen Rihani (author), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator), published by Dodd, Mead and Company, Pages from *The Book of Khalid*, 1911

such vineyard as my Hermit's and the world will not further need reform. For through all the vapour and mist of his ascetic theology, through the tortuous chasm of his eremitic logic, through the bigotry and crass superstition of his soul, I can always see the Vineyard on the one side of his cell, and the Church on the other, and say to myself: Here be a man who is never idle; here be one who loves the leisure praised by Socrates, and hates the sluggishness which Iblis decks and titivates. And if he crawls between his Church and his Vineyard, and burrows in both for a solution of life, nay, spins in both the cocoon of his ideal, he ought not to be judged from on high. Come thou near him; descend; descend a little and see: has he not a task, and though it be of the taper-under-the-bushel kind? Has he not a faith and a sincerity which in a Worm of the Earth ought to be reckoned sublime? 'If there were sorrow in heaven,' he once said to me, 'how many there would continuously lament the time they wasted in this world?'

"O my Brothers, build your Temples and have your Vineyards, even though it be in the rocky wilderness."

Whitman but were repelled by the various styles of modernist literature and art.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the Mahjar group experimented with prose poetry and used simpler form and diction. They played an important role in the history of modern Arabic poetry that M. M. Badawi describes this way:

> By introducing a new conception of poetry, by adding a spiritual dimension to it, so to speak, by turning away from rhetoric and declamation, by concentrating on the more subjective experience of man in relation to nature and ultimate questions, by introducing biblical themes and images into their poetry, by their preference for short meters and stanzaic forms, the *Mahjar* poets, especially of the United States, exercised a liberating influence upon modern Arabic poetry. Indeed their extremist views were often rejected, the revolt of some of them against Arabic versification which resulted in the once fashionable prose poetry of Rihani and Jibran, proved to all intents and purposes to be a dead end, at least until recently; their language was sometimes severely criticized for not being sufficiently correct or even grammatical, and the tendency of many of them to turn their back on the Arab cultural past was often violently attacked. Nonetheless, it would be difficult to exaggerate the significance of the role they played in the development of modern Arabic poetry, and of the subtle influence they exercised in shaping modern Arab sensibility. Without their seminal minds the course of modern Arabic poetry would in many ways have been different.[3]

It is likely that Badawi wrote this with Gibran in mind, for after a falling out of sorts with Rihani during the 1910s, Gibran emerged as the leader of that group and the president of al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya (the Pen League), which was first founded in 1915 or 1916, reformed in 1920 in New York, and disbanded at his death in 1931 [PL. 27]. Gibran's Arabic writings also drew much of the criticism to which Badawi refers.

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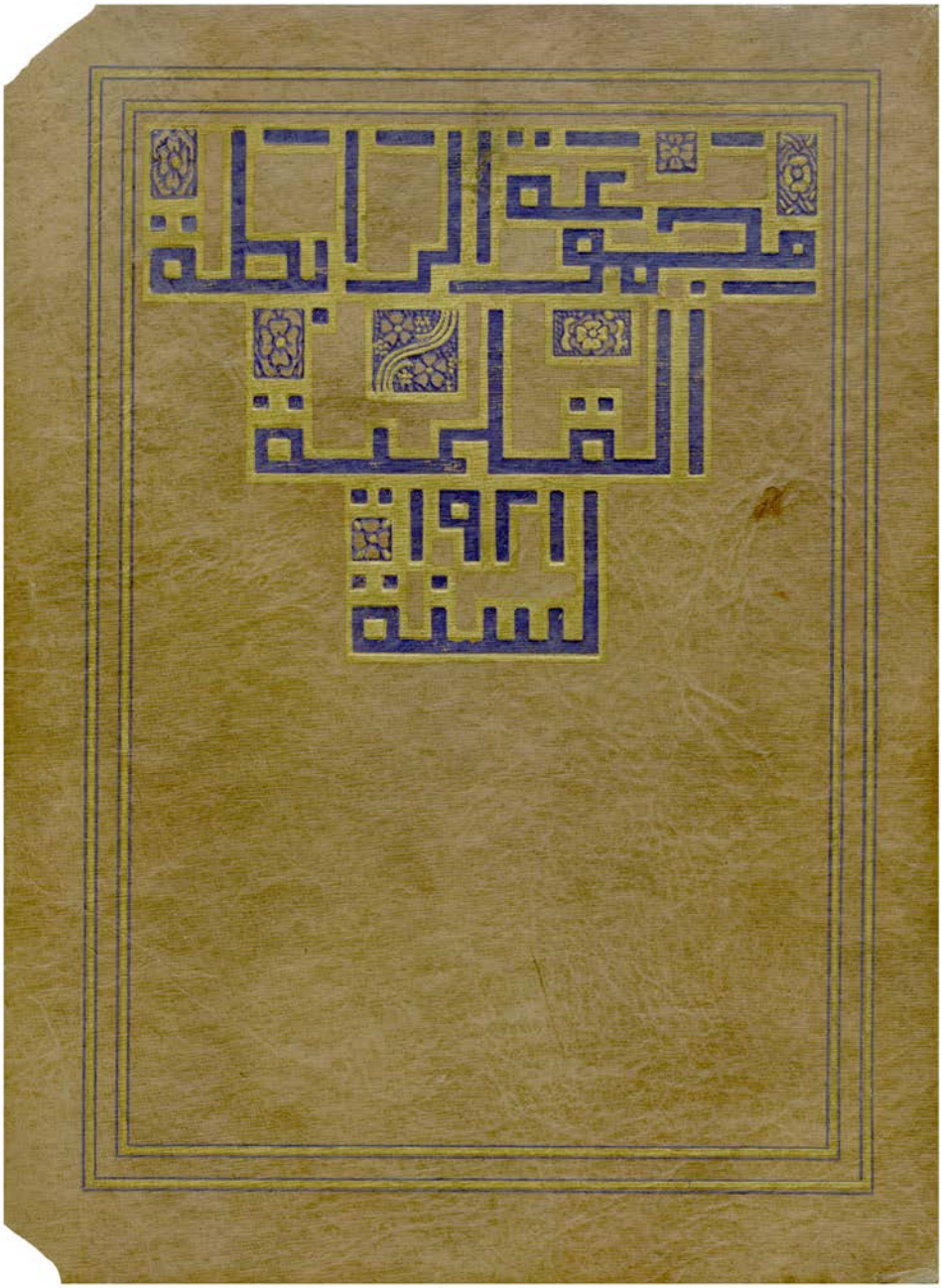
3 M. M. Badawi, *A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 203. For a detailed study of the development of modern Arabic poetry and the role of each one of the Mahjar poets in it, see Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 85-138.



PL. 27
Nasib Arida, Rashid Ayyub, Wadi Bahout, William Catzeflis, Kahlil Gibran, Abd al-Masih Haddad, Nadra Haddad, Elia Abu Madi, Mikhail Naimy, with cover design by Kahlil Gibran, *Majmu'at al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya* (The Gathering of the Pen League), 1921

PL. 28
Naẓarāt shā'ir wa-muṣawwir fī al-ayyām wa-al-layālī, plate in *al-Mawākib* (*The Procession*), 1918

Gibran's last significant Arabic work was the long poem *al-Mawākib* (*The Procession*), written during WWI but not published until 1919 due to paper shortage [PL. 28]. By then he had already transitioned to the second, English phase of his career. His works from this period include *The Madman* (1918), *The Forerunner* (1920), *The Prophet* (1923), *Sand and Foam* (1926), *Jesus, the Son of Man* (1928), *The Earth Gods* (1931) [PL. 29], and the posthumously published *The Wanderer* (1932) and *The Garden of the Prophet* (1933). Gibran's international reputation as an inspirational writer rests on the phenomenal popularity of these works, especially *The Prophet*. Drawing on the mystique of the East, these works are characterized by Gibran's use of biblical idiom, aphoristic style, and universalist, didactic tone. The speaking voice is often an intriguing mix of Romantic visionary, pantheist, and nonsectarian mystic.

An immigrant seeking acceptance, Gibran was encouraged by his early success in Boston's artistic milieu to embrace the persona projected on him, and he accepted many American ideas about the Orient, particularly the role of Oriental sage or prophet that he came to impersonate. He conformed to it, whereby he also confirmed it for his readers, and what is perhaps most poignantly interesting, he seems to have believed in it—or willed himself to believe it. Gibran was not a two-faced opportunist who knew how to manipulate racist stereotypes, but he was not above self-exoticization or lying about his family and class background to embellish his image to the women in his life, his publishers, and his readers.[4] His adoring disciple Barbara Young's quasi-hagiographic biography, *This Man from Lebanon* (1945), amplified the legend.

Yet as his other, more reliable biographers emphasize, Gibran's sense of isolation was enormous. Robin Waterfield, who foregrounds the psychology of the immigrant and his desire for success and recognition, argues that Gibran's life in the United States "evolved organically out of the persona he chose to adopt—that of wounded Romantic, shading into that of poet and prophet—but even an organic development of a persona remains two-dimensional. Whether Gibran was talking to friends or to a public audience, the impression he projected was the same. As an insecure young immigrant, he soon learnt that this role could win him ready acceptance, and even adulation; such positive feedback entrenched the role-playing until it

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4 Gibran and Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran*, 3-38. See also Khalil Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran: His Background, Character and Works* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1963), 67-70.

PL. 29
Kahlil Gibran, published by Alfred A. Knopf, *The Earth Gods* (first edition), 1931

THE EARTH GODS

BY

KAHLIL GIBRAN

MCMXXXI

NEW YORK · ALFRED · A · KNOPF · LONDON

became second nature. But once in a while, his first nature prodded him into awareness."[5] For example, in 1921, while still working on *The Prophet*, Gibran declared to his close friend and biographer Mikhail Naimy that he was "a false alarm."[6] If anything, that realization seems to have led him to embrace more fully the role of Oriental prophet and hermit, both in his works and in his private life, increasingly spent in the isolation of his Greenwich Village studio, which he called his "hermitage." There he spent the last decade of his life writing and painting, until he died of the effects of alcoholism at the age of forty-eight.

The Intellectual Context

While the mystique of the East appealed to avant-garde and counter-cultural circles disenchanted with modern Western society, its flipside was the derogatory stereotypes rampant both in mainstream culture and in the academic field then known as Orientalism. As Edward Said argued in his influential book *Orientalism* (1978), nineteenth-century British and French scholarship on the peoples of the Middle East and South Asia reflected the power relations between colonizers and colonized. For Said, Oriental studies were compromised by the role they played in justifying and facilitating European colonialism. Said defined Orientalism as an academic field of study, a style of imperial administration, and "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"[7] The Orient/Occident or East/West duality pits against each other two discursive constructs perceived as totally distinct and fundamentally in opposition, with one (the West) considered superior to the other. The East, Said argued, was not something objectively there in the empirical world—there is no place or culture called the "East"—but a discursive invention that operates, according to the logic of the excluded middle, as Europe's negative self-reflection, its ideal Other. Said ended his introduction to the book with the hope that the very notions of East and West would be eliminated once and for all—meaning, of course, not that diverse cultures would disappear,

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5 Robin Waterfield, *Prophet: The Life and Times of Kahlil Gibran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 4–5.

6 Mikhail Naimy, *Kahlil Gibran: A Biography* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 171.

7 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 2. On Orientalist attitudes to the Arabic language and literature, see pp. 128, 142–45, 320.

but that the ideological fictions of "East" and "West," along with the dualistic "style of thought," would be discarded.

In the early twentieth century, however, the dualistic logic of Orientalism reigned supreme. Arab American writers, especially those who wrote in English with American readers in mind, were heavily influenced by Orientalism, even as they tried to resist it. To rehabilitate the image of their culture, those writers invoked the idea of Oriental wisdom, the East as the birthplace of prophets and great religious traditions. Some writers, like Ameen Rihani and Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, tried to recast the Orientalist hierarchy between "East" and "West" as a Hegelian dialectic in which each side enjoyed an advantage and suffered a disadvantage: the East is spirituality rich and materially backward, whereas the West is scientifically advanced but spiritually impoverished. This horizontal equivalence sets the stage for the metaphor of the "bridge" between Orient and Occident, which was so appealing to early Arab American writers and to many of their readers even today: the writer with a foot in each world who can reconcile the spirituality of the East and materialism of the West for the sake of a higher form of civilizational synthesis. In doing so, they unwittingly accepted the racialist and colonialist assumption that such things as "East" and "West" exist as coherent, self-contained, and antithetical cultures. Indeed, they tried to retool that dualism to their advantage.

Gibran, too, was fascinated by the metaphor of the bridge. In a diary entry dated June 7, 1912, Mary Haskell reported that he made the following comment to her as they "walked across Common and Cambridge St. Bridge" in Boston: "To build a bridge—that is what I want to do: to build one so strong that it may be crossed upon forever."[8] But whereas Rihani and Rihbany wrote explicitly about ways of reconciling or synthesizing "East" and "West," these notions do not play a role in the universalist outlook of Gibran's writings. Instead of engaging Orientalist discourse on its own terms, he bypassed dualism and wrote in a universalist mode inspired by Blake's pantheism, Christian and Islamic mysticism, and the Hinduism of Bengali poet and 1913 Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, whom Gibran met and drew in 1916. That mode does not recognize dichotomies and sees opposites as outward manifestations of the Oneness of being. It is no wonder that Gibran's best-known

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8 Virginia Hilu, ed., *Beloved Prophet: The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and Her Private Journal* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 80.

book, *The Prophet*, is formally modeled on Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, itself featuring an Oriental sage who speaks in aphorisms. In fact, Nietzsche's entire philosophical project aims at destroying the foundation of the European metaphysical tradition, from Plato and Aristotle to Kant and Hegel, a metaphysics that relies on dichotomies like truth and falsehood, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, body and soul, mind and matter, and by the same "style of thought," East and West. Nietzsche rejected such dichotomies and initiated (or revived, for he had precursors, including Spinoza) a counter-tradition that continued with Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics, Sartre's existentialism, and Derrida's deconstruction, each of which being a secular method of debunking dualism.

In that sense, we can say that Arab American writers who accepted the distinction between East and West situated themselves within Orientalist discourse even as they tried to critique it from the inside, a discourse that relies on the European metaphysical tradition based on dichotomies, and one which in the nineteenth century produced colonial ideology and Orientalist discourse. By contrast, the later Gibran placed himself within the Nietzschean counter-tradition, which rejects dualism, a rejection that approximates mysticism's emphasis on the Oneness of being. Gibran was no systematic philosopher, of course, and he did not fully subscribe to—or possibly grasp—the secular implications of Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. Hence Gibran's uneasy fusion of anti-foundationalism, pantheism, and mysticism. He found the idea of truth as multiple and personal to be attractive because it offered an alternative ethos to the rigidly hierarchical worldview propagated by Orientalism, racialism, and other ideologies of difference. His search for universal truths that transcend cultural and religious boundaries represents a countercurrent that, however implicitly, challenged the discourse's hierarchical logic while espousing a nonsectarian kind of spirituality.

Legacy

This year, 2023, marks the centennial of *The Prophet*. Although he considered himself to be an artist and a writer in equal measure, Gibran's drawings and paintings are much less known than his books—hence the importance of this exhibit, which spotlights an overlooked part of his controversial legacy. On the one hand, he is the only Arab American writer to whom national monuments are dedicated (in Boston and Washington, DC) and he remains Knopf's best-selling author of all time. *The Prophet* alone has sold more than ten million copies in the United States and been translated into over

a hundred languages. It has enjoyed cult-status in countercultural and New Age movements, and its author has had a great impact on pop culture icons, from Elvis Presley to The Beatles, Johnny Cash, and David Bowie, along with one of the world's best-selling writers today, Brazilian Paulo Coelho, who is himself a kind of latter-day Gibran.[9] On the other hand, Gibran's English-language works have never been taken seriously by scholars and academic critics, some of whom regard him as a "charlatan" who exploited Oriental stereotypes.[10] His works have also been described as "fast food" poetry,[11] and as a "welcome escape route" for "late romantics and seekers after the exotic."[12] Whatever the case may be, there is no doubt that Gibran represents a compelling and complicated cultural phenomenon that could have emerged only in America.[13]

9 Coelho is an avid reader of Gibran's works and the translator of his letters to Mary Haskell under the title *Cartas de amor do profeta* (Rio de Janeiro: Ediouro Publicações, 1997).

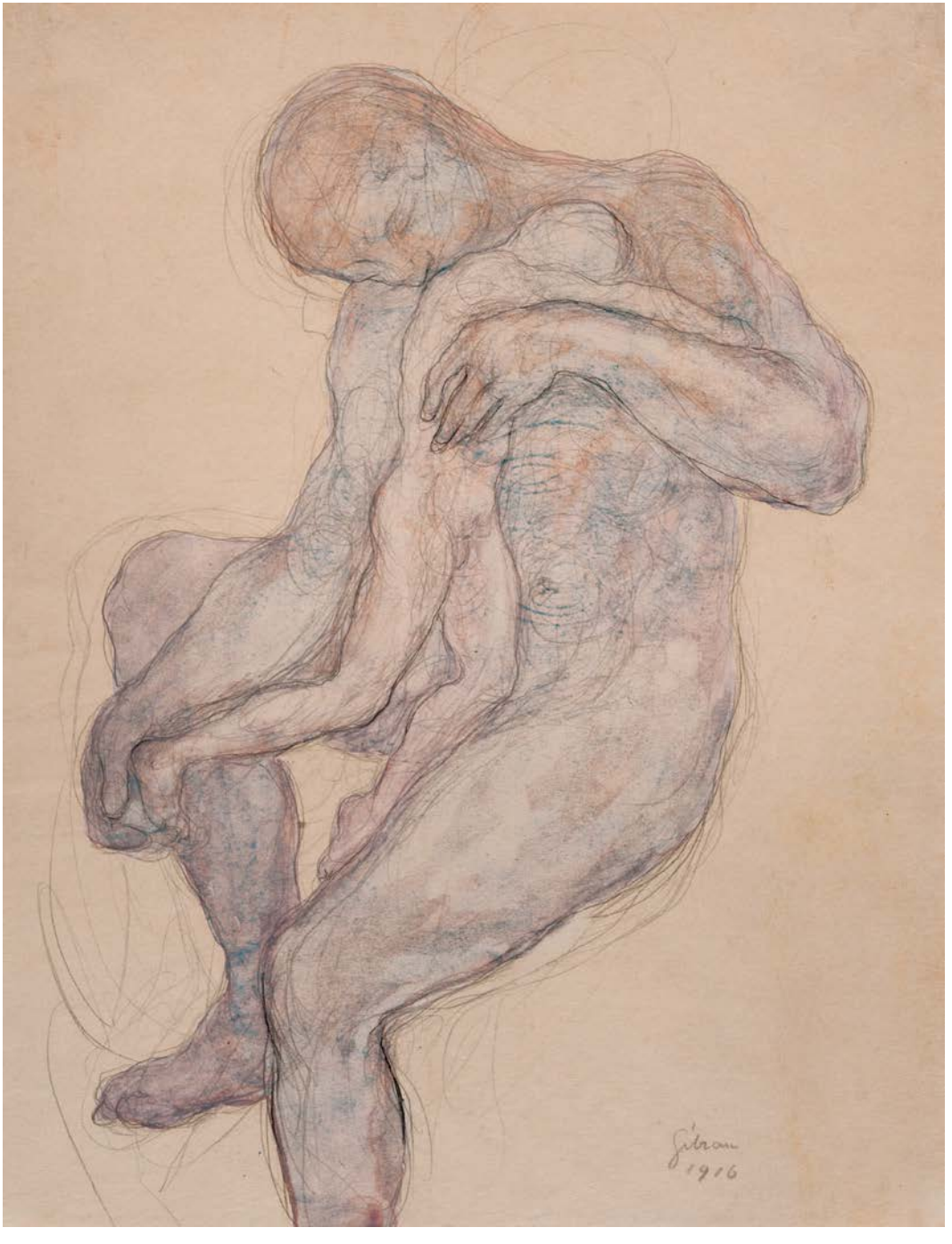
10 See, for example, Evelyne Shakir's "Arab-American Literature," in *New Immigrant Literatures in the United States*, ed. Alpana Sharma Knippling (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), 4.

11 Gregory Orfalea and Sharif Elmusa, eds., *Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab American Poetry* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), xvi.

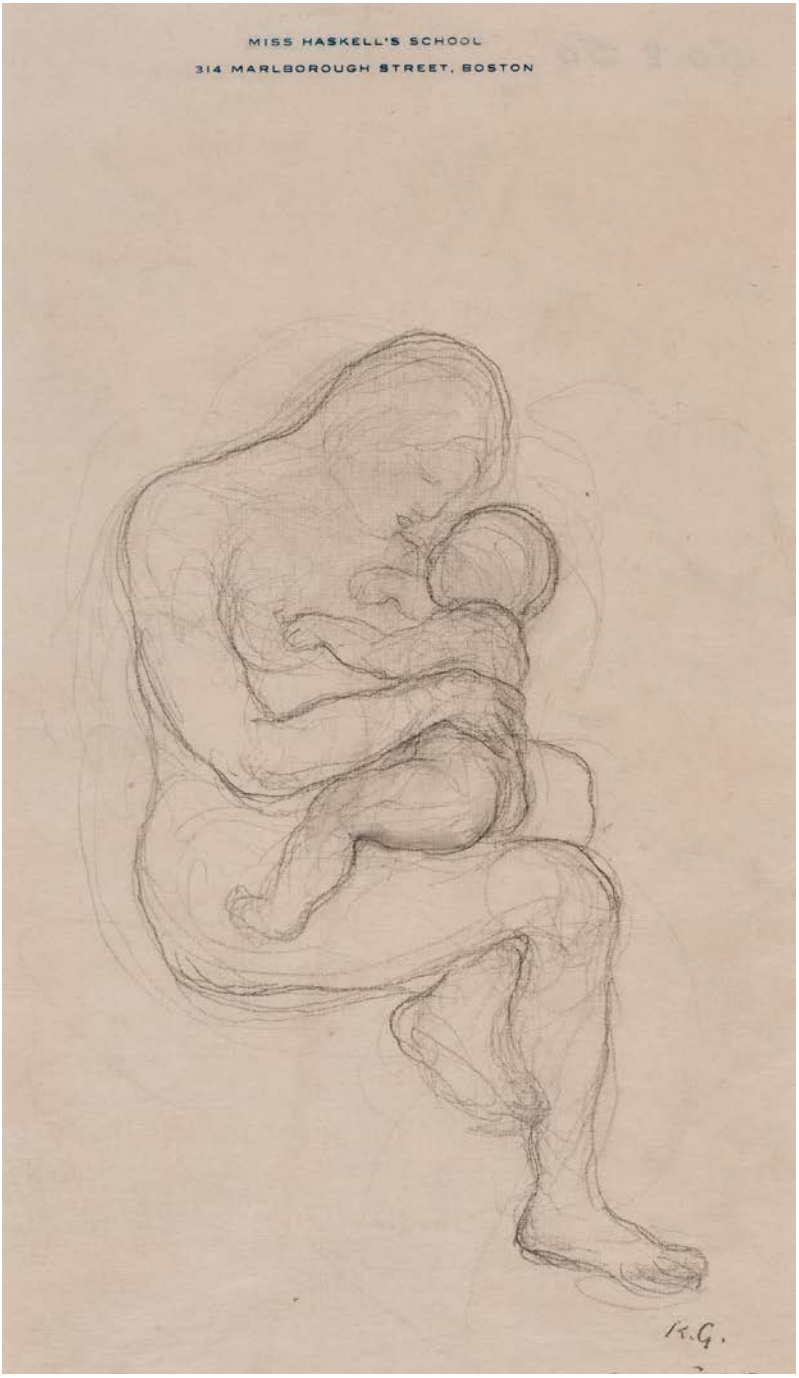
12 Khalil Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran*, 281, 283.

13 Parts of this essay are adapted from "The Gibran Phenomenon," a chapter in my *Immigrant Narratives: Orientalism and Cultural Translation in Arab American and Arab British Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and from "Gibran in Brazil," included in *Gibran in the 21st Century: Papers of the 3rd International Conference*, eds. Henri Zoghaib and May Rihani (Beirut: Lebanese American University, 2018), 65–84.

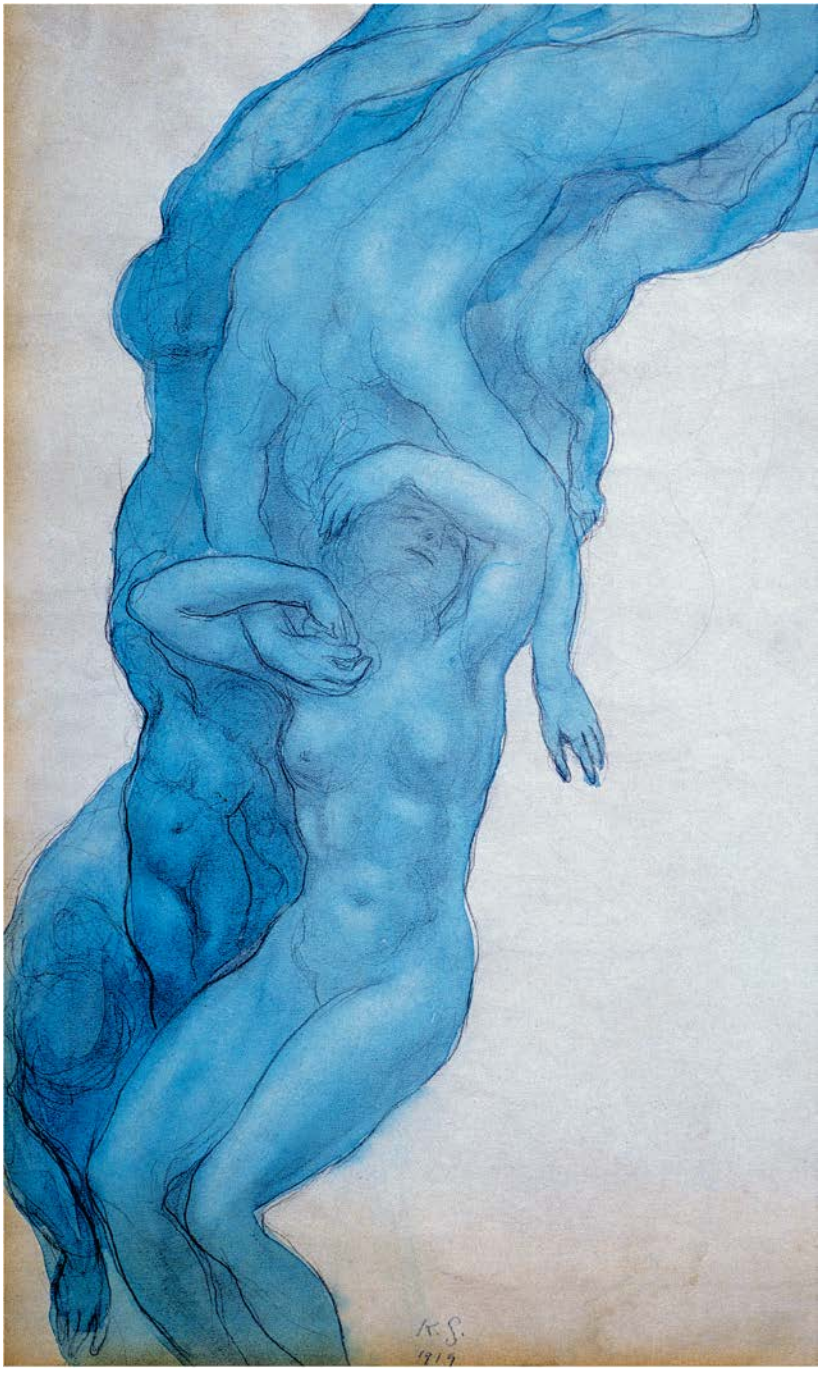
PL. 30
Nude, 1916



PL. 31
The Greater Self, 1916



PL. 32
Untitled, c. 1910–15

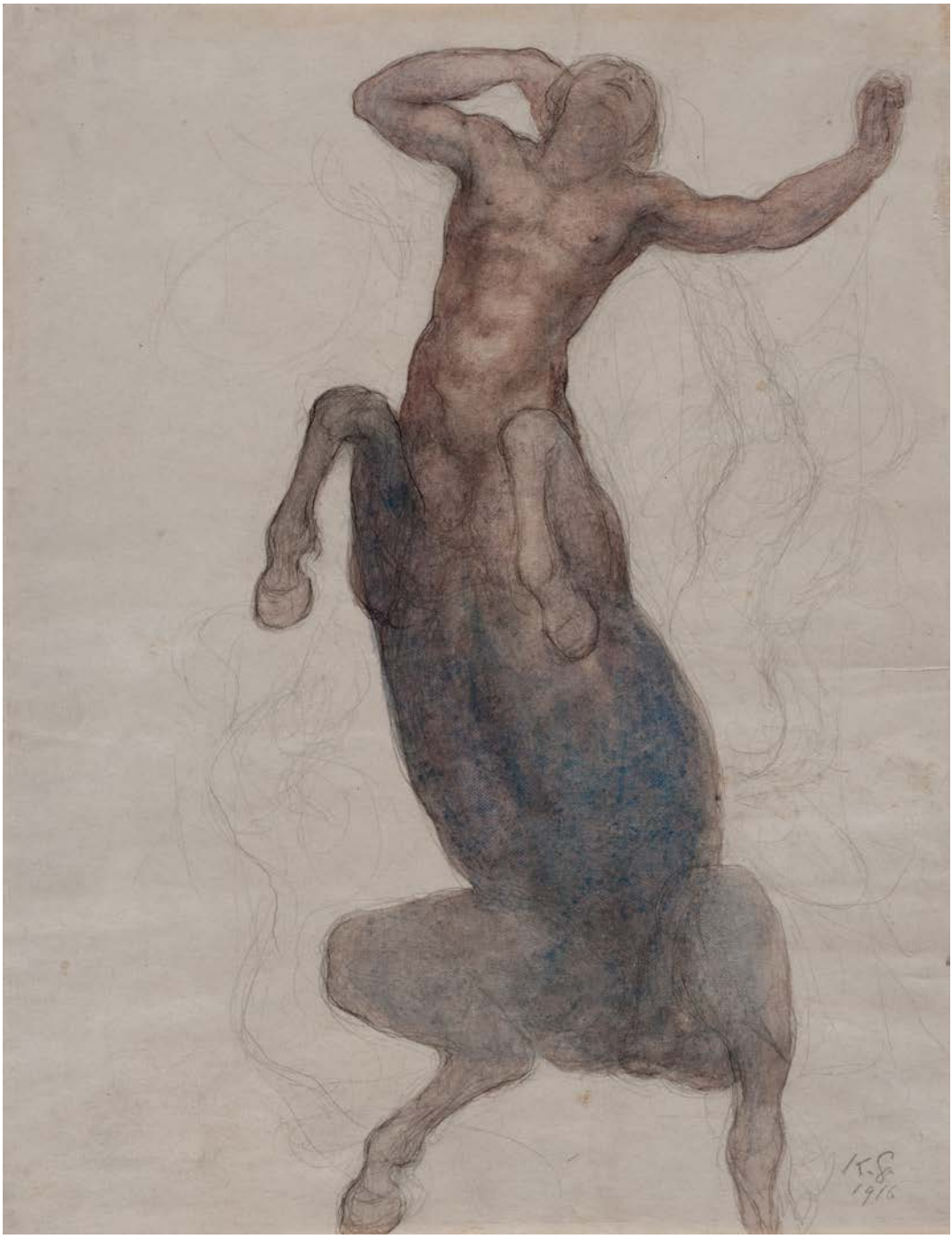


PL. 33
The Waterfall, 1919

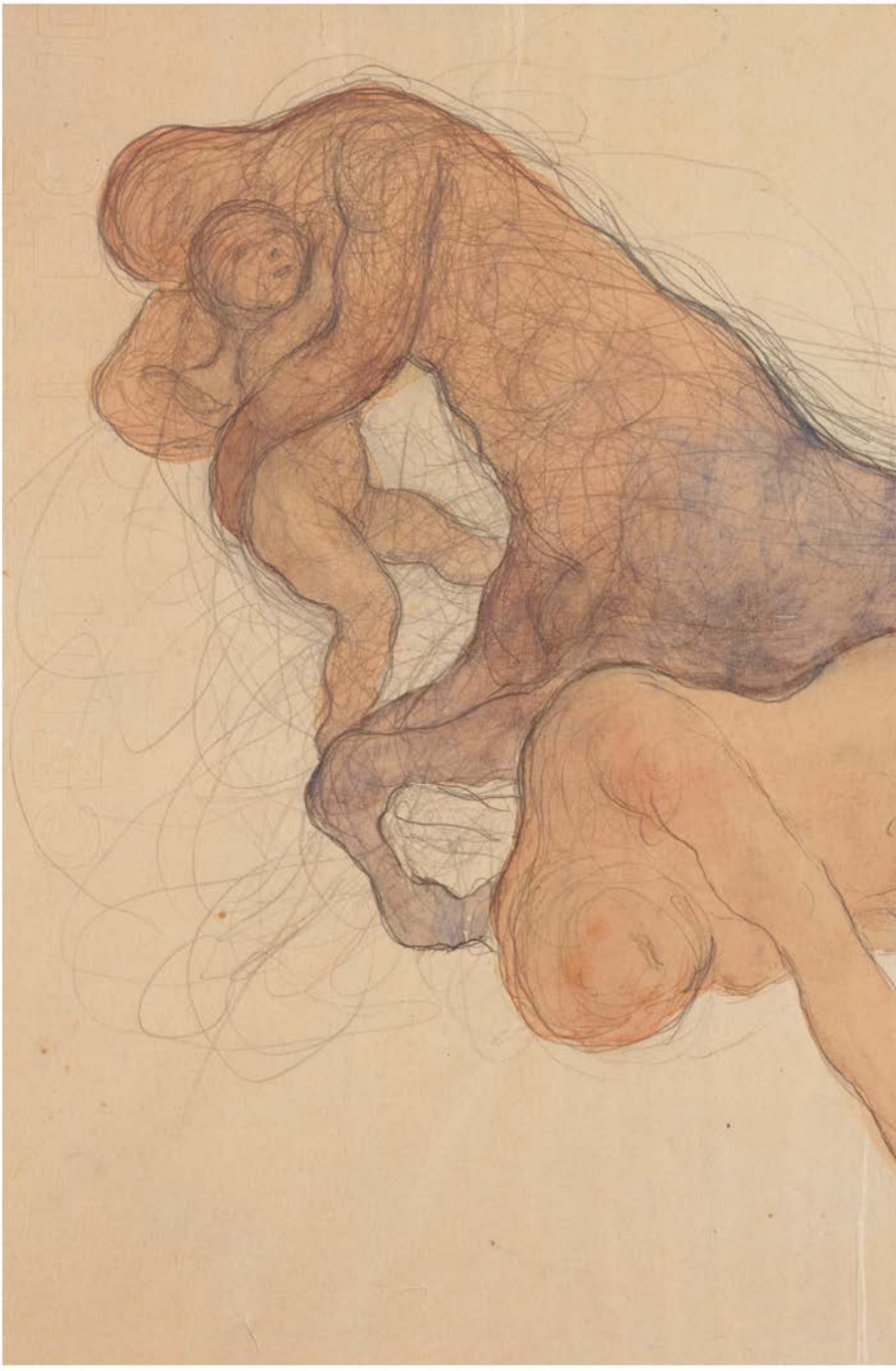
PL. 34
Untitled, 1916

PL. 35
Standing Figure and Child, n.d.

PL. 36
Man's Aspiration to Greatness, 1914–20



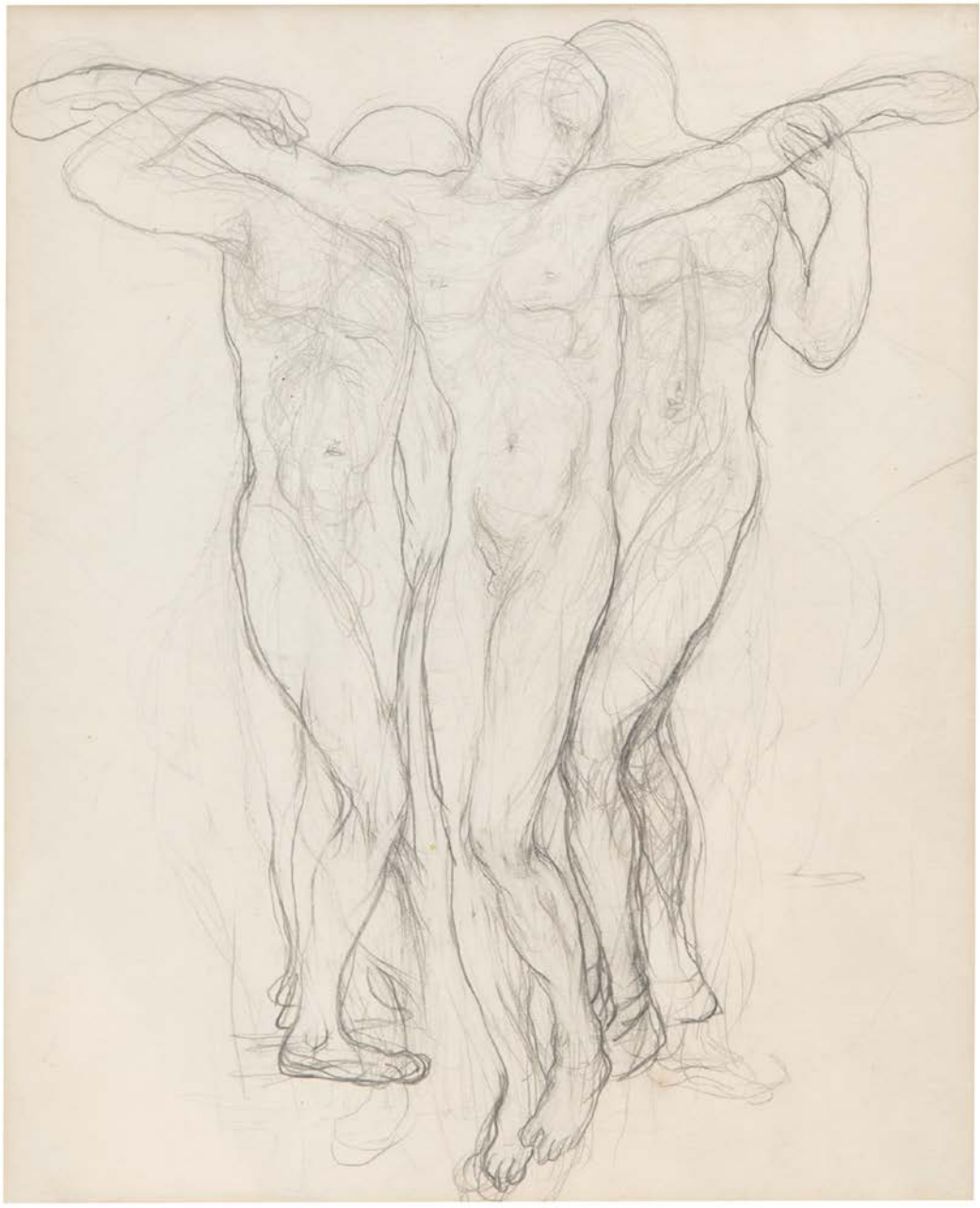
PL. 37
The Great Longing, 1916



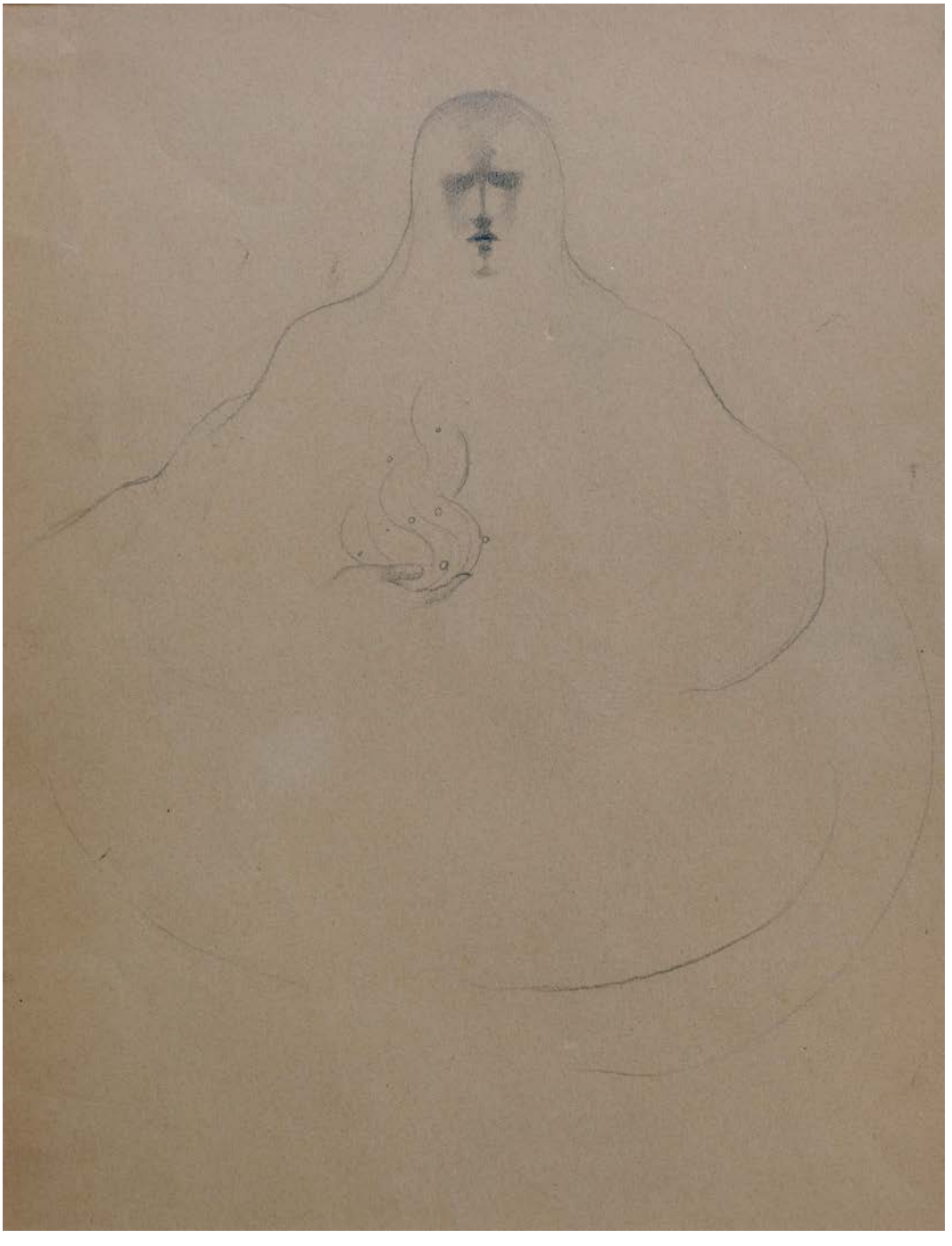
PL. 38
Centaur, Woman, and Child, 1916


M.G.
1916

PL. 39
The Triangle, 1918

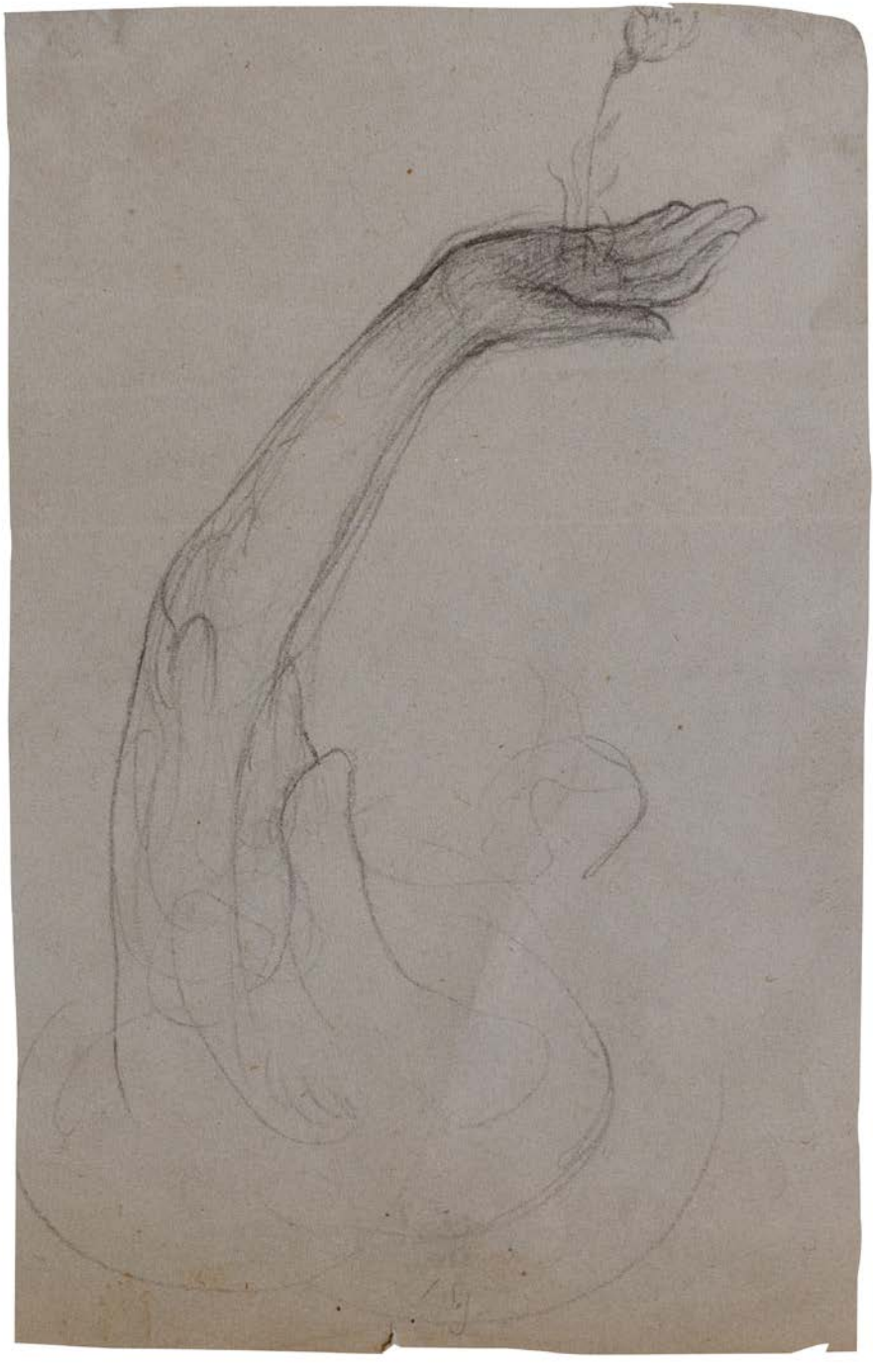


PL. 40
Three Standing Figures, n.d.



PL. 41
Study of a figure with a flame, before 1914

PL. 42
The Flame of Life, c. 1910



PL. 43
Hand and Rose, 1919

Saint Gibran

Jordan Nassar

In the Upper West Side apartment where I grew up, one whole wall in the dining room was lined with built-in bookshelves. The white bookshelves, contrasting with the burgundy walls of the room, housed rows and rows of books, interrupted only by a doorway leading to the central hallway of the apartment, towards the living room and bedrooms. The bookshelves carried everything from small, leather-bound, gold-embossed volumes of Shakespeare's sonnets and plays, to a plastic-ring-bound, use-worn copy of *Lebanese Cuisine* by Madelain Farah, to the bright green, black, and white keffiyeh-print-covered *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* by family-friend, more like an uncle, Muhammad Muslih. Down towards the bottom, to the left of the doorway, near the floor-to-ceiling wrought-iron wine rack in the corner, my father kept his old medical volumes: *Gray's Anatomy* and DSM-I through IV. In the center of the wall, to the right of the doorway, was the only shelf without books; instead it housed trinkets and objets—small spherical glass votive candle holders, tiny carved olivewood camels and horses from Bethlehem, a Nutcracker or two that had escaped the Christmas storage boxes, little painted wooden eggs from Poland, black-and-white photos of great-grandparents standing in ornate metal frames. There was one shelf above the doorway upon which, between a pair of bronze bookend-busts of Abraham Lincoln, lived a row of books, some tall, some stout, each embossed with the name Gibran Kahlil Gibran.

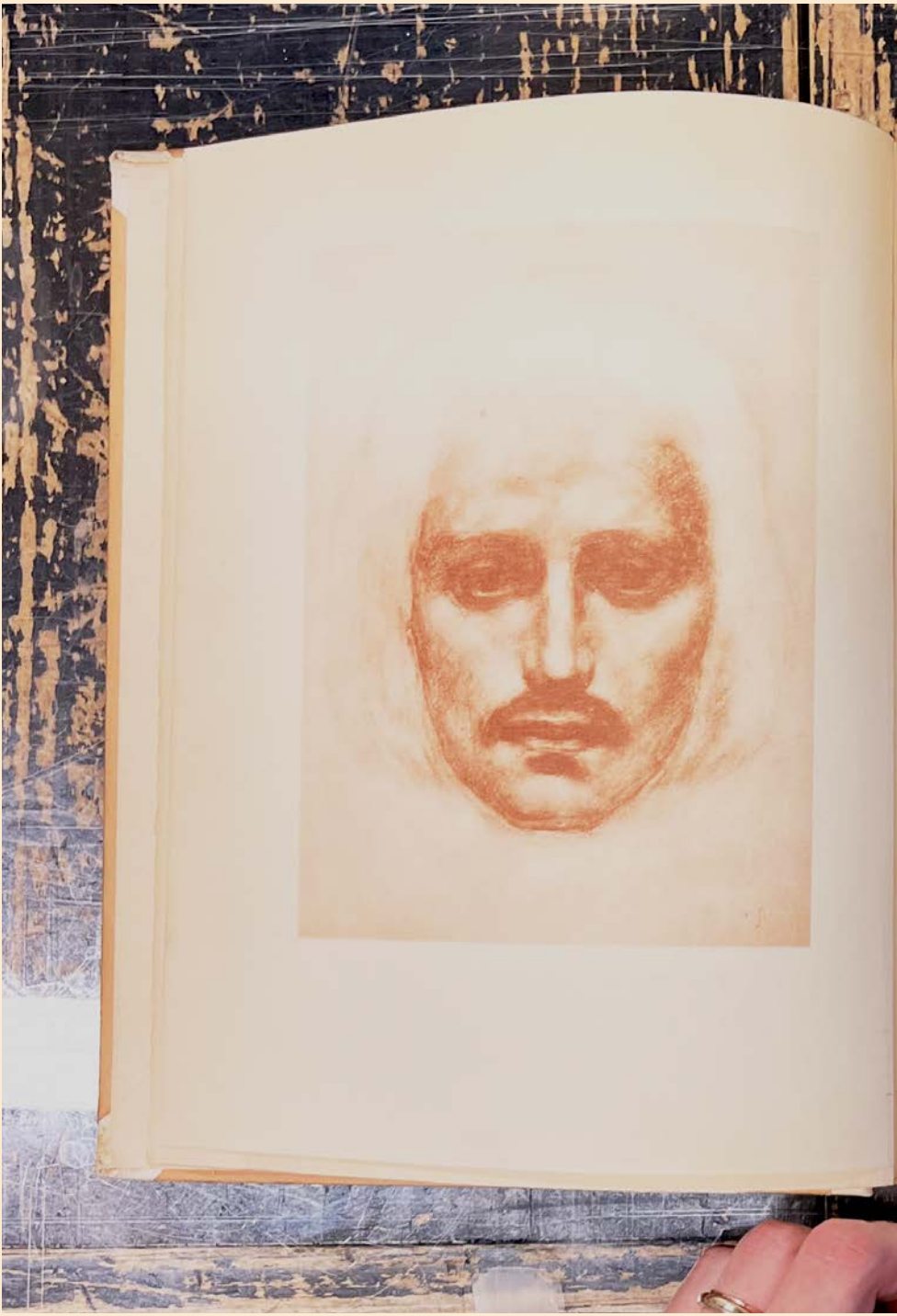
Gibran was my grandfather's name, Gibran "George" Nassar. This coincidence contributed to my childhood assumption that Gibran Kahlil Gibran was related to us: maybe a great-uncle or at least a distant cousin. The way I'd heard this name mentioned had

reinforced this idea; it was familiar, it was family, assumed, obvious, yes, of course, Kahlil Gibran.

My grandmother, Jemelia Nassar, née Haddad, was born in the 1920s in Little Syria, the once-booming nineteenth-century lower-Manhattan Arab neighborhood that was demolished in the 1940s to make way for the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Little Syria was an epicenter of arts and culture, the first Arab American community after the initial wave of Arab immigration in the 1880s to which my own family belonged. Famously, this is where Gibran Kahlil Gibran lived for many years, amidst many of the great Arab (American) writers, journalists, and publishers of the time, and it was where he published *The Prophet*. Our family histories are intertwined.

I had never read a word of *The Prophet* or any other of his works, until I was in my twenties. The role of Kahlil Gibran in my young life had little to do with his words, his writings. His presence was more like the Virgin Mary in Catholic households, perhaps—her image in the background, up on a shelf, always looming but not a central focus in the lives of its inhabitants. Actually, maybe Mary is too big. Kahlil Gibran was, for our family, a local saint, like in a sleepy little village in the south of France, say, just farmland, horses and donkeys and stone villas, a nondescript one of dozens, but this town, unlike the town over, was the birthplace of a nun in the 1200s who had become a saint. Everyone in town are the only ones who remember her. They feel proud of her and proud of the fact that they're from where she's from, maybe someone names a daughter after her every so often, but no one else in the country or the world knows about her, excepting the rare student at a seminary. Saint Dorotea of Montau, Saint Emilie de Villeneuve.

As an adult and an artist, and as a Palestinian American, I think often about my culture and about cultural heritage more generally—how we inherit that which is passed down, how traditions, foods, and music are carried around the world, retained but often skewed, or at least recontextualized. My work is about this cultural heritage, my unique library that I can borrow from, and Kahlil Gibran anchors those bookshelves for me. His words become titles of artworks and exhibitions, as do those of other Arab, Arab American, and Middle Eastern writers and artists: Mahmoud Darwish, Etel Adnan, Monir Farmanfarmaian, Umm Kulthum. Whereas these others I discovered along my way, coming across their exhibitions or learning about them from friends, Gibran has always been there for me, inherited, a tradition, our own personal patron saint, Saint Gibran of Little Syria.



PL. 44
Kahlil Gibran, published by Alfred A. Knopf, *The Prophet* (first edition), 1923

THE PROPHET

BY

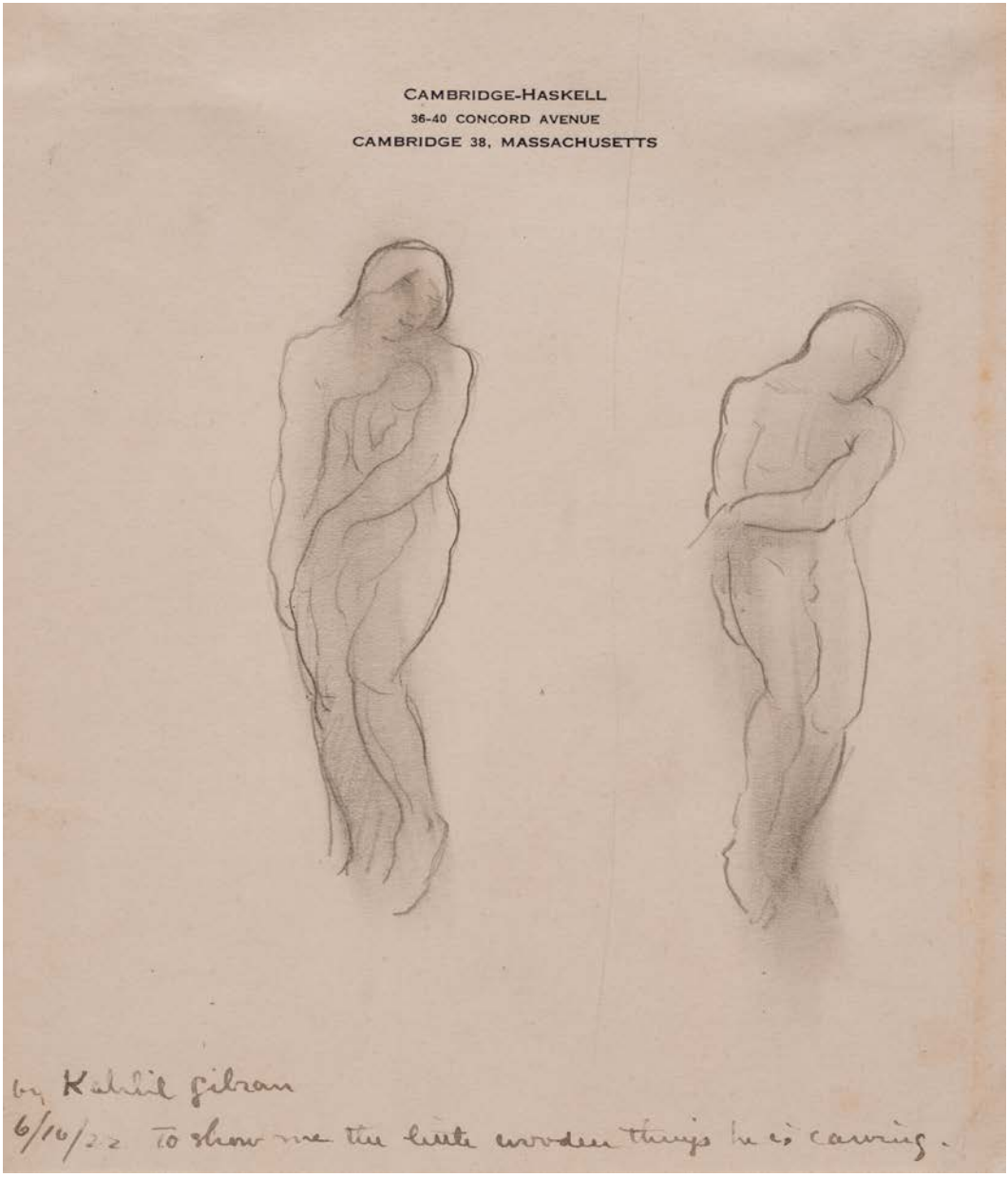
KAHLIL GIBRAN

NEW YORK
ALFRED A. KNOPF
MCMXXXVIII

PL. 45
Group of seven drawings, n.d.

PL. 46
Untitled, n.d.

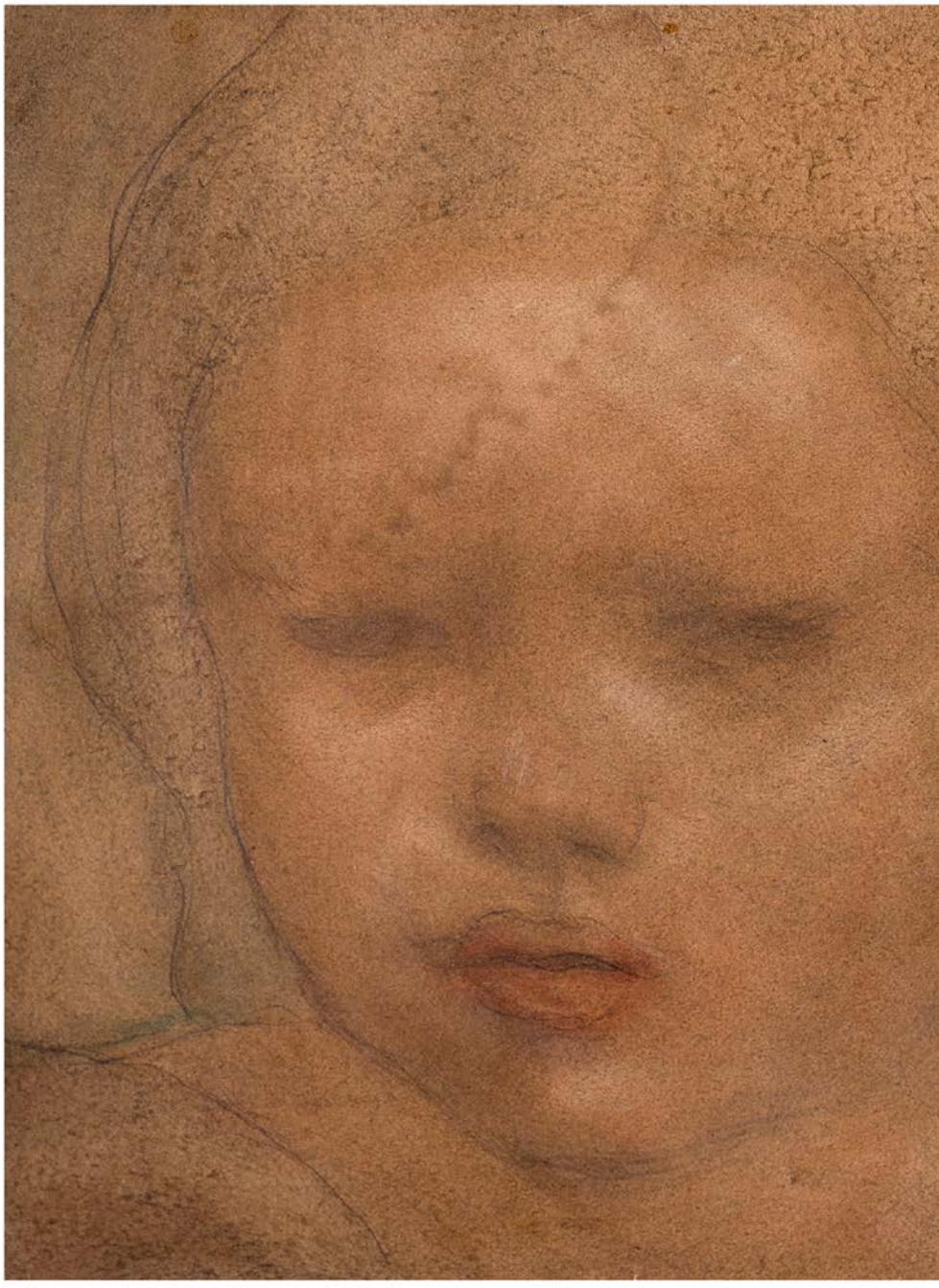
PL. 47
Study of a Face, 1917



PL. 48
Untitled, n.d.

PL. 49
Untitled, c. 1918

PL. 50
The Mask, c. 1910



PL. 51
Head of a Child, n.d.

PL. 52
Untitled, n.d.

PL. 53
Untitled, c. 1900–31

PL. 54
Head of Christ, 1920

PL. 55
Untitled, c. 1900-31

PL. 56
Portrait, 1917


To Winifred with love
from Kahlil
Christmas 1917

PL. 57
Untitled, c. 1900–31

Resurrecting the Mother as a Landscape

Ali Cherri

Only recently I came across Kahlil Gibran's portrait of his mother titled *Towards the Infinite*, a drawing dating back to 1916, thirteen years after the death of Kamila Rahme Gibran at the age of fifty. Gibran drew his mother's profile in strange alignment with the horizon, forming a mountain peak or an enormous sand dune that has been shaped over millions of years by wind and water—a surface whose morphology is constantly in a process of change.

Gibran's abstraction of the face into lines, shapes, and textures makes visible how the world penetrates the human interior and dissolves the distinctions between subject and object. The mother becomes a material object, represented as a sensory agent interacting with the world, rather than a being that transcends it. This postmortem portrait of the mother as a landscape has two aspects that are united and that feed upon each other in a symbiotic fashion: the body and its phenomenological relationship to the surrounding world. The face becomes a fascination, a subject of its own; there is no given, self-evident "reality" outside of this depsychologized topography.

In this abstraction, the arid face is revealed as tenuous, fragile, and ever-changing, and at the same time, as complete and concrete in and of itself—not a representation of something else. Gibran regards and reveals this landscape in its inherent beauty and mystery.

By resurrecting the mother's face as a landscape covered in a veil of sand, Gibran creates a union with the topography and camouflages her presence in the world. He activates the spirit of the dead that is latent in the sand where the dead are buried. Kamila's face augments the very notion of the landscape, making it thrive with an erotic charge.

Resurrection is an act of faith that lies in a utopia: the desired subject can only return to a sweeping, deeply fulfilling world rich with natural beauty. For resurrection to happen, the same person must exist simultaneously on earth and in the afterlife. The embodiment of a deceased person is the work of a miracle that can only exist outside of *the natural order of things*.

In his novella *The Broken Wings*, Gibran writes, "Everything in nature bespeaks the mother." Mother Earth is often revered as a goddess in world mythology. Gibran reveals his interest in people, in landscapes, and in the relationship between them without succumbing to a romantic vision of the world.

In her book *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Rebecca Solnit writes: "Once I loved a man who was a lot like the desert, and before that I loved the desert." This quest for the infinite can only be expressed through a back-and-forth between a face that takes the shape of a sloping hill and a mountain that mimics a mother's profile.

PL. 58
Towards the Infinite, 1916

Kahlil Gibran: Things Saved, Things Given

Anneka Lenssen

"I am sending you a drawing," Kahlil Gibran wrote to his friend and literary collaborator Mary Haskell, "Put it under glass if you can. The paper on which it is drawn is not strong enough to stand many things."[1] This request for the dedicated care of an unstable item—made within an ongoing exchange of artifacts mailed between Gibran's home base in New York City and Haskell's in Boston—may reflect Gibran's early training in photography, which involves uncertain processes for fixing silver crystals into optical, physical images.[2] But equally, it marks a creative threshold for the artist during the years of the First World War, when he turned to rapid wash drawings on relatively flimsy commercial typewriter paper.[3] From 1914 to 1919, Gibran produced scores of wash renderings of shape-shifting beings such as centaurs and All-Mothers in cloudy layers of pigment and pencil. Many were generated between spells of intensive work for the Syrian-Mount Lebanon Relief Committee, a diasporic organization engaged in lobbying the American government to break a military blockade on the region by sending

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1 Kahlil Gibran to Mary Haskell, October 6, 1915, in *Beloved Prophet: The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and Her Private Journal*, ed. Virginia Hilo (New York: Knopf, 1985), 261.

2 On the photographic character of Gibran's approach to wash drawing, see Anneka Lenssen, *Beautiful Agitation: Modern Painting and Politics in Syria* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), 25–73.

3 The drawings in this series were made on sheets that display the Elsinore Central bond paper watermark.

aid to famine-stricken Syrians.[4] Taking retreats to Cohasset, Massachusetts, Gibran made drawings that took creative processes to be their primary content.[5] As Gibran and his friends were primed to recognize, the capacity of the resulting forms to overwhelm their paper supports could help intensify their testimony to the existence of an interconnected spiritual being.

Gibran exhibited some forty wash drawings in 1917 in a solo exhibition at Knoedler Gallery.[6] Then thirty-four years of age and enjoying a rising intellectual reputation in West Village circles of pacifists and critics of Empire, Gibran specialized in lessons on the life of the spirit as an antidote to the brutal scientism of the great military powers. Interestingly, these messages of spiritual plenitude met with significantly more hostility in visual form than in prose or poetry. The critical response in the mainstream newspapers was largely negative—"decadence" in its symbolist forms was very much out of favor on the eve of the American entrance to the war.[7] Nevertheless, at least one conceded a poignant quality to the

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4 Gibran was instrumental in creating this committee in 1916 through the amalgamation of other existing committees in New York that aimed to ease the famine in some or all regions of wider Syria. For a firsthand account, see S. A. Mokarzel, "Gibran's Tears," *The Syrian World* 3, no. 8 (February 1929): 32-33, https://www.kahlilgibran.com/digital-archive/110-the-great-longing-the-syrian-world-3-8-february-1929/file.html. Also see Francesco Medici, "Kahlil Gibran and the Armenians," trans. Nadine Najem, 2020, The Kahlil Gibran Collective, https://www.kahlilgibran.com/90-kahlil-gibran-and-the-armenians.html. Gibran's correspondence from the period reveals that he connected Turkish disregard for communities in Mount Lebanon in particular, a Maronite Christian area (as was Gibran's own family background), to the Turkish Ottoman government's ongoing genocidal killings of Armenians. I would like to take this opportunity to credit the remarkable efforts of Medici, Glen Kalem, and other members of the Kahlil Gibran Collective. Because they have assembled an extensive digital archive of primary source documents, it is possible for scholars around the world to go beyond caricatured claims about Gibran's life.

5 Kahlil Gibran, draft essay (1920s), in *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*, eds. Anneka Lenssen, Sarah Rogers, and Nada Shabout (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018), 52-53.

6 *Forty Wash-Drawings by Khalil Gibran*, January 29 to February 10, 1917, Brochure in M. Knoedler & Co. records, Series VIII, Exhibition files, 1869-1971, box 3630, Getty Research Institute.

7 See especially "Random Impressions of Current Exhibitions," *New York Tribune*, February 4, 1917. Gibran's friends at *al-Funūn* published Arabic-language summaries of press coverage, referencing additional articles in *The Christian Science Monitor* and *New York American*. However, their aim seems to have been to elevate Gibran's status in the eyes of Arab readers as an artist whose work is viewed in the same frame as famous European artists, and the summaries selectively portray negative reviews as positive responses. See "Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān wa-Ma ra ihi al-Ta wīrī," *al-Funūn* (March 1917): 943-44.

PL. 59
Untitled, 1916

PL. 60
A Woman with a Blue Veil, 1916

material fragility of the drawings. A writer for *The New York Times* reported that Gibran's paper "crinkles and stiffens and forms part of the total effect," embodying a notion of liminality better than the overworked pencil delineations.[8] Due to the uncoated surface of the paper, wherever Gibran laid down the mass of a watercolor figure, he also induced a response from the still-dry, surrounding ground. As dimensional totalities capable of registering alchemical interaction between presence and absence, the images occupy their space differently than a modernist composition on a flat plane [PLS. 59, 60].

When he wrote about his drawings, Gibran placed emphasis on the spontaneity of the method. A letter he sent to Haskell describes something like a fugue state: "At Cohasset I did 75…sometimes I'd come in from the woods at 5 o'clock and do 3 or 4 before dinner… while I worked I hardly knew what I was doing. I'd go to sleep…the next morning I would sometimes not remember their look—and they would surprise me when I saw them."[9] A later statement alluded to elements of meditation: "The first step is the creation of an intense mass of color chosen and relayed unmindfully," followed by a process of using intuition for "revealing" the painting within the resulting surface. Throughout, he claims, "I am little concerned by outer forms, inner connectedness being more important."[10] Indeed, given the pressures faced by the Relief Committee in the summer of 1916, it is tempting to characterize Gibran's propensity for wash drawings on typewriter paper as an effort to reclaim the eight-and-a-half-by-eleven-inch space of bureaucratized solicitation as one for intuitive response. Gibran had assumed the post of secretary that June, and he spent the subsequent months working feverishly with Committee colleagues to circulate petitions and broker contracts to secure relief for the starving people of Mount Lebanon. To seek to paint hallucinations was, perhaps, to seek to recover a connection to imaginative flux.

Despite Gibran's advisement against our attending too exclusively to the content of his art, many attempts to reckon with his creative career do exactly that. The recurring visual motifs in the oeuvre have been catalogued and subjected to expert historical

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8 "Art at Home and Abroad," *The New York Times*, February 25, 1917.

9 Kahlil Gibran, quoted in Jean Gibran and Kahlil Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran: Beyond Borders* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2017), 271.

10 Gibran, draft essay (1920s), 53.

analysis.[11] A drawing of a centaur carries real emblematic power, evoking as it does themes of dualism between man and beast and traditions of comparative mythology (not to mention key modern precedents such as Auguste Rodin).[12] What is more, Gibran's global fame as the author of *The Prophet* invites such an interpretive approach. The gnomic structure of his writing—and we should recall that, in addition to publishing books, he serialized his texts as newspaper columns and presented them aloud at poetry gatherings—pairs a titular concept with a vignette from the life of an observing witness. Gibran's decision to insert offset lithography reproductions of his wash drawings into his publications, pursued from 1919 onward, further encourages a focus on allegorical meanings in his art. Nevertheless, I want to suggest that Gibran's most significant contribution to a global history of modern arts may be located in his approach to the life of drawings in particular.[13] Guided by an interest in conditions of ephemerality across types of media, he developed tactics for making and circulating images that reconfigure the terms of cultural survival for an age of mechanical reproduction [PLS. 61, 62].

Metaphors of distributed giving and receiving abound in this oeuvre. In 1931, friend and colleague Ameen Rihani employed a language of broadcast media in a poetic tribute to Gibran following the latter's premature death. "Like the radio catches the voice waves," he wrote, "so Gibran caught the immortal voices, of the history, literatures, and religions of the East."[14] Opting to use a metaphor of distributed *sound* to characterize the many-layered inheritance of the region, the text gives the process a Surrealist cast. To catch the immortal voices was to prepare oneself as a host for other entities. Gibran for his part also spoke of new wireless technologies as merely another iteration of previous capacities to catch circulating, transhuman knowledges. Wireless is an

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11 See Wahib Kairouz, *Gibran in His Museum*, trans. Alfred Murr (Jounieh, Lebanon: Bacharia, 1997).

12 For especially salient commentary on the female centaur figure, see Sobhi Habchi, "Gibran entre Poésie et Peinture," *Revue de littérature comparée* 2, no. 306 (2003): 209–24.

13 In this, I differ with the focus on painting (and the question of whether Gibran is skilled in it) maintained by many of Gibran's biographers.

14 Amin Rihani, "Ilā Jubrān (1931)," in *Hitāf al-Awdīyya: Shi'r Manthūr* (Beirut: Dar Rayhani, 1955), 123–36. An English translation is available: "To Gibran: A Eulogy by Ameen Rihani," https://www.kahlilgibran.com/105-to-gibran-a-eulogy-by-ameen-rihani.html.

PL. 61
The Three Are One, 1918

PL. 62
Proof of illustration for frontispiece of *The Madman*, c. 1918

"enlargement of the soul of man," he wrote to Haskell (in the same letter to which he attached his fragile drawing).[15] But, he maintained that such an enlargement was not new. Instead, the human subconscious had always acted similarly, picking up on messages sent between souls, such that "a world-deed that happened in India became known to the soul of Egyptians."

Objects entered Gibran's terrain of creative reception as well, operating there as if shuttles for moving through enfolded experiences of time. We read of the artist accumulating a collection of beloved objects in his lived space. He kept ancient statuary, Phoenician glass, Persian pottery, French and Italian paintings, and musical instruments in his studio.[16] To this, there were added relics of communal aspiration. Following the fundraising drives of 1916, members of New York's Armenian community gifted Gibran a pigeon-blood red ruby ring in gratitude.[17] He purchased a twelfth-century Armenian tapestry depicting the Crucifixion. He was open to an exploratory logic of collection, too, at one point asking a British friend attached to an expedition in Iraq to keep an eye out for Chaldean basalt sculpture.[18] For Gibran, the sculpture of ancient Chaldea comprised an entire class of aesthetics oriented to inner sight as opposed to merely optical appearance, akin in this regard to Egyptian art and opposed to Greek. The items, once gathered into a kind of menagerie, might vibrate with the possibilities of pasts to be reassembled as futures.

The most fantastic of the objects saved in the studio may have been a meteorite that Gibran received from Haskell in late 1916 during a frenetic time of activism accompanied by preparations for the Knoedler exhibition. Writing to alert Gibran to its impending arrival, Haskell described a heavy metallic stone filled with "microscopic diamonds," and "crowded with Infinities" that had been procured from Diablo Canyon in Arizona.[19] As Haskell relayed to Gibran via a friend in Arizona, a number of origin myths surrounded the crater-like hole in Arizona that marked the site of recovery. Whereas certain Native Americans supposed that a star

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15 Gibran to Haskell, October 6, 1915, in *Beloved Prophet*, 260.

16 Kahlil Gibran to May Ziadeh, June 11, 1919, in *al-Shu'la al-Zarqā'*, eds. Salma al-Haffar Kuzbari and Suheil Bushrui (Damascus: Manshūrāt Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1984), 43.

17 Medici, "Kahlil Gibran and the Armenians."

18 Gibran to Ziadeh, November 3, 1920, in *al-Shu'la al-Zarqā'*, 81.

19 Haskell to Gibran, November 12, 1916, in *Beloved Prophet*, 503.

or a god had fallen from heaven and entered the earth at that spot, the white inhabitants of the area believed a meteor made the hole and had proceeded to buy the crater and commence digging for evidence in metal deposits.[20] Upon receipt, Gibran sent an ecstatic note. "It is the most wonderful thing I have ever had in my hand," he wrote. "The most wonderful because it feeds my imagination and it sends my thoughts into space and makes the infinite nearer and less strange to my soul."[21]

Haskell is clear in identifying the settlers in Arizona who wield disenchanted scientific theories as "whites." Her characterization is telling, both of a historical moment that featured numerous theories of race memory and models of interpenetrated selves and ancestors, and of a particular set of political negotiations around the Syrian identity in the United States.[22] Prior to the exclusionary Immigration Act of 1924, a number of Syrian emigres from the Ottoman Empire took to the American court system to arbitrate their racial status: whether "white," or "Asiatic," or other.[23] On the hope of achieving greater political enfranchisement, many of Gibran's fellow Arab intellectuals in New York advocated for the community's whiteness, but the backdrop of Gibran's work during World War I involves the dawning realization that the Great Powers cared little about preventing dispossession in the Near East. Consider that Haskell packaged the meteorite to send it to Gibran at a time when their group believed it had succeeded in organizing with the Red Cross to send a ship to Mount Lebanon, collaborating with Armenian relief committees sounding the alarm about systematic annihilation under Ottoman Turkish rule, to convince American authorities to do so. Yet by the time the meteorite arrived at Gibran's studio, the mission had already been thwarted. As soon as Ottoman authorities in Jaffa

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20 *Beloved Prophet*, 503–4.

21 Gibran to Haskell, January 3, 1917, in *Beloved Prophet*, 509. Gibran continued to express gratitude, later sharing with Haskell that he often held the meteorite as he was falling asleep.

22 Donna V. Jones, "The Career of Living Things is Continuous; Reflections on Bergson, Iqbal, and Scalia," *Qui Parle* 20, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2012): 225–48. The collected correspondence of Haskell and Gibran is rife with conceptualizations of the individual as being culturally and biologically interpenetrated with a collective, such that the memory of a whole community might be carried by a singular subject.

23 Sarah M. A. Gaultieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Oakland, University of California Press, 2009), 52–80. The most famous case on the matter, brought by a Syrian seeking to establish eligibility for citizenship, is Dow v. United States (1915).

insisted on receiving the contents and overseeing distribution, American policymakers balked, rerouted, and sold the provisions to raise funds for Red Cross work elsewhere.

In the wake of Gibran's experience of his disposable status in both American and Ottoman territory, it is possible to discern the underlying melancholia in Gibran's impulse to hold onto things.[24] As evidenced by the letter that opens this essay, he could yearn to establish curatorial regimes for his paintings as objects—envisioning placement under glass, his item subject to a burden of care—and to coordinate intersubjective legacies in this way.[25] Such efforts by Gibran to combat absence, to deny loss by means of acquiring items from the many histories of the world, took place against seemingly unending dispossession.

Emerging as a primary theme of Gibran's push-pull wash techniques is the impossibility of manifesting a self on the world stage of wars for territory and resources. Time and again, when Gibran endeavored to contribute visual art to the cause, he produced images exploring the possibility of spiritual survival outside or beyond a fleshly body. Consider Gibran's contributions to a special "Syria in Distress" issue of the journal *al-Funūn*, a cultural publication of the New York Arab diaspora: a poem in the form of a long lament narrating the guilt of a survivor, "Dead are my People," and several wash drawings.[26] The journal made clear that the images were affective structures for sustaining a sense of communal life amid shared pain [PL. 63]. A full page was occupied by a drawing identified as "face of my mother, face of my nation," Gibran's first known depiction of an image of a *national* mother as an allegorical female presence [PL. 4].[27] His oeuvre already included numerous images of maternity that were laden with the universal dimensions of life-giving. But this image, a graphite and wash drawing filled by the grisaille patterns of lithography, appears eerily dimensionless and devoid of life. Its androgyny makes for a Messianic quality, as

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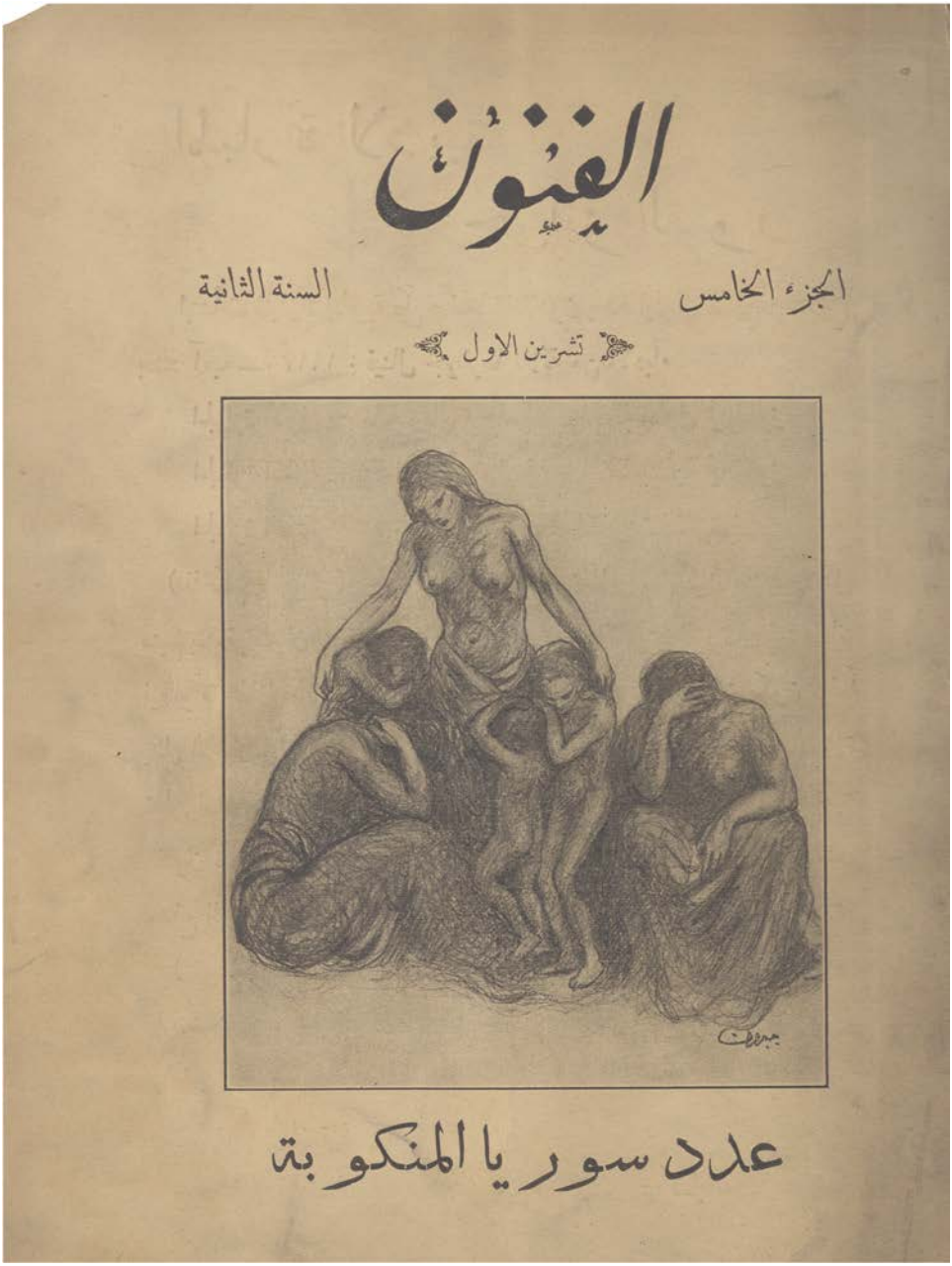
24 I am grateful for conversations with Nana Adusei-Poku about expanding the ways that melancholia finds expression outside pathology.

25 As often noted in reflections on shifting art world norms, the etymology of the word "curator" already signals an obligation to perform care work. It is derived from the Latin curare, meaning "to take care of," or "to cure," such that moral and physical dimensions of the activity are merged.

26 "Māta Ahlī," *al-Funūn* 2, no. 5 (October 1916): 388. The poem was subsequently published in other Arabic journals, including the widely read Egyptian journal *al-Hilāl*.

27 Reproduced on page 420 of the October 1916 issue.



PL. 63
Nasib Arida (editor), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator), *Al-Funūn*, "Syria in Distress," October 1916

if a sacrificial body predestined to be abandoned by its spirit. Only by a further caption is political efficacy introduced as a possibility: "This is a word born from the heart of Gibran. It is incumbent upon us, every Syrian, to adopt it like a constitution—so as to give purpose in these days brimming with strife and adversity."[28] The result is an image of a national mother that functions less as an icon than as a script about the loss of self within a world with capacity to both deplete and revive individual life.

Towards the Infinite, a haunting watercolor and graphite drawing completed the same year, captures with moving pathos the artist's anxiety around survival, and, indeed, his impulse to mythologize precarity [PLS. 58, 64]. An image produced on relatively sturdy Agawam bond typing paper, it renders its portrait of a tilted head into a membrane between presence and loss. Although the drawing was exhibited at Knoedler Gallery with the nondescript title *Study of a Head*, Gibran later told friends it depicted his mother Kamila at the moment of her expiration, "in the last instant of her earthly life and in the first instant of her life beyond her."[29] Aspects of his wash technique in the image, with his flat downward strokes of heavy pigment suspension, call to mind the commemorative aspect of photographs, complete with maudlin colorization to make vivid the memory of lost family. Pink fleshy tones accumulate on the drawing's surface in visual separation from the outline of facial features. Yet as Gibran also makes clear in his Arabic-language commentary, his theme was not the person of his mother in her individuality. Rather, he aimed to trace a belief in progeny that placed his immediate mother (*ummī*) in a network of "mothers and sisters in spirit" (*ummahātī wa-akhawātī bi-al-rūḥ*). In this regard, every face served as a mother and every body brought together the materials of past and future survival.

One of the most appreciative responses to *Towards the Infinite* appears in a 1917 essay by Alice Raphael, a poet and philosopher who wrote for the journal *The Seven Arts*, a recently established "little magazine" that counted Gibran as a contributor.[30] Raphael's essay takes the Knoedler Gallery exhibition as an occasion to associate Gibran with an outlook she characterizes as Eastern

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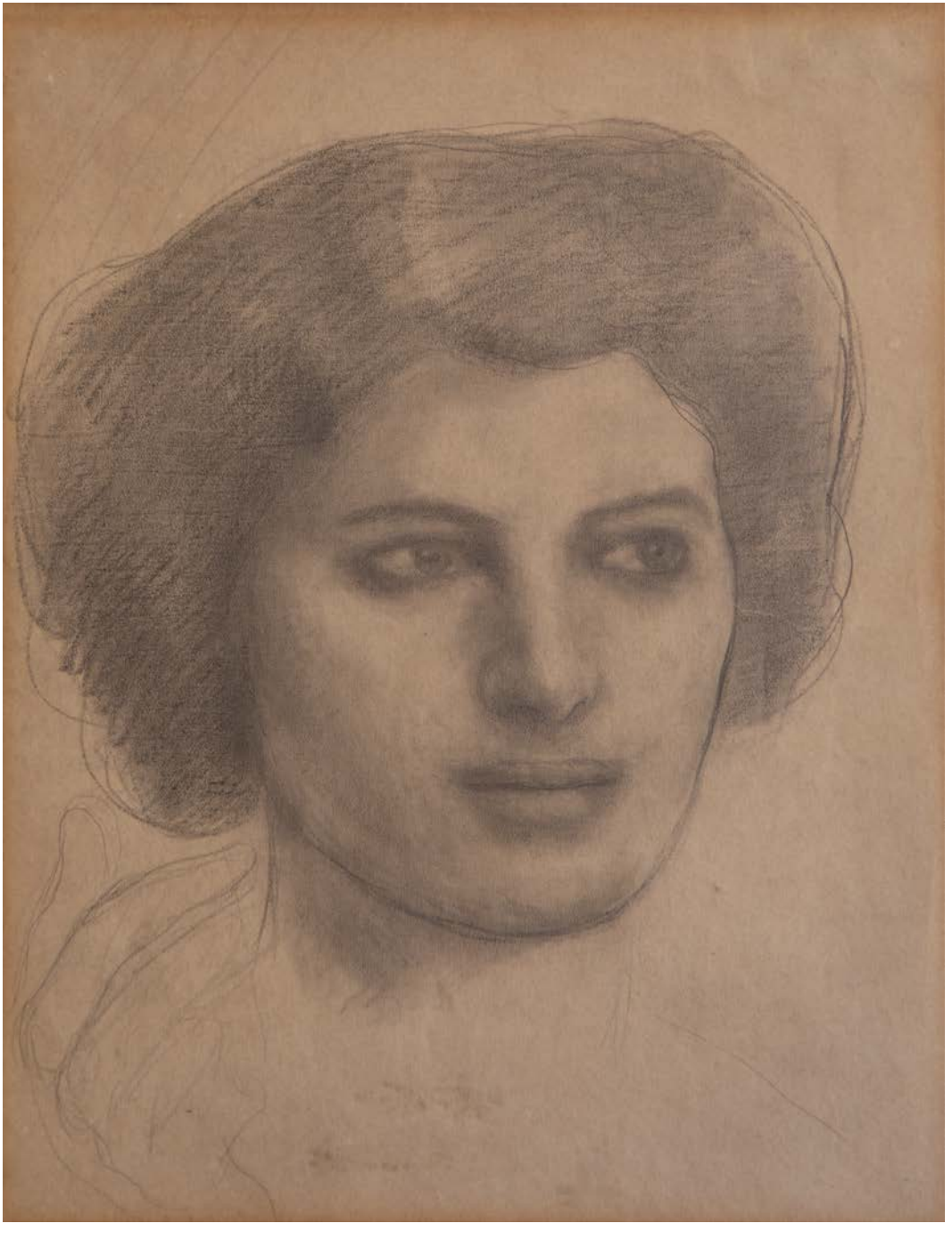
28 Ibid.

29 Gibran to Ziadeh, January 28, 1920, in *al-Shu'la al-Zarqā'*, 67. When this drawing was reproduced in color as the frontispiece to *Twenty Drawings* (New York: Knopf, 1919), it had gained the title *Towards the Infinite*.

30 Alice Raphael, "The Art of Kahlil Gibran," *The Seven Arts* (March 1917): 531-34.

PL. 64
Kahlil Gibran, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Page from *Twenty Drawings* (second edition), 1974 [While the signature on the work *Towards the Infinite* clearly indicates the bottom of the page, Gibran chose to rotate the image when reproducing it in his book *Twenty Drawings*.]



PL. 65
Portrait of May Ziadeh, 1920-21

rather than Western symbolism, discerning a logic in his drawings that is oriented to eternal realities rather than empirical details. For Raphael, it is telling that Gibran addresses the human spirit in compact forms, needing "only a small sheet of paper" to manifest his spiritual insights as opposed to the fresco story cycles of European artists.[31] Declaring *Towards the Infinite* to be the most beautiful drawing in the exhibition, Raphael testifies to a luminous ground so delicate that the throat veins seem to quiver and the pale lips to move. Color here, according to Raphael, serves not to testify to compositional balance or optical pleasure. It works to "reveal his form." The sensibility is thus sculptural rather than painterly, using the material on the page to register energy that would otherwise pulse beneath the surface as potential form.[32]

Gibran's interlocutors in his discussion of his practice and his conception of *Towards the Infinite* included the feminist writer May Ziadeh [PL. 65].[33] A letter he sent to Ziadeh in 1920 attempts to articulate a number of oppositions between spirit and matter that bear upon his drawings. By way of conveying a yearning for unity that he takes as a component of creation, Gibran confesses that he feels he wears two suits to work as an artist: one a woven garment and the other a cladding of "flesh, bone, and blood."[34] Each, of course, must be jettisoned if he is to achieve spiritual equilibrium. In the case of *Towards the Infinite*—a depiction of precisely this type of threshold event—Gibran plays with further versions of doubling and coupling presences. The image, he suggests to Ziadeh, may be construed as a kiss between feminine selves. It shows a marvelous dawning light that, emerging from "our depths," places its lips on the neck of another.[35] His choice of narrative imagery would seem

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31 Raphael, "The Art of Kahlil Gibran," 532.

32 Raphael declares the watercolors to be an "arresting force in our modern conception of paint." The intended reader of *The Seven Arts* was a citizen who tended toward pacifist views and fretted over military expansionism and industrial overproduction. Raphael's sense of Gibran's achievement in this context becomes most clear in a 1919 revision of the essay, published in *Twenty Drawings*. There, writing with renewed conviction that faddish modernist arts had nothing to offer any soldier who'd seen the trenches of war, she praised the fact that "Gibran has not gone to strange lands to study the new but he has walked the silent path of the meditative creator and he has brought out of his own depths these eternal verities of the history of man's inner life."

33 Gibran to Ziadeh, November 3, 1920, in *al-Shu la al-Zarqā* , 75–82.

34 Ibid., 80.

35 Ibid., 77.

PL. 66
Proof of *The Mountain*, n.d. [Gibran chose to rotate the image when reproducing it in his book *Twenty Drawings*.]

PL. 67
The Mountain, c. 1916

to be inspired by scholarship on ancient Egyptian sky deities and hymns describing the interplay of suns and the sky, described as a mother.[36]

Tellingly, circa 1920, Gibran's descriptions of his drawing practice mobilize a poetics of dematerialization. He suggests, for instance, that his best drawings are "sketches in mid-air and images drawn on the face of the moon."[37] By then, Gibran had already begun making his drawings for use as lithographic reproductions, such that the integrity of the original image would be dissolved into a sea of replication.[38] As soon as his reputation as a writer rose with the 1923 publication of *The Prophet*, the agitation and occasional loss of the "original" paper became a practical axiom of his illustration work, which converted drawings to photographs to metal plates and back to drawings.

This is a draftsman who made imagery for circulation rather than preservation, even as he took note of the constitutive experience of loss that accrued to him and his kin in their experience of occupation and displacement.

There has long been a hesitancy among scholars to assign a political status to Gibran's oeuvre. One reason has to do with an overreliance on Haskell's diary accounts of Gibran's commitments and beliefs. Because Haskell's observations have established the primary narrative points, most biographies of the artist recount Gibran's participation in the activist community as she did, which is by professing wonder at his impossible aspirations while hoping for a return to his truer literary and artistic calling. Another reason has to do with subsequent assessments by left-wing Arab critics, many of whom admired Gibran's early characterization of "his Lebanon" as a community of laborers as opposed to stuffed-shirt politicians but saw his later work with ideas of prophethood and

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36 See, for instance, James Henry Breasted's discussion of the goddess Nut in *A History of Egypt from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1905), 59.

37 Gibran to Ziadeh, November 3, 1920, in *al-Shu'la al-Zarqā'*, 81.

38 By the mid-1920s, it was sometimes even the case that he had sold drawings, only to find that his printers subsequently lost the originals. See Gibran to Mariita Giacobbe [Lawson], August 9, 1926, in *Rasā'il Jubrān al-Tā'iha, ma'a 19 Risāla Yukshafu 'anhā lil-Marra al-ūlā*, ed. Riyad Hunayn (Beirut: Mu'assasat Nawfal, 1983), 180–81.

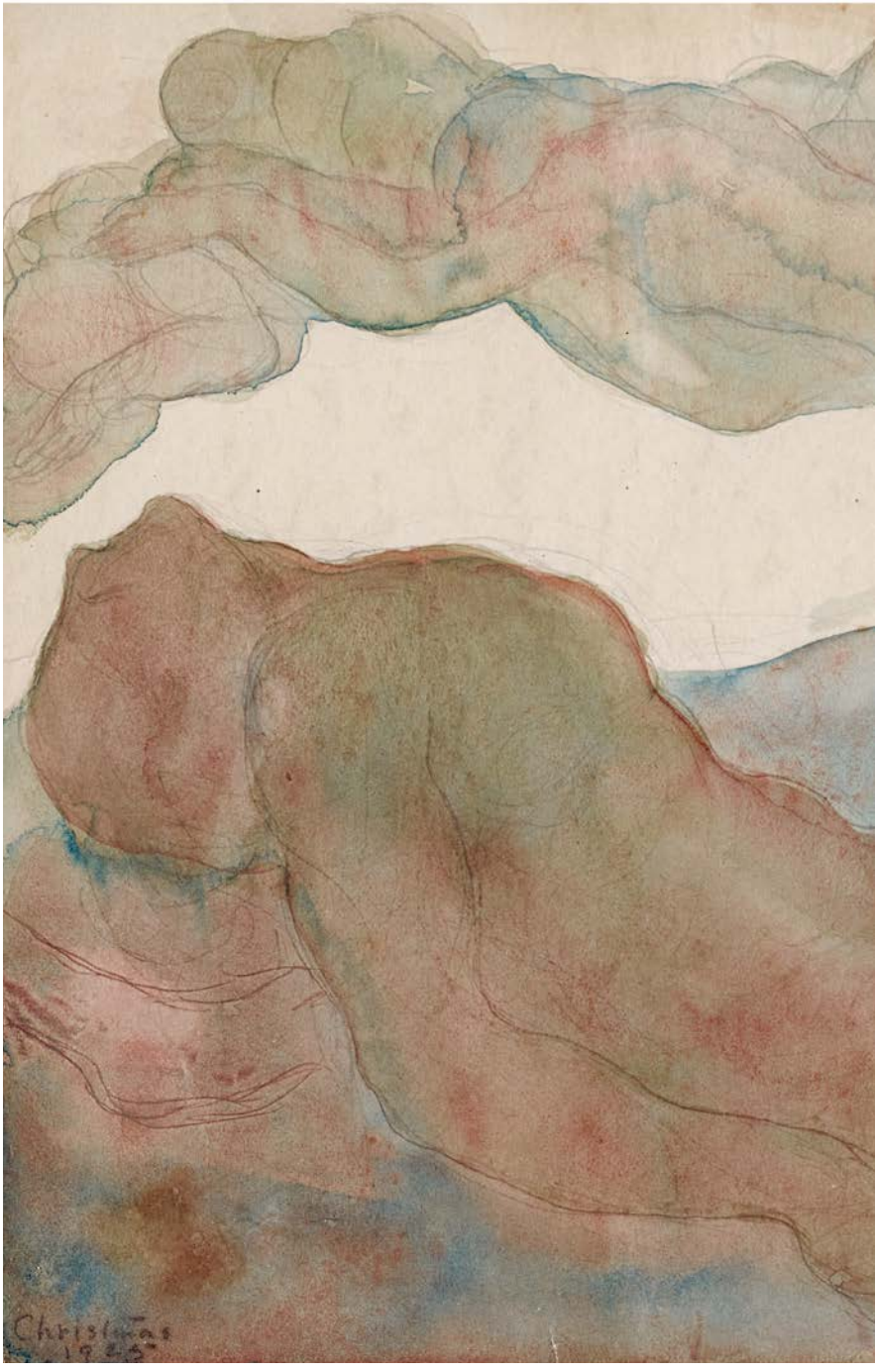
spirit as a retreat.[39] It can be challenging to read a practice of self-denial as a revolutionary position.[40]

It is true that Gibran's appeals to mist, smoke, and transubstantiation seem to act at odds with his (and our) desire for active revolution. And yet, Gibran took seriously the role of witness to what others could not see. Unlike armchair socialists such as William Morris who tended toward the pastoral and bespoke, Gibran never privileged the singular, handmade object at the expense of distributed perception. Ultimately, in fact, he remained little concerned with controlling his radiant flow of images. Gibran's focus on process rather than "ends" was vital to work as an immigrant intellectual confronting his minoritized subjectivity at a time of world crisis. Rejecting autonomy as an ideal, he used his drawings to sustain a sense of relatedness within an infinite and expanding circuit of recipients of things saved and things given.

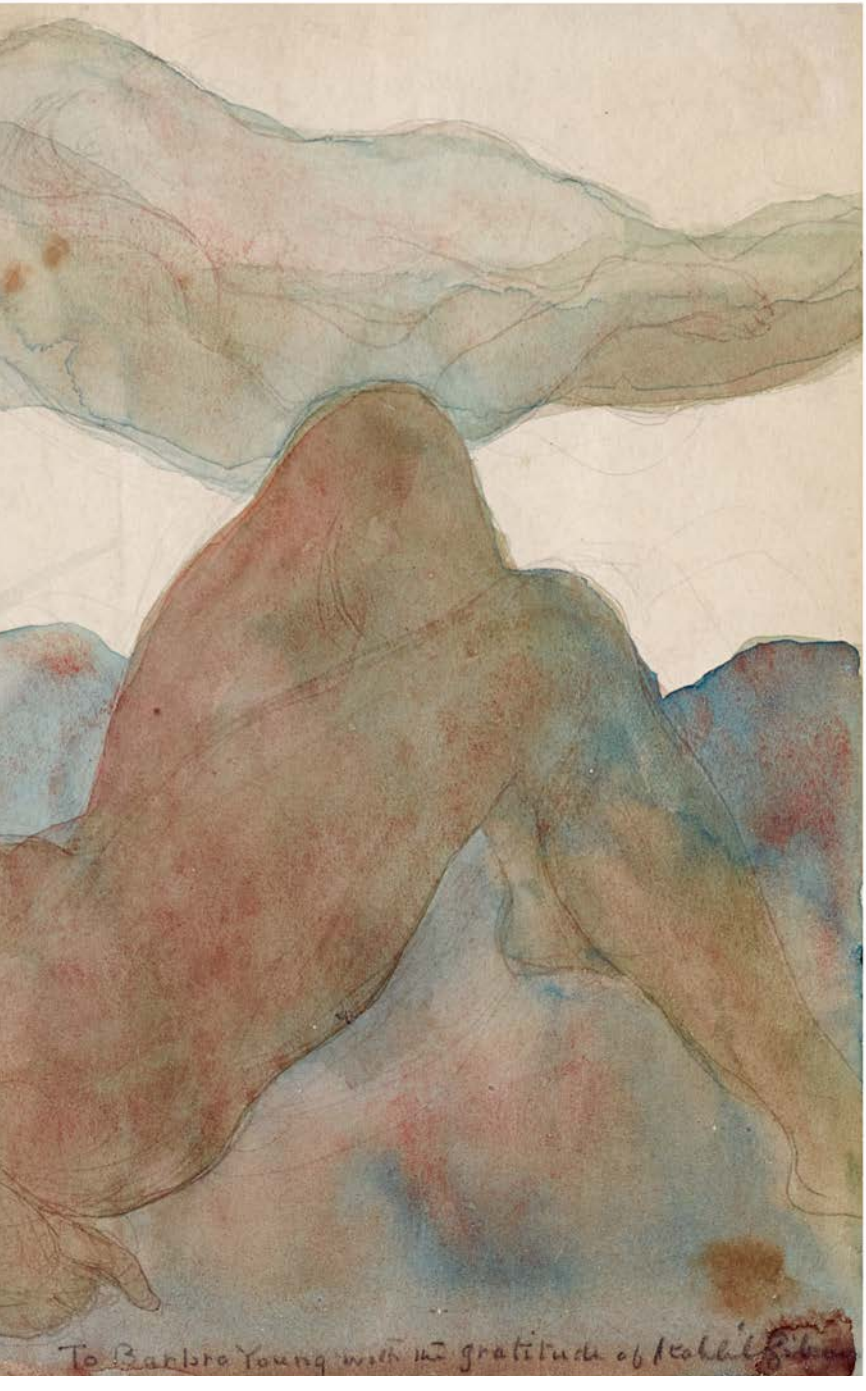
39 Raif Khoury, "Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān," *Al-Talīʿa* (1 August 1937): 702–6.

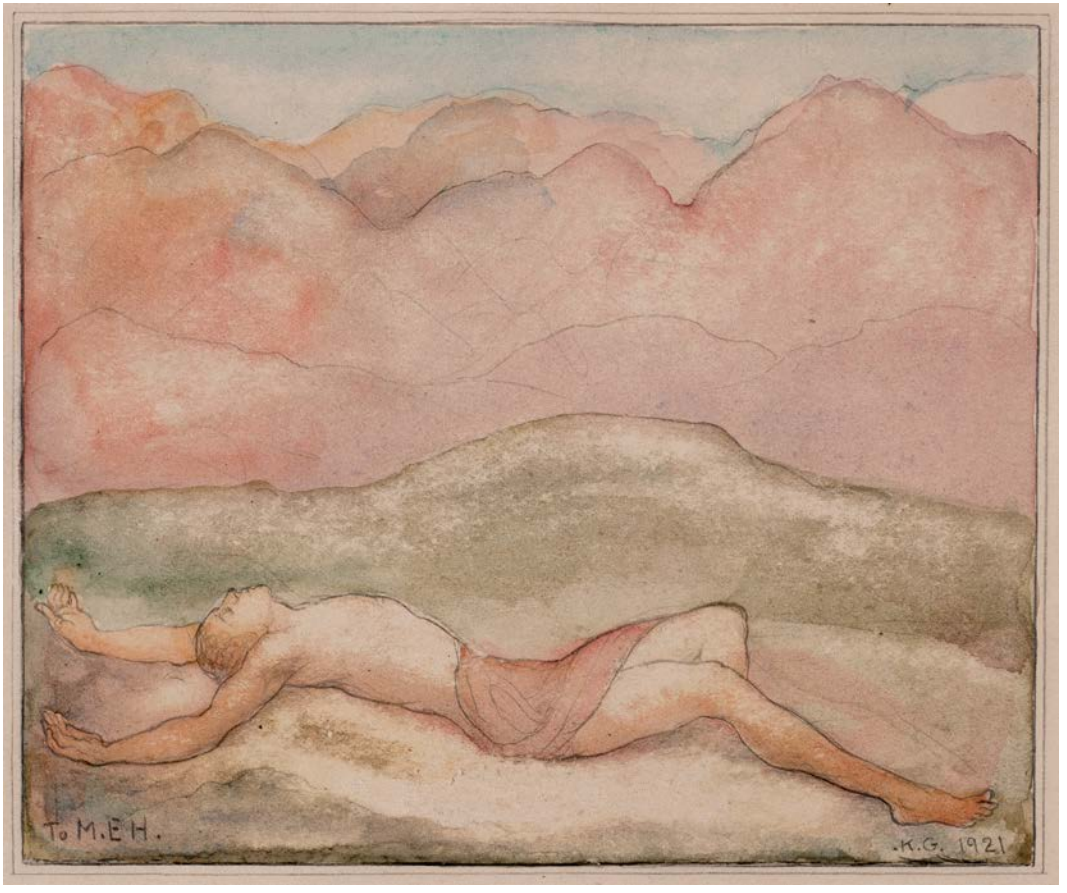
40 One notable effort is made by Stephen Sheehi, "Modernism, Anxiety and the Ideology of Arab Vision," *Discourse* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 72–96. The most detailed treatment of Gibran's activism is Adel Beshara, "A Rebel Syrian: Gibran Khalil Gibran," in *The Origins of Syrian Nationhood: Histories, Pioneers, and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2011), 143–62.

PL. 68
The Heavenly Mother, 1920



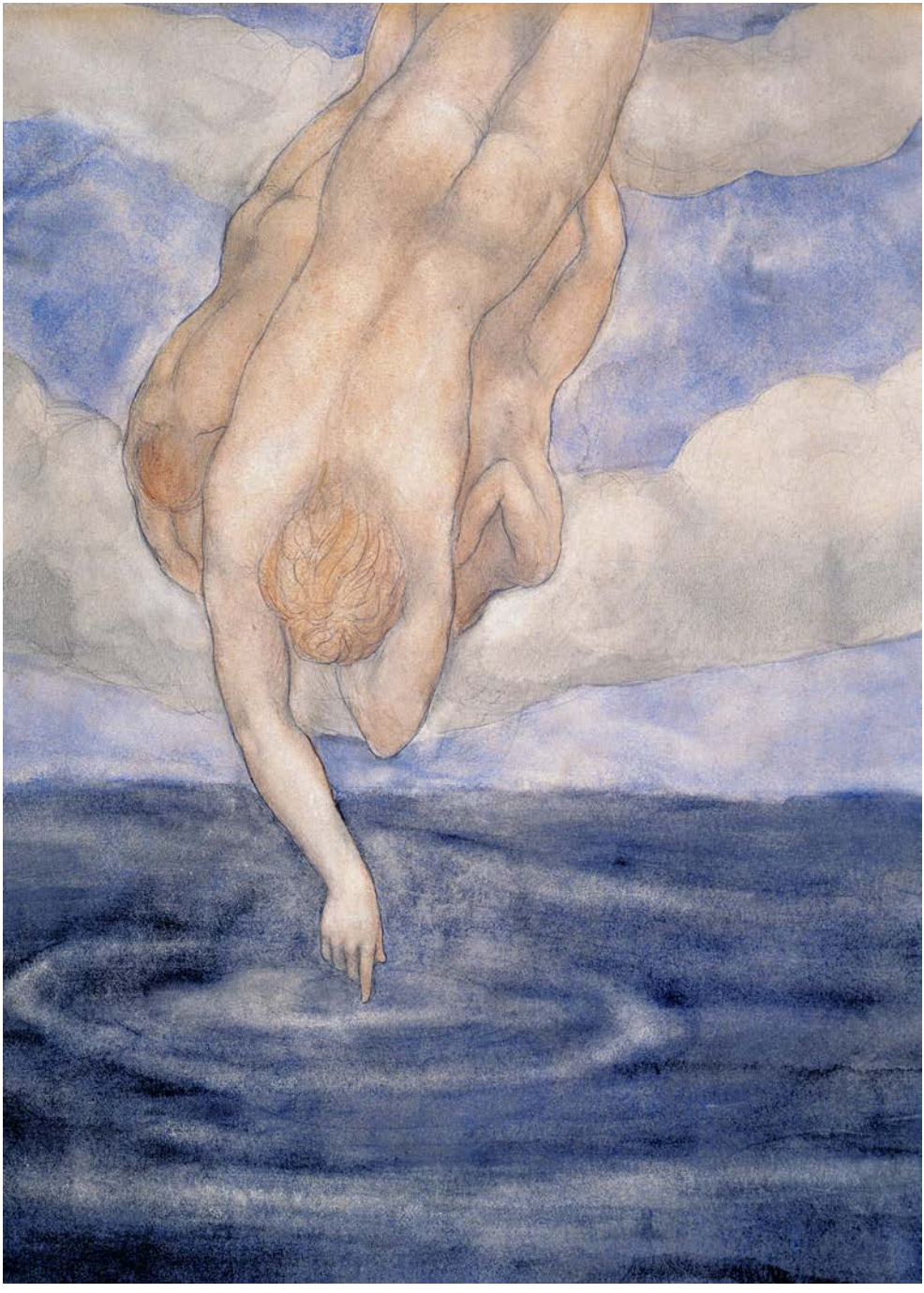
PL. 69
Reclining Nudes, 1925


To Barbara Young with my gratitude of Isabel Bishop



PL. 70
Untitled, 1921

PL. 71
Spirit of Light or Spiritual Communion, 1921

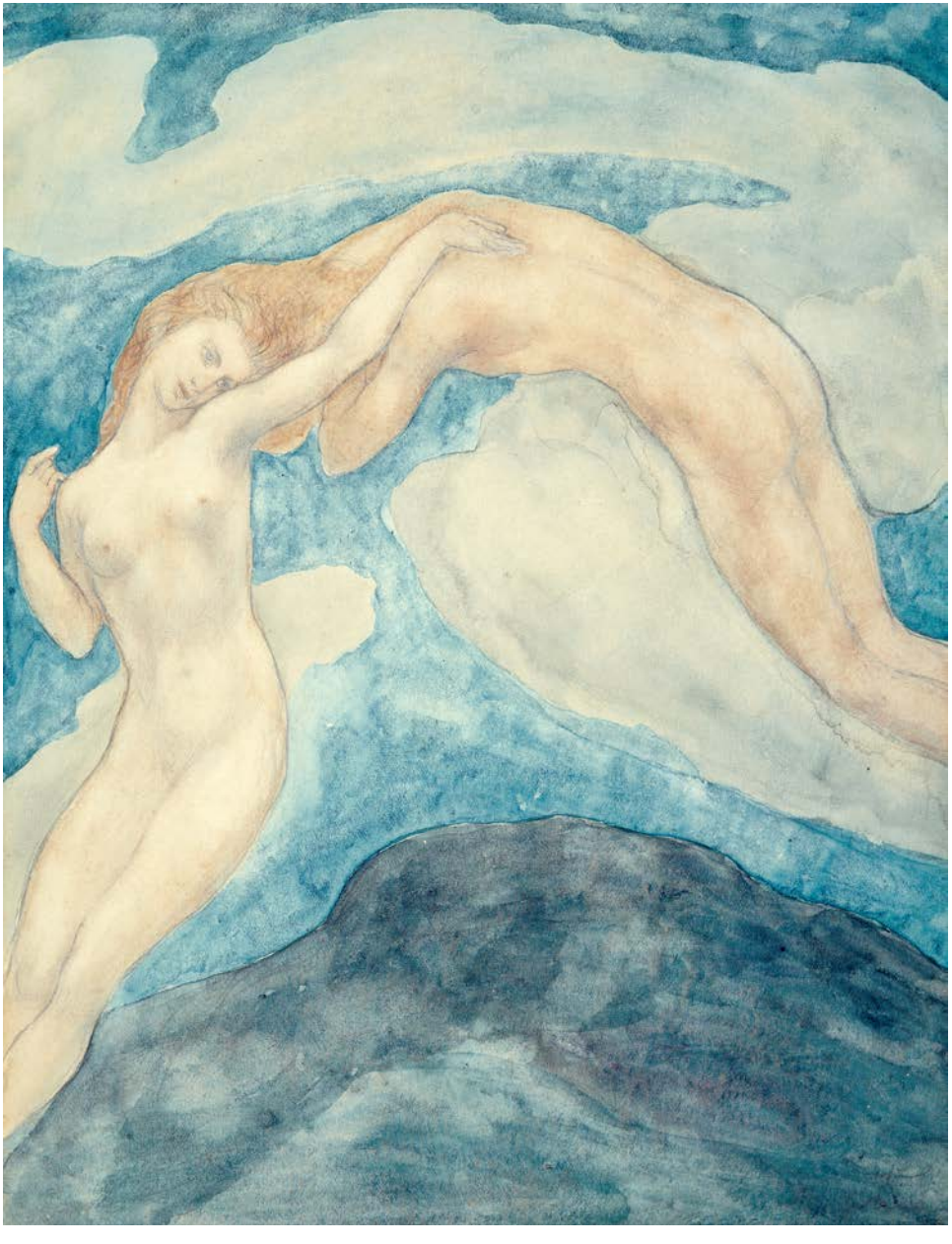


PL. 72
The Triad–Being Descending Towards the Mother Sea, 1923

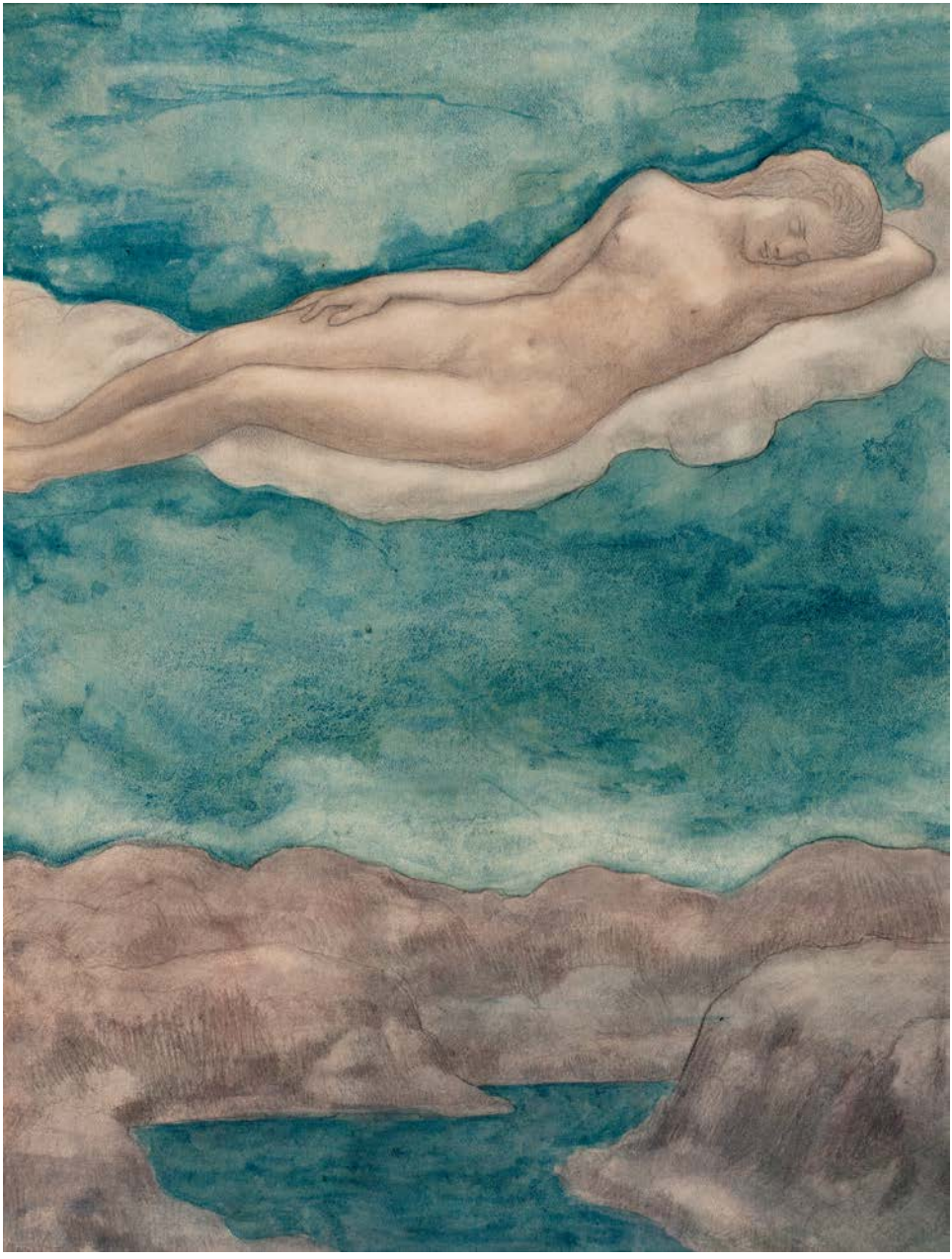
PL. 73
The Archer, 1923

PL. 74
Love, 1923

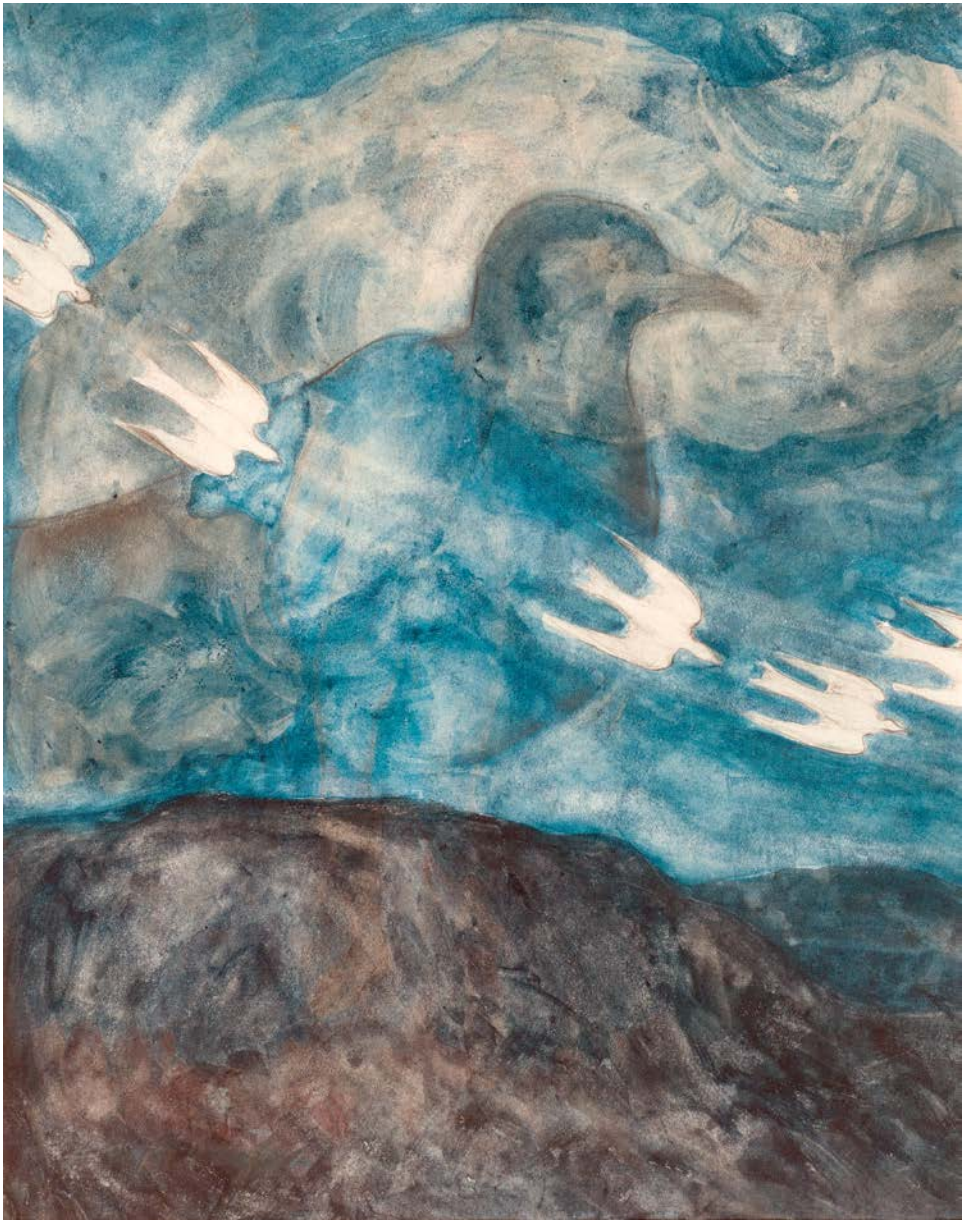
PL. 75
The Divine World, 1923



PL. 76
The Summit, c. 1925

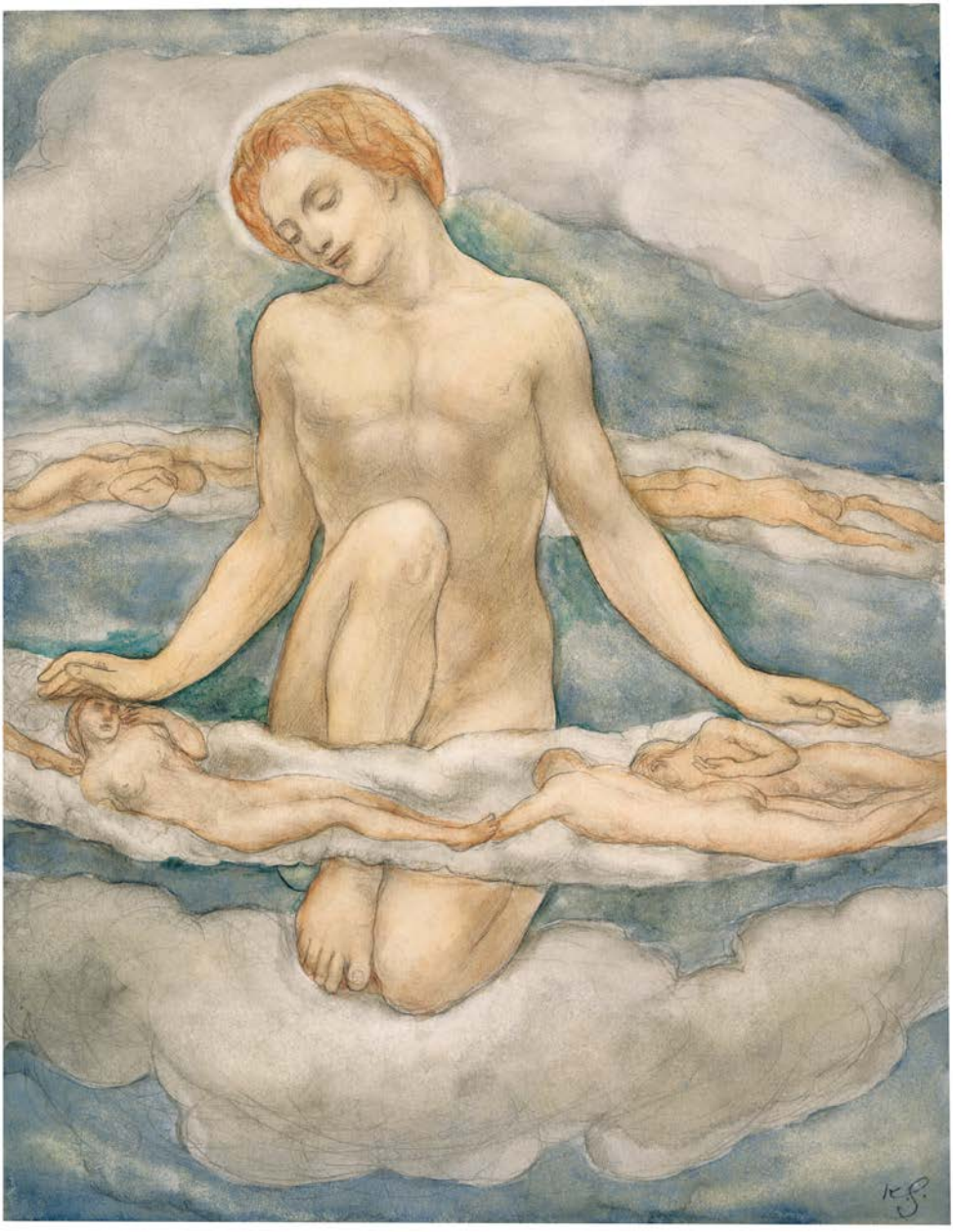


PL. 77
Untitled, c. 1925

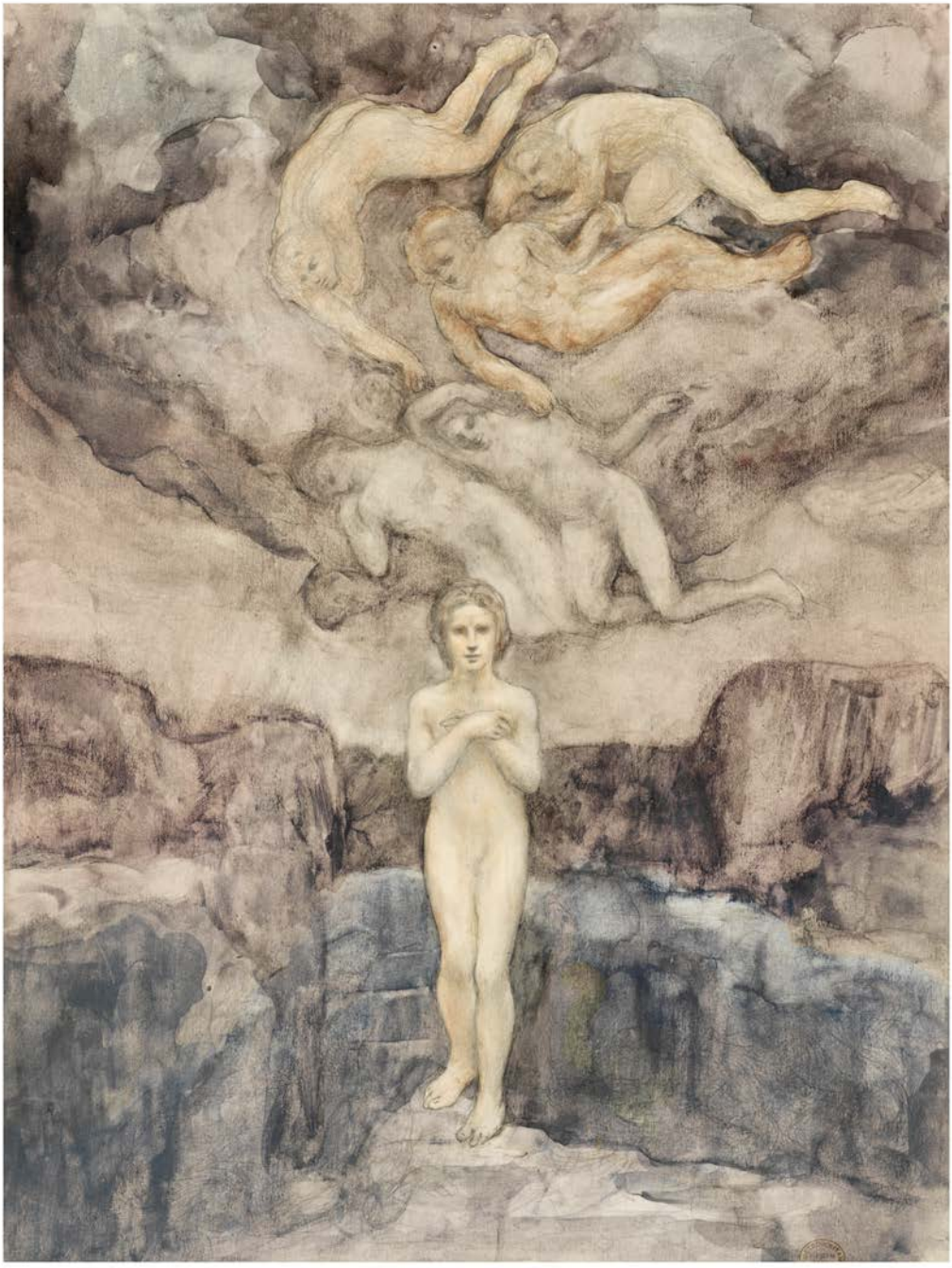


PL. 78
The Blessed Mountain, c. 1926

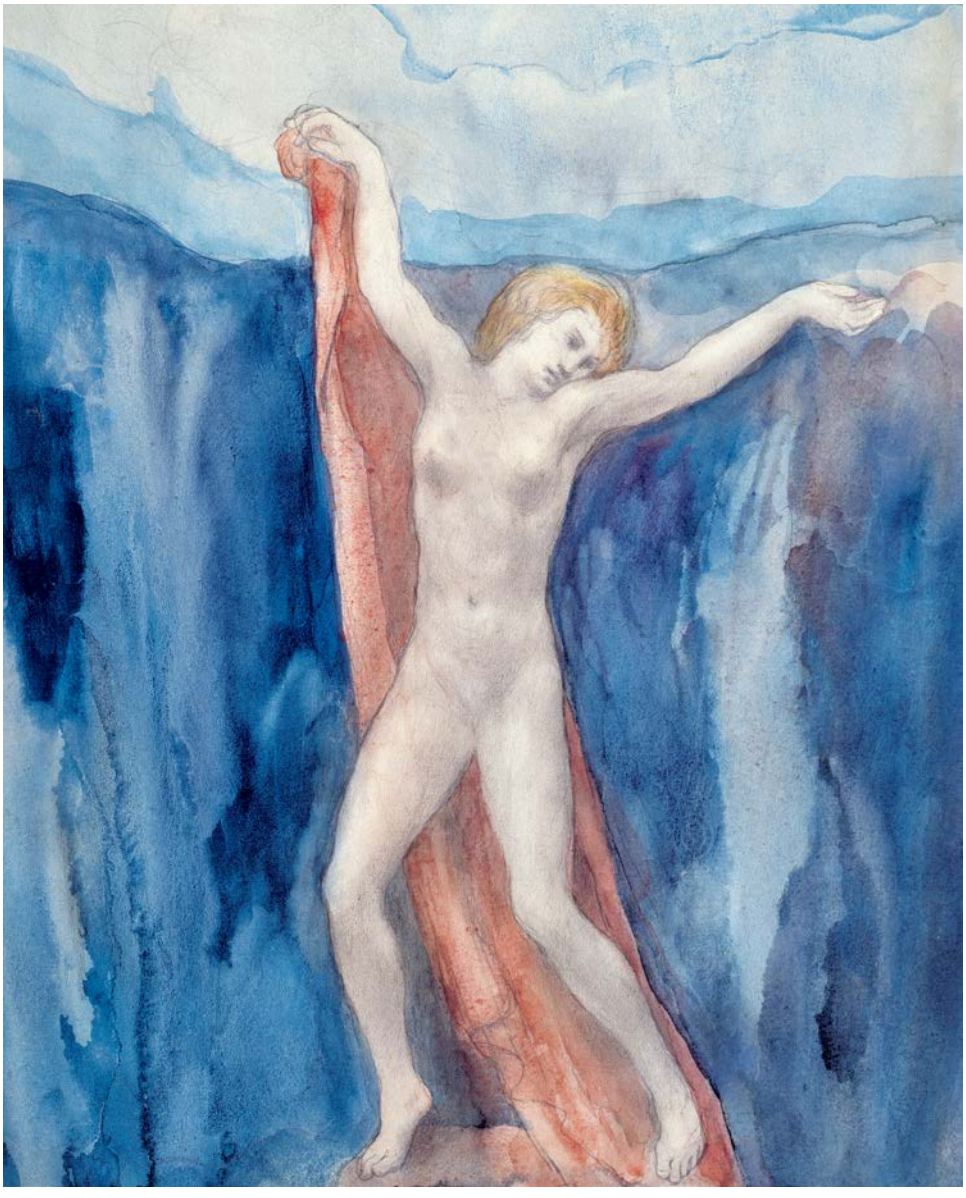
PL. 79
Sketch for *Jesus the Son of Man*, 1923



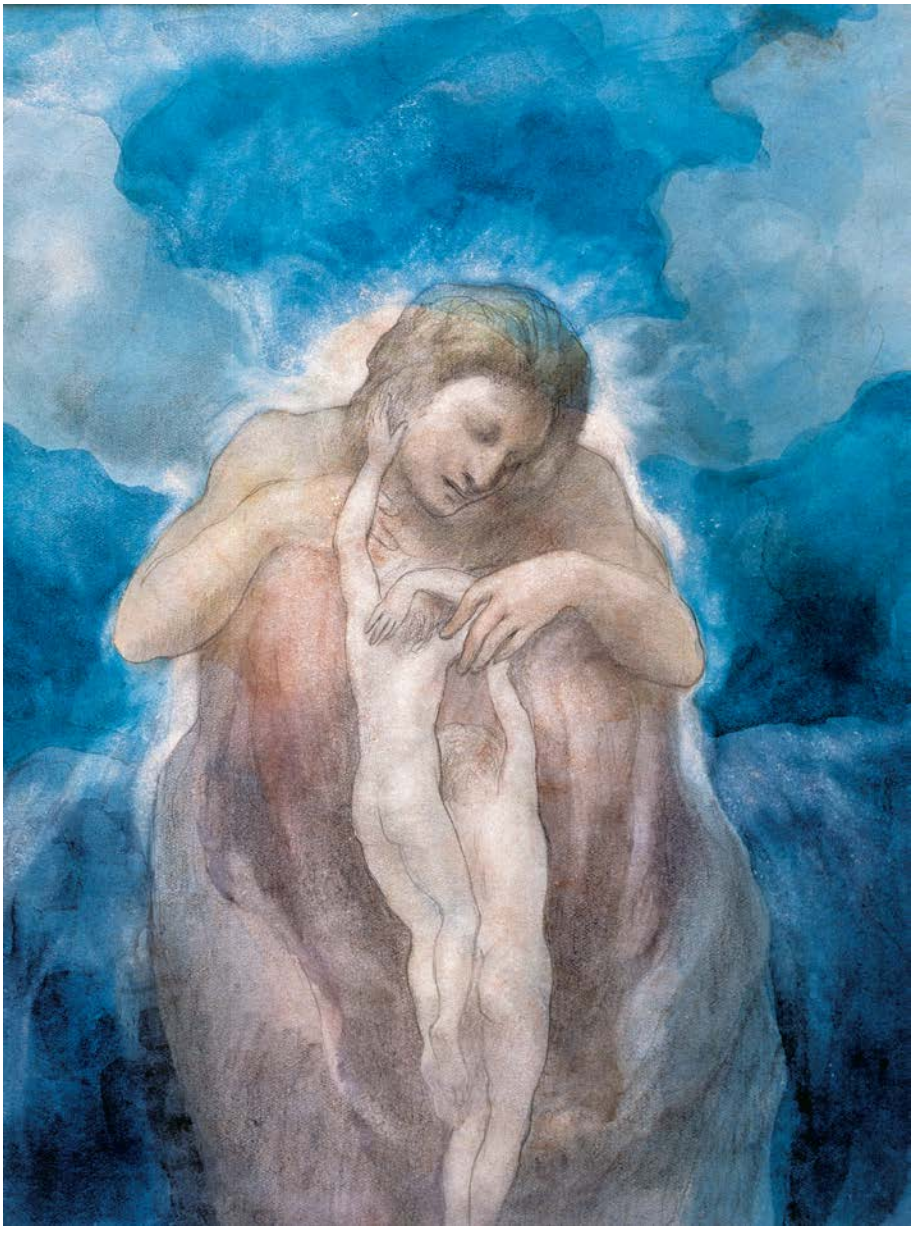
PL. 80
Nude Figure Kneeling Among Clouds, c. 1928



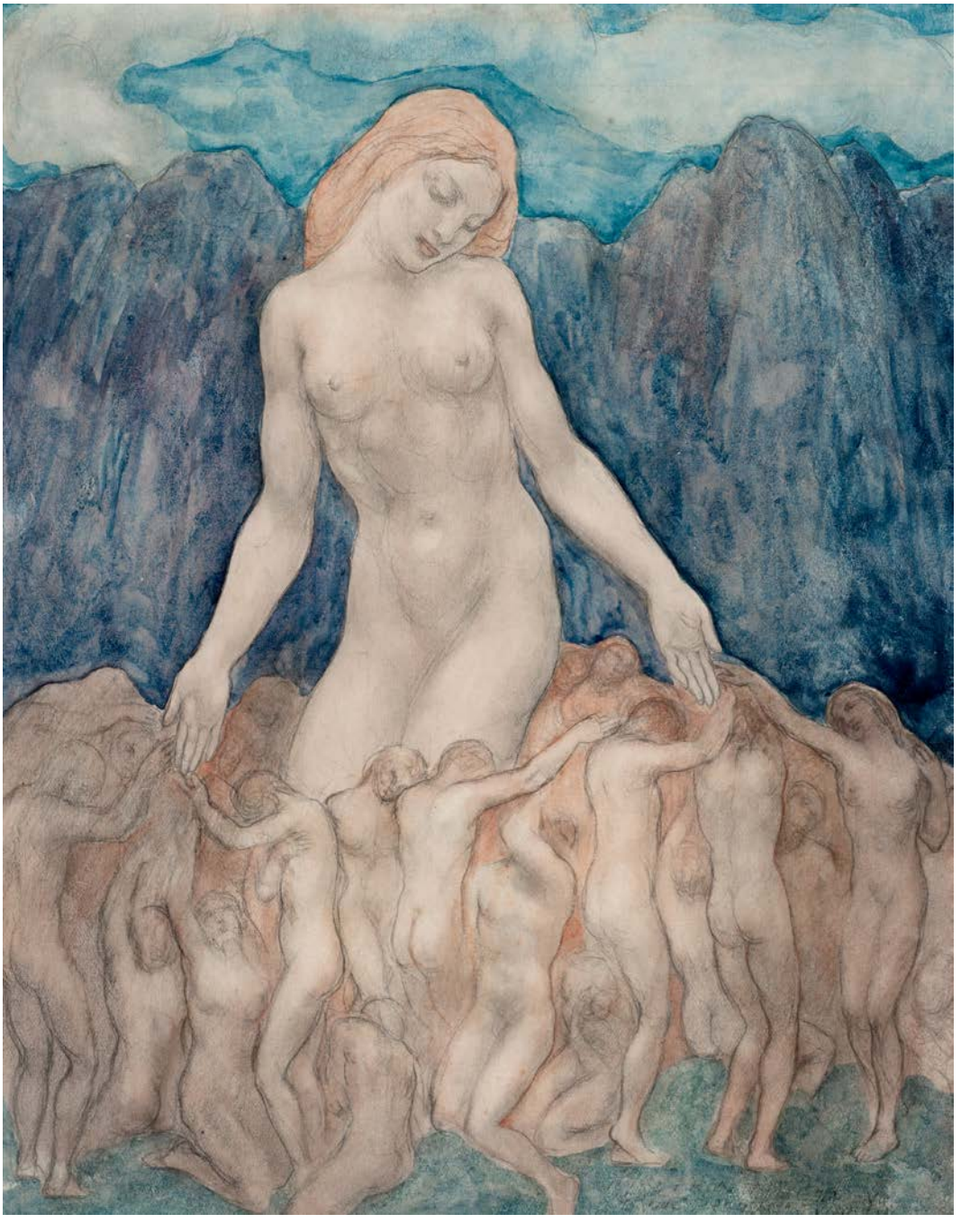
PL. 81
I Have Come Down the Ages, n.d.



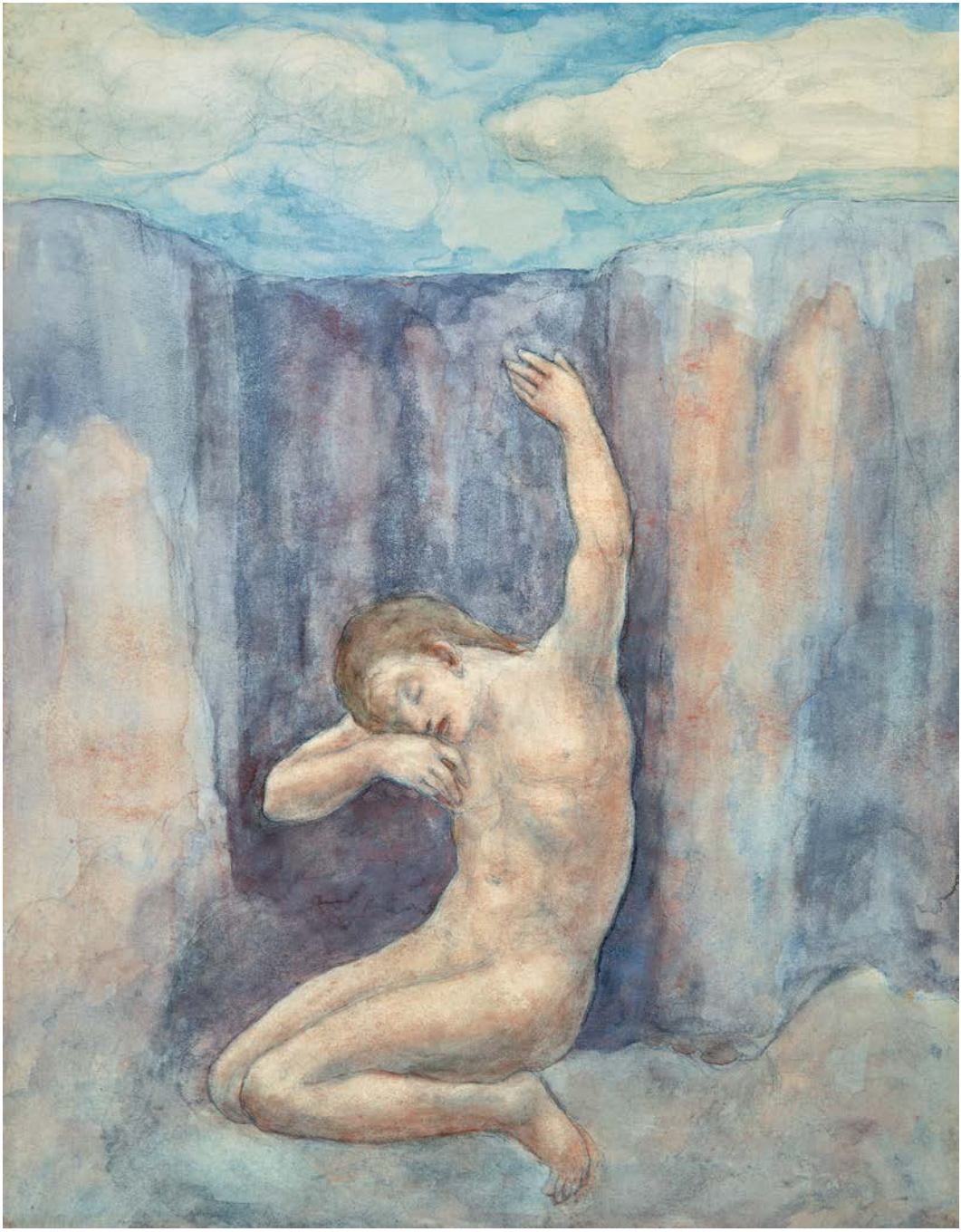
PL. 82
Dance and Rhythm, 1920-23



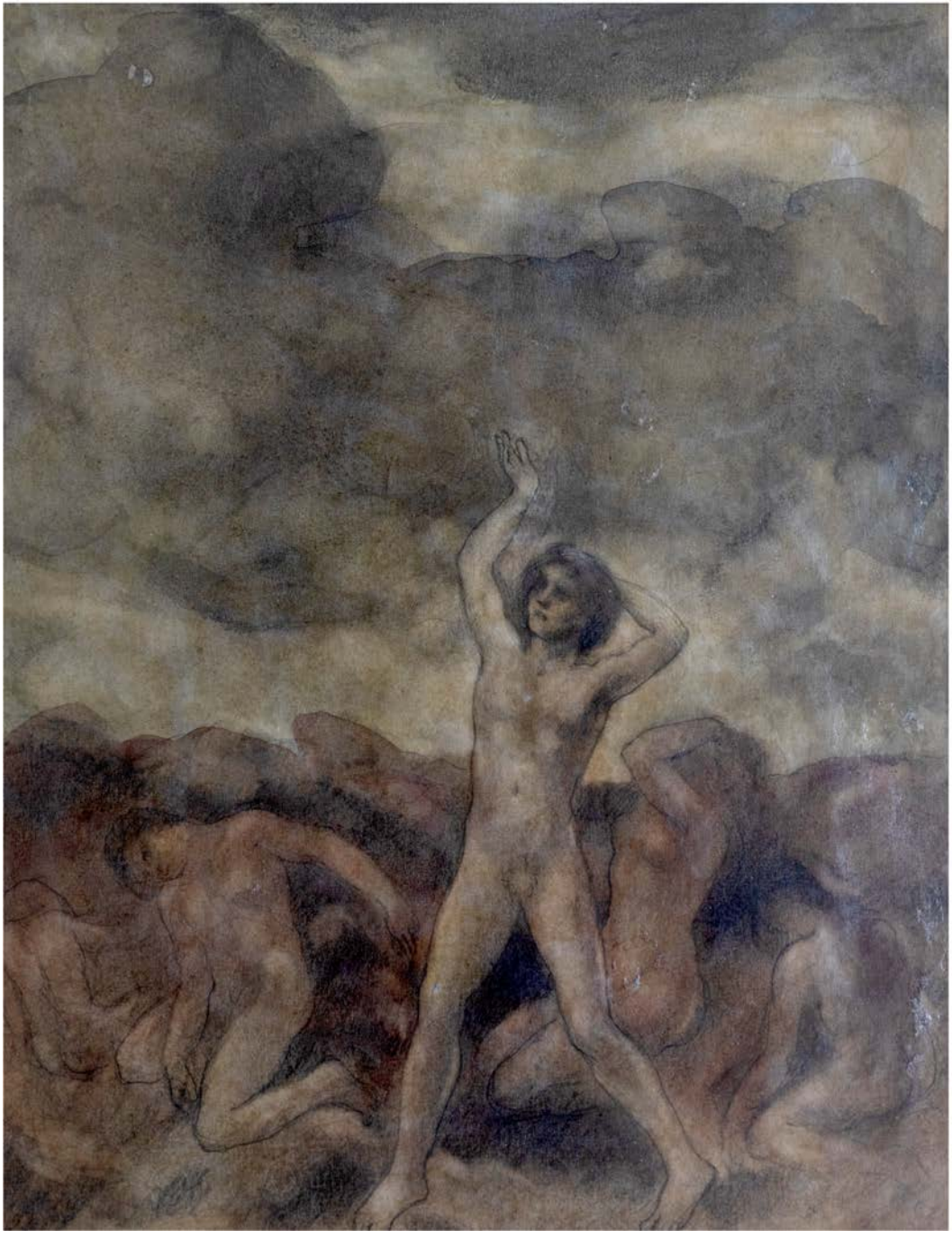
PL. 83
The Universal Mother Embracing Two Transcending Spirits, 1920-23



PL. 84
Life, c. 1931



PL. 85
The Outstretched Hand, 1930



PL. 86
Storm, c. 1922

PL. 87
Untitled, 1930

Mounira Al Solh, Sketch on notebook paper, Lebanon, December 2022/January 2023

A Cold and Rainy Day

Mounira Al Solh

On January 6, 2023, I drove from 800 meters above sea level in Broummana, where, after my orphan-upon-birth grandfather was assassinated in the center of Beirut in 1958, the mostly Christian and Druze graveyard of the town offered him and his family this exceptional two square meters of ground to be modestly—with the inscription of the Muslim Al Fatiha prayer—buried in peace. Broummana is the Christian town of the mother of his cousin and wife, my outstanding feminist and activist grandmother, after whom I was fortunately named.

I drove past the graveyard, down to sea level, took a few curves, passed the Roumieh prison road, overlooking the still deeply-wounded harbor of Beirut, freshly pregnant with the waiting eyes of all its victims and their relatives, who are now being persecuted instead of cared for. Since August 4, 2020, at 6:07pm—COVID-19 times—they have been fighting to know why their loved ones were killed, waiting for the un-coming of justice. I headed back above sea level 1450 meters, all the way up to Bsharri.

I counted at least 140 curves, some mild and many harsh, sharp as a knife, swinging like bony elbows between mountains and plains, alternating from sea view to mountain chain vistas. The car spun and wove around as many curves in the road as years that have passed since Jubrān Khalil Jubrān was born on January 6, 1883—or perhaps it was December 6, according to different records. The fact that I visited his museum possibly on the same day he was born was pure coincidence. And by pure coincidence I mean the way many of us physically survived the August 4 explosion by leaving the sight ten minutes prior or jumping quickly enough under the bed. Coincidences and reflexes might save you or kill you or wound you forever.

Around 1500 meters above sea level, I finally reached the end of the road, marked by the Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum.

"Gibran bought the monastery!?," asked my mom and my daughter with shock and anger, both ready to explode, almost in tears, when I returned from my visit and told them where I was. I said, "Yes, but it's Kahlil Gibran, Al Mustafa, not the other Gibran, not anyone else you might be thinking of!" Mom breathed, and my 11-year-old daughter breathed. They understood. Relief!

During the Lebanese Revolution, women, transgender people, and even children were on the fronts revolting, resisting the thugs! Every child in Lebanon knows who is to blame for our miserable situation here, who to curse. Even the most disconnected of the children, the dreamy ones, the over-protected ones, the ones who believe in unicorns, the ones *who grew up abroad*, the children of "polite" people—all of them were invited to curse those who stole us and our Lebanon. We had nothing more than curses: the verb! The verb in Lebanon is as sharp as knives, as the mountain road's curves. We could not kill those ruling over Lebanon physically because we are not criminals like them, but we killed them with the verb, using asses, dicks, pussies—all the taboo parts of the naked body—as tools to curse them. The body parts in those curses are entirely unlike the body parts in the paintings of Kahlil Gibran. They are crude, they are not symbols of anything; they are weapons, they are not light blue. They are bloody red!

Relax mom, relax Jasmina. We are talking about the Prophet, Kahlil Gibran!

After years of not having been to the museum, this was the best present I could (secretly) give to myself the day before I had to again leave Lebanon. I did not take any of my family members, though we would typically go on such excursions with a group of people since we live in community in Lebanon. For this trip, I sipped every moment of my loneliness, faced with the Lebanese holy mountains, the Cedars of the Lord (Arz El Rab), the sacred Wadi Qadisha. I immersed and emerged in them as a song that spins in the head, as a glass of red pleasure wine and golden grapes, as a nay windy sound that brought me to the skies above the sea, to the ancient polytheistic gods, climbing and reaching toward the museum of Gibran. There I went, all on my own without anyone else from my clan.

For a couple of years, I have been leading a life across continents, as millions of other Lebanese do—as did Kahlil Gibran

himself. They might mistakenly call people like us “ex-iled,” or “ex-patriots.” But to be an ex-pat, you first need to have a “pat,” a *patria*. Lebanon is for me beyond a “pat,” deeper than an “ile.” It is the mother seed, the root, the mountain, the sea, the assassinated family, the place I always return to, the place I depart from, my feminist grandmother after whom I was named, the place of my Syrian family, the harbor in its power and its loss, the electricity that keeps cutting, my upbringing during the Civil War and during the illusionary few years of peace that brought with them many “projects” and creative minds to Lebanon, among them many returning “ex-pats” who do not even speak Arabic and wanted to return to live here in bubbles but later claim to be more Lebanese than those who remained in Lebanon through the Civil War. Lebanon is the imported pine and palm trees, the checkpoints, the sea again, the rock, the religious co-habitation and ethnic cleansings, war with the excuse of religion. It is my Syrian mother who is a citizen of Beirut, it is my grandmother, it is my father, it is where my daughter is born, it is the occupied Lebanon. It is not a functional *patrie*. Many “ex-pats” and “ex-iled” still die in Lebanon, and many choose to return here, and they have the right to do so even if they were forced out, even if they don’t speak Arabic, even if they lived in bubbles and never felt home in their home.

This is also what Kahlil Gibran did. Though he passed away in the United States, his wish was to return to holy mountainous Bsharri for his burial. I wonder, where was Mary Haksell buried? What about May Ziadeh, “the chief” of Arab women writers, who encouraged him to write in English. What about Josephine Peabody? And also his sister who helped him buy his dream place, the monastery in Bsharri?

Even if each of them is buried apart, there are connections and channels across continents: water, air, earth—the elements and miracles, as my friend Pélagie Gbaguidi explains, making me realize how deep the connections are, soothing my pain about distances.

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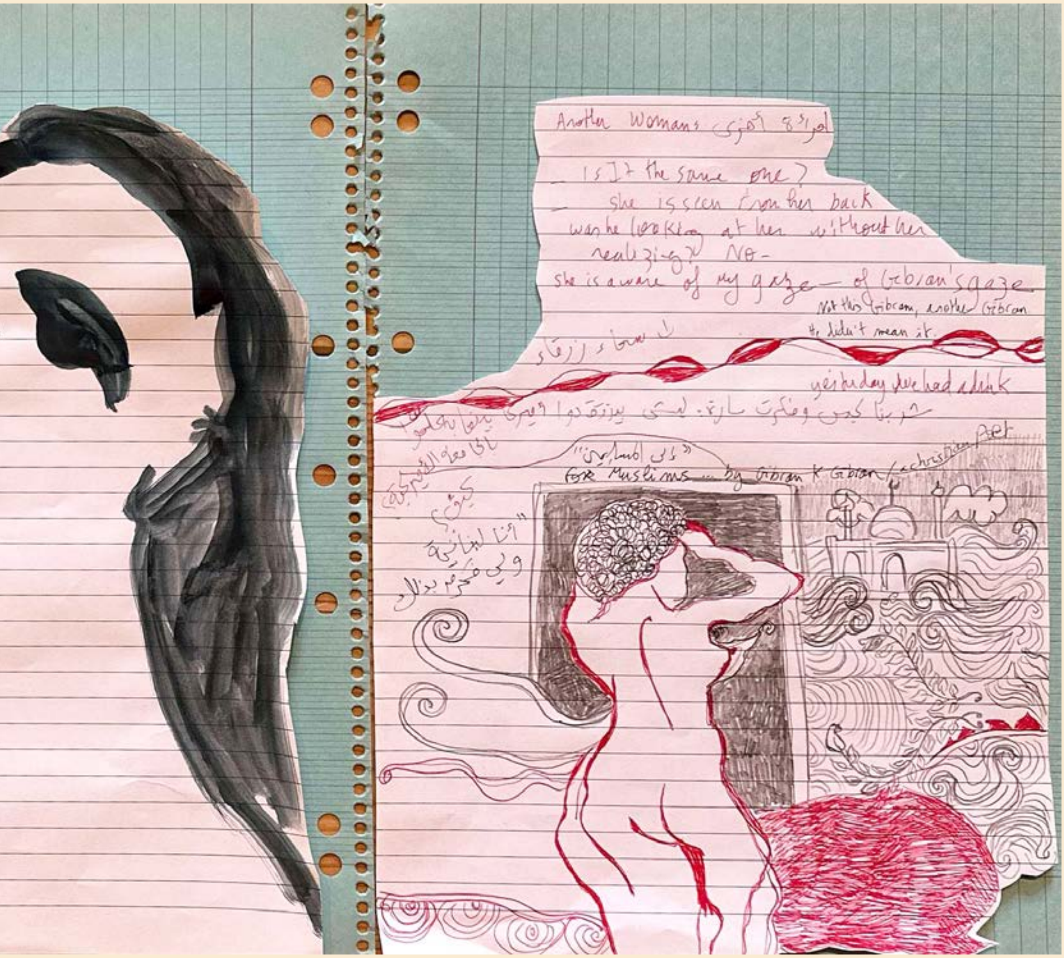
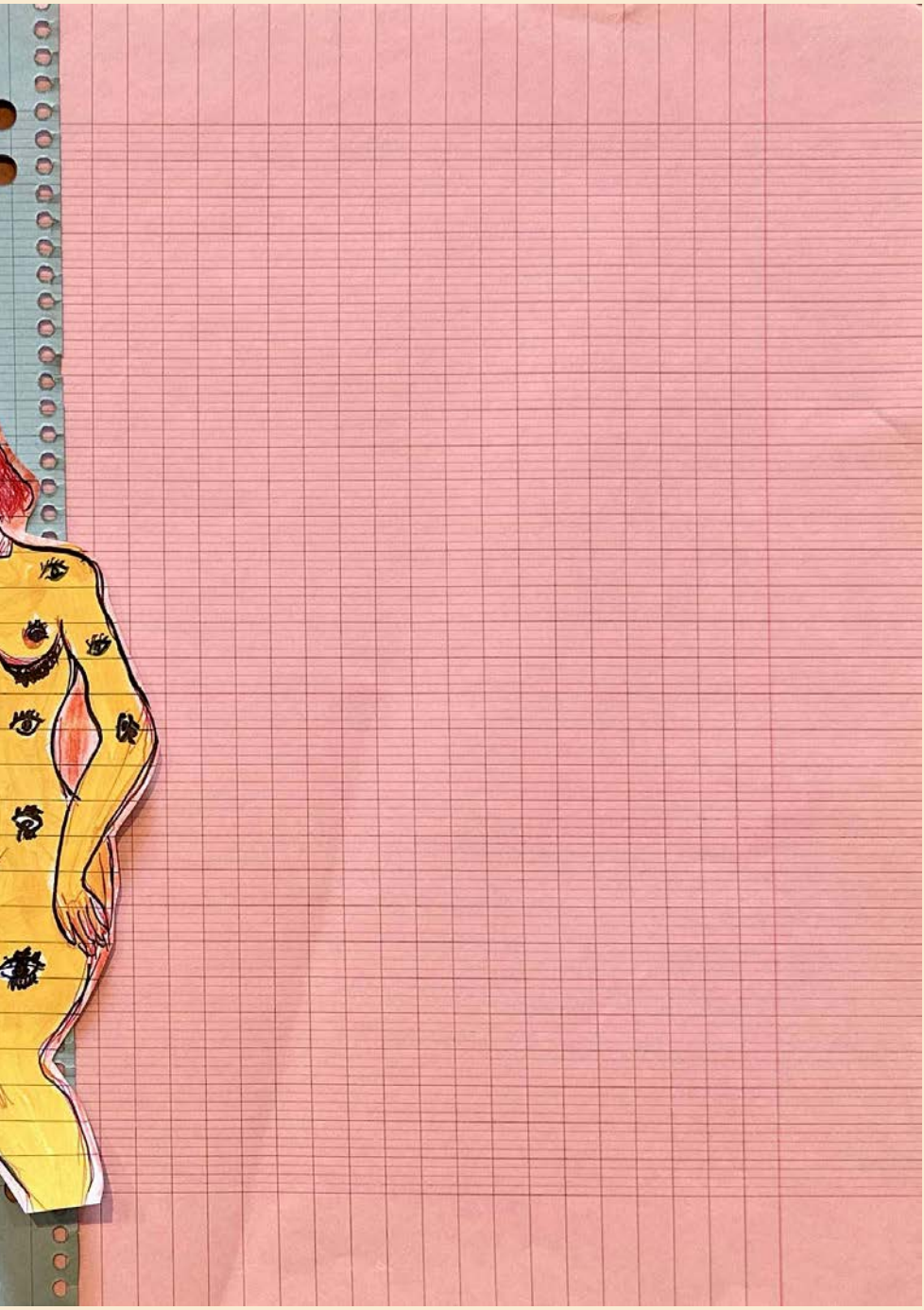
At the rocky entrance of the museum, two “tourists” appear, contemplating the view. They are not simply touring the region. The man has been to Syria as a “foreign” commandant participating in the Syrian war, and the woman follows the hero man who

Mounira Al Solh, Collages/cut-outs on notebook paper, Lebanon, December 2022/January 2023



Another Womans امرأة أخرى
– Is It the same one?
– she is seen from her back
was he looking at her without her
realizing? NO –
She is aware of my gaze – of Gibran's gaze.
Not this Gibran, another Gibran
He didn't mean it.
yesterday we had a drink
"إلى المسلمين"
FOR Muslims ... by Gibran K Gibran / a christian poet
"أنا لبنانية

Mounira Al Solh, Collage/cut-out on notebook paper, Lebanon,
December 2022/January 2023



helped enforce Assad's dictatorship in Syria, but on this day it seems they are entitled to come and contemplate the view, our view, and read Gibran's books.

Isn't Gibran the one who famously said, *Awladoukom laysou lakoum*? "Your children are not your children." He said it and we echoed. As children we used every possible occasion to tease our parents and adult relatives by appropriating this sentence, bringing to it our quotidian slang: "Your children aren't yours, they are the children of life." If we were banned from going out or anything else, this was the common refrain; we used it as a verbal weapon to defend our right to unlimited freedom.

At the entrance, I am instructed to push the door and enter what was once, ages ago, the Monastery of Mar Sarkis. The contrast between the cold outside and the warmth inside takes me by surprise. These days, nothing works in Lebanon, but here in the museum of Kahlil Gibran, there are very powerful heaters to keep visitors, paintings, guardians, and staff members—and the solitary grave of Gibran—quite warm. Likely because of those who believe in this project and in Gibran's legacy, there is additional external support. As long as the "Lebanese State" isn't involved and as long as there is fervor and the energy of the people to keep this place alive, things should work.

The museum guardian, obviously a natural son of the area, isn't just a guardian; he is emotionally, physically, and mentally present in the space, ready to sweetly defend and explain every detail from his position behind his wooden desk at the right side of the low-ceiling curved entrance. The desk is said to have been among the furniture in Gibran's apartment in New York or at least representative of his taste and attitude towards one's home and belongings.

Upon entering the first room in the monastery/museum and after greeting this engaged and kind man behind the desk, paying a symbolic entrance fee of only 50.000 LL, which is today less than a few pennies and is decreasing in value by the minute, you hear what is in the next room: the well that is bursting water out of the mountain in which the building lies. Out of the curved wall, it ejaculates time, the legacy of the seventh-century monastery and its position hiding in the belly of the huge solid rocks. The water that you hear flowing as you walk inside the museum opens wide connections, brings back unwanted Ottoman rule that put Gibran's father in jail. The sound of the water takes you above and out of

the far away August 4 explosion of the deep down harbor of Beirut, a harbor that killed people and a city along with them on that day but also a harbor that had formed the prosperity of that same city earlier and had saved lives from hunger, others from unfair rule and from war. They hurried to huge ships that took them to unknown destinations, as did Gibran's mother and sisters and "half-brother," who all had to flee in haste to a different, far away harbor. The water in the well knows it is not that far! 1500 meters down with the water to the sea. Destination: Take me OUT OF THIS UNFAIR PLACE! Save me!

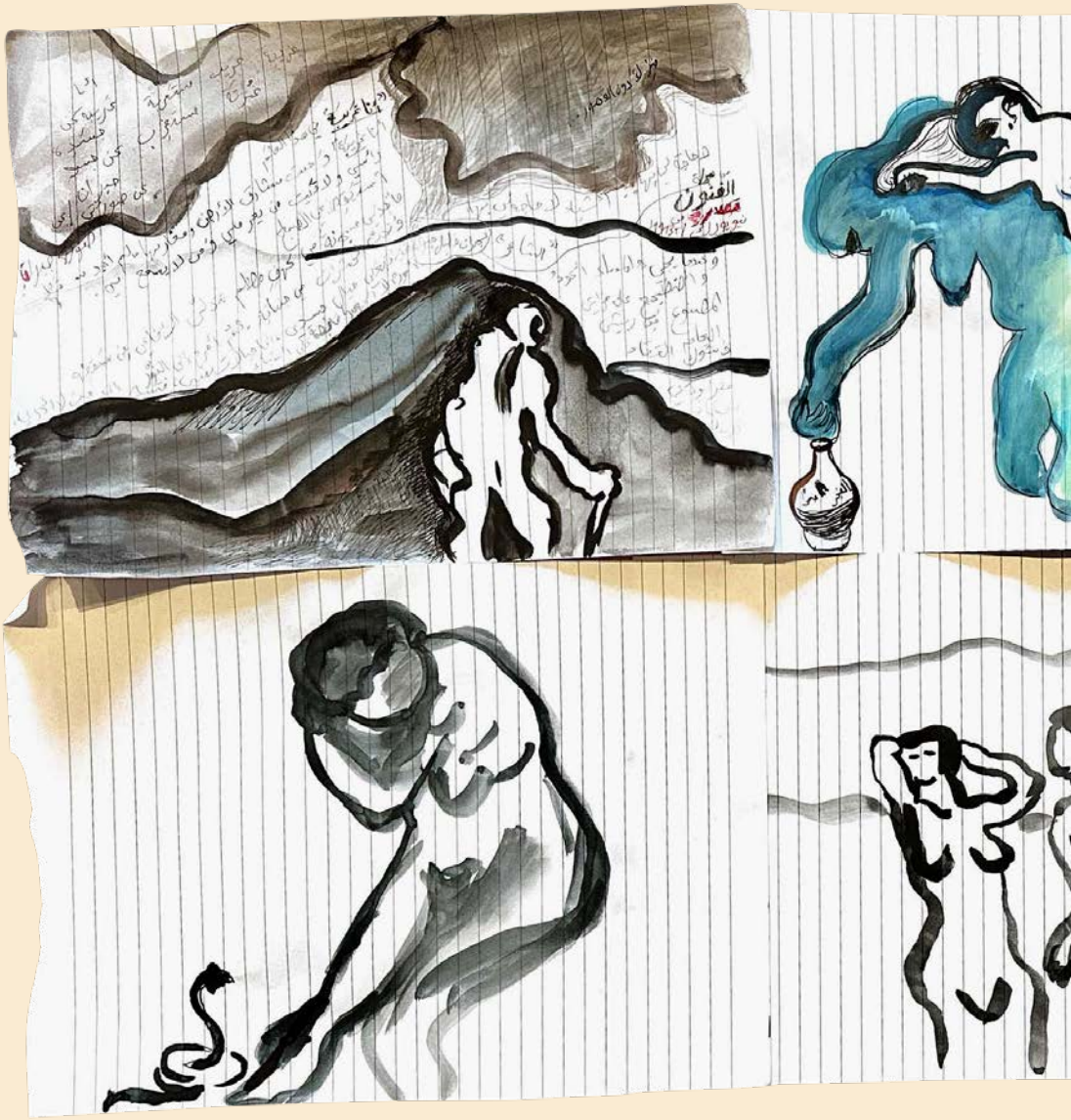
In the third room, the paintings greet me. I see the gray naked body of what looks like a man in an artwork that I am not allowed to photograph. I think of the male bodies I encountered in Nicolas Moufarrege's paintings and embroideries: sturdy bodies, painted and embroidered by a Lebanese artist whose work was introduced to me by Dean Daderko, and not in Lebanon, as in Lebanon he is hardly known. Moufarrege, while in "ex-ile" in New York, died from AIDS-related illness in 1985, during the Lebanese war.

I see a black mountain. Gibran's mountains are not colorful like the mountains of Etel Adnan. They are drawn with heavy strokes of shades of black and colors close to black or, contrastingly, with extremely rosy rose and disturbingly baby blue shades.

I see gray clouds like the ones I encountered on the way to Bsharri. They haunt and arc above the mountains on such a winter day. In that same painting of the man, he holds a stick in his hand, looks slightly down as if he had already walked to the right edge of the frame when Gibran painted him. He is ready to continue his mysterious walk, he still has a looooooooooooooong way to go.

On the opposite wall, *I see the blue*. A girl is naked, I am not allowed to photograph her. Behind her a river cuts its way between a Lebanese-like mountain and a Dutch-like green plain. The woman or the girl, with a light creamy skinned body, holds her left ear with her right hand, rolling her arm above her head, like in a warm-up dancing position, whereby muscles are not needed apparently.

She is *purely* naked in another picture, she is breastfeeding a man somewhere else, she is mingling with many other bodies, they are in nature, in *harmony*, and in another room, she becomes Mary Haskell or perhaps the painter himself, or his mother, or other beloved women, or perhaps the blue horse. The museum is in harmony with a time when women had to be naked for men



Mounira Al Solh, Sketches on notebook paper, Lebanon,
December 2022/January 2023


هل يعلمون؟
هل يعلمون؟
نامي

in paintings, but even Ameen Rihani posed with a bare torso for Gibran. In another room, a painting in which we can't tell if the figure is a man or a woman, and this is in favor of the poet. Sometimes horses and men are combined. Horses are male, they desire women; disturbingly baby-blue horses are female, and a man rides them; or horses are gender neutral, and a disturbingly blue man or woman or gender-neutral person sometimes rides them.

I can't make photographs, and I won't try to anymore, so I pull out my notebook and start to understand where I am by sketching what I see. Mimicking. Roughly. I have an hour before it's too dark and before I slide down the holy mountains' curves to dirty Beirut, almost past the harbor, then back up to Broummana, to my daughter and mother, and to the other reality of Lebanon: the current total collapse.

Before I leave, the kind-hearted guardian asks me for my name, only to conclude that I am not Christian, and for this reason he starts to explain the miracle of Lourdes, which occurred in and around the monastery. I remember a time I used to come to Hasroun right near the holy Qadisha Valley to spend a couple of nights with my beloved life companion, for it was a secret love at that time. After a few visits, we noticed that people would insist on knowing *where we came from* before serving us coffee or the like. Once, they really wanted to know: "Where in Beirut are you from?" "East or West"? "Ashrafieh?" Hoping we would be from there so they could speak with us safely about "the others" who are not from there. So as not to scare anyone with the possibility of our *otherness*, we gradually forgot about going to the holy valley. How great is this ability we Lebanese have, more than any other people on this planet, to forget and yet again quickly remember? Wounds from the Lebanese Civil War are not closed, and that is because the war has never finished. I understand fear, based on clichés, and I also embody it. None of us in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, etc. are innocent of such matters as far as I know.

And now, interrupting all this, a man sits in the middle of the entrance's wooden double seater, taking both places with his surprisingly sympathetic shaped bones and delicate small face, as delicate as the self-portrait of Gibran that hangs in the bigger back room of the museum. He carries a wooden stick like the man in the first picture I had encountered, but he doesn't look like a roaming soul. He seems vigorously rooted in the rocks of Bsharri and their secret wells with a bird-like weight, eyes the colors of the sky above the holy rocks, the outfit of a simple yet determined

warm and wise man who spends lots of time outside. He is the guardian of the grave of Gibran, if I understood correctly, before it was moved inside the museum.

I would have asked if I could draw him since I had my notebook, brushes, and watercolor box. But I fear that the priest who had just entered with his Italian-speaking Lebanese guests would be even more curious and stick like a huge, sugary pink chewing gum next to me. When he arrived, he told me he had seen me before, and I replied with a white lie that I also had seen him before.

Before the priest entered, when I was alone for a short while in the spaces, I dared to open my sketchbook. The guardian saw me sketching, and he was enthusiastic and curious. He asked me if I planned to keep the drawings on this lined notebook paper. I reassured him that I would copy them later onto "clean paper," which, needless to say, I will never do. This outstanding man deserves all the credit, it felt to me, as if he was carrying Gibran's museum on his chest, a breathing chest, breathing our mountains in and out, breathing in and out as the mountains above and adjacent to the magical Bsharri, whitened by snow. A place that Gibran managed to sculpt into the broader Lebanese history and global human history, making out of a monastery a place for all kinds of Lebanese to flow upon, all kinds of people to emanate from and to aspire to—like the songs of Fairuz, who also sang for Gibran. It is eternal, it is beyond borders and beyond religions, and "it will bathe in perfumes and dry off with the light," as the lyrics say.

PL. 88
Portrait of Kamila Gibran, 1920

A Chronology of Kahlil Gibran's Life and Work

Isabella Kapur

1883

Kahlil Gibran is born Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān to Kamila Rahme and Khalil Saad Jubrān in the town of Bsharri, in the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate, Ottoman Empire, in present-day Lebanon. (In 1860, the massacre of Lebanese Christians led to the separation of Mount Lebanon into an autonomous Christian region under Ottoman and European protection.) While his exact birth date is unknown, Gibran himself favored January 6.

Gibran's parents developed a poor reputation in the relatively small town of Bsharri. Kamila Rahme was the daughter of a Maronite cleric who was excommunicated from the church for officiating the wedding of two people from politically opposed factions, and she had a son, Butrus, from a previous marriage. Khalil Saad Jubrān, described as imposing and arrogant, worked as a walnut farmer and tax collector but occupied much of his time drinking and gambling.

1891, age 8

Unable to afford their home, Gibran's family (including his two younger sisters, Mariana and Sultana) is forced to move to an unhygienic basement apartment in Bsharri, acquired by Khalil Saad Jubrān in exchange for loyalty to Bsharri political leader Raji Beyk. When Beyk is accused of corruption in 1891, Jubrān is caught up in the scandal and arrested for embezzlement. He is found guilty and the family's property is confiscated.

Gibran's interest in drawing develops.

1895, age 12

After Gibran's maternal grandfather dies in 1894, the family's social, economic, and emotional difficulties are compounded. Gibran's

PL. 89
Evocation of Sultana Tabit, 1908

mother moves herself and her children to the slums of South End Boston, leaving Gibran's father behind in Bsharri. Kamila works as a peddler, a common occupation for Syrian/Lebanese immigrants in Boston at the time.

Gibran attends Quincy School, the nearby public school which includes students from the Irish, American, Jewish, Syrian, Eastern European, and Chinese communities in the South End of Boston. In the process of immigrating, Gibran's name had been interpreted and misinterpreted several times. In school, at the insistence of one of the administrators, his name is Westernized in the manner that would become most common—"Khalil" becomes "Kahlil" and "Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān" is condensed to "Kahlil Gibran."

Gibran takes drawing classes at Denison House, a settlement house across the street from the Quincy School run by social workers—mostly college-educated upper- and middle-class women.

1896, age 13

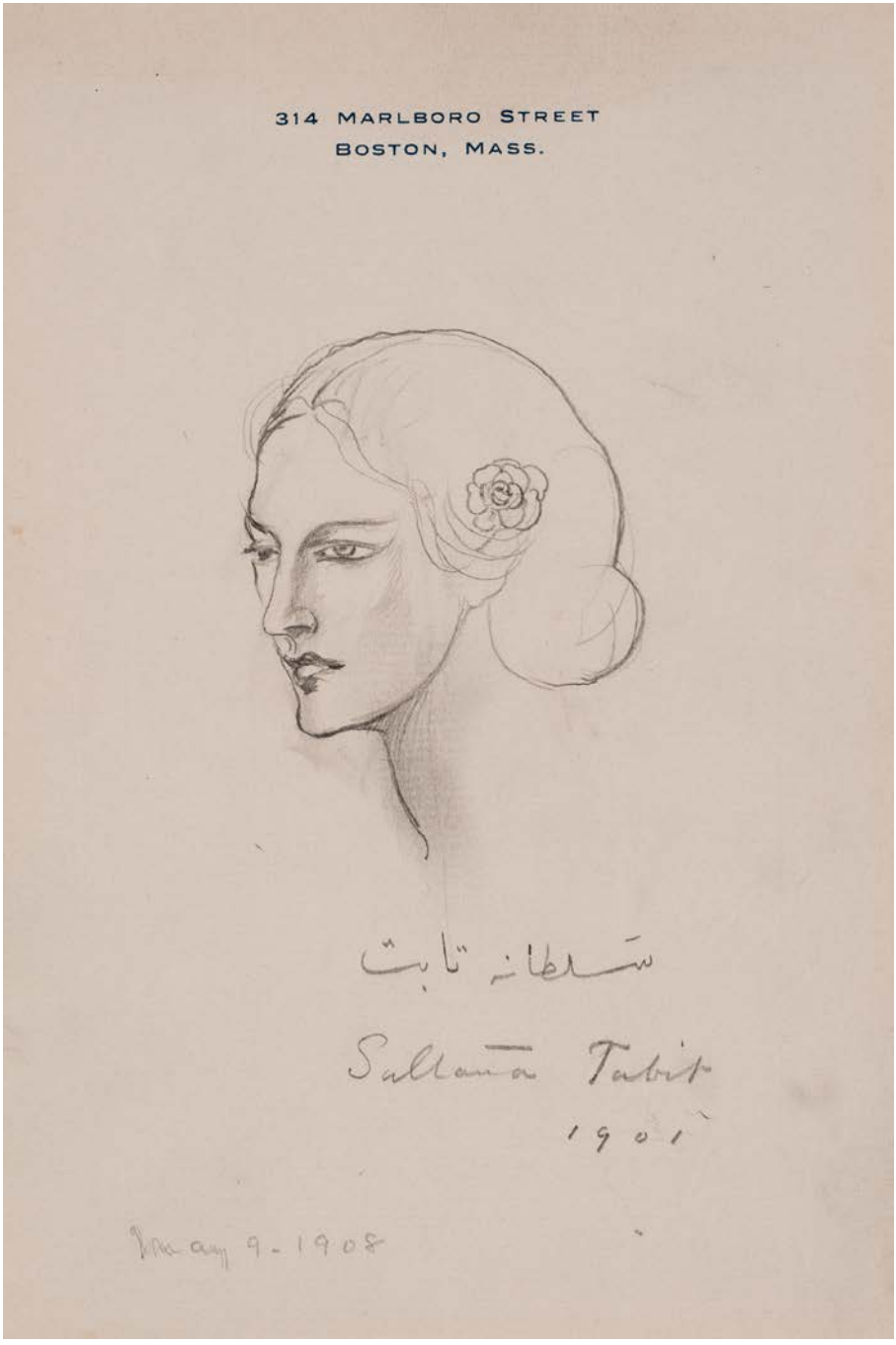
Denison House social worker Florence Pierce and philanthropist Jessi Fremont Beale identify Gibran's talent in drawing and introduce him to Fred Holland Day, a wealthy photographer, philanthropist, and publisher who becomes Gibran's first patron. Day photographs Gibran—surrounding him, as he did his other subjects plucked from the South End, with an ambiguous selection of clothing and objects to create an Orientalist vision of Near Eastern nobility—and introduces him to the Boston art and publishing worlds. The photographer encourages Gibran's drawing practice.

1897, age 14

Gibran discovers the Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck, whose work deeply influences him. Through Day and his circle, Gibran also learns of artists like Aubrey Beardsley, Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, Maxfield Parrish, William Blake, the Pre-Raphaelites, and other Romantics and Symbolists.

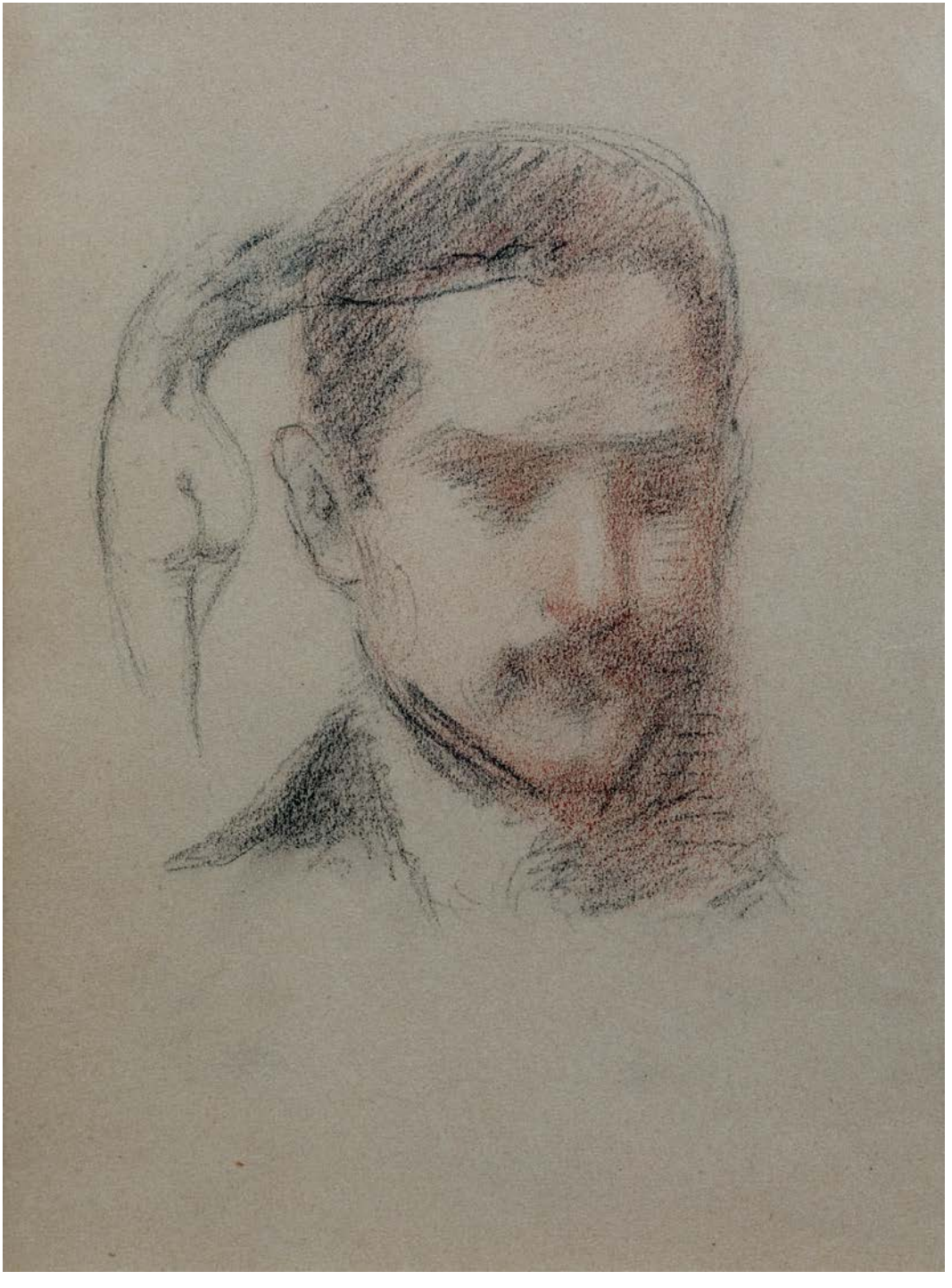
1898, age 15

Gibran first gains the design and typography skills that he will employ in subsequent decades. He contributes designs to books from Day's publishing company, Copeland and Day; Dodd, Mead and Company; and L.C. Page and Company. Gibran meets the then twenty-three-year-old Cambridge poet Josephine Prescott Peabody, befriending her by drawing her portrait from memory.



PL. 90
Head of Sultana Tabit, 1908

PL. 91
Head of Micheline and line drawing of Sultana's head, 1908



PL. 92
Portrait of Youssef Howayek, n.d.

Gibran's mother sends him back to Lebanon, nervous about the influence that his new art world connections are having on him. He attends Madrasat al-Hikma (College La Sagesse), a Nationalist Maronite high school in Beirut open to students of all faiths. There, he pursues literature in both Arabic and French. With his friend Youssef Howayek, he creates a literary journal called *al-Manāra* (The Beacon). At Madrasat al-Hikma, Gibran also encounters the Ottoman resistance.

1901, age 18

Gibran leaves Beirut to travel in Europe, spending time in Paris. Gibran continues to design book covers, including those of *Wisdom and Destiny* and other publications by Maurice Maeterlinck, published by Dodd, Meade and Company.

1902, age 19

Gibran learns that his sister Sultana has died of glandular tuberculosis. He returns to Boston to find that his mother has been diagnosed with cancer, and his brother, Butrus, is also suffering from tuberculosis.

Gibran resumes correspondence with Josephine Prescott Peabody. The two attend art events together and Peabody encourages Gibran in his writing and art. Around this time, Gibran also meets the well-loved Boston Rabbi Charles Fleischer, who becomes a friend and who will host a funerary tribute to the artist following his death decades later.

1903, age 20

Gibran's brother Butrus succumbs to tuberculosis in March. In June, Gibran's mother Kamila dies. Gibran and his surviving sister, Mariana, run the family shop until they clear the debts the business has accrued. Mariana supports them as a seamstress. Gibran's health also deteriorates, as does his anxiety about illness.

In May, Gibran's artwork is shown publicly for the first time in an exhibition at Wellesley College, an opportunity facilitated by Peabody.

Gibran distinctly shifts towards writing. His earliest published writing, which he shares in the years that immediately follow, is in Arabic.

PL. 93
Profile of Mary Haskell, 1922

1904, age 21
Fred Holland Day hosts the first solo exhibition of Gibran's work. On the final day of the exhibition, Gibran meets Mary Haskell, the head of a Boston girl's school who will become a lifelong supporter, patron, sounding board, and editor for Gibran, as well as, at one point, a prospective spouse. Through Mary Haskell, Gibran meets writer Charlotte Teller, who introduces him to labor and women's rights activists and literary figures including Samuel Clemens (aka Mark Twain), who Gibran would draw.

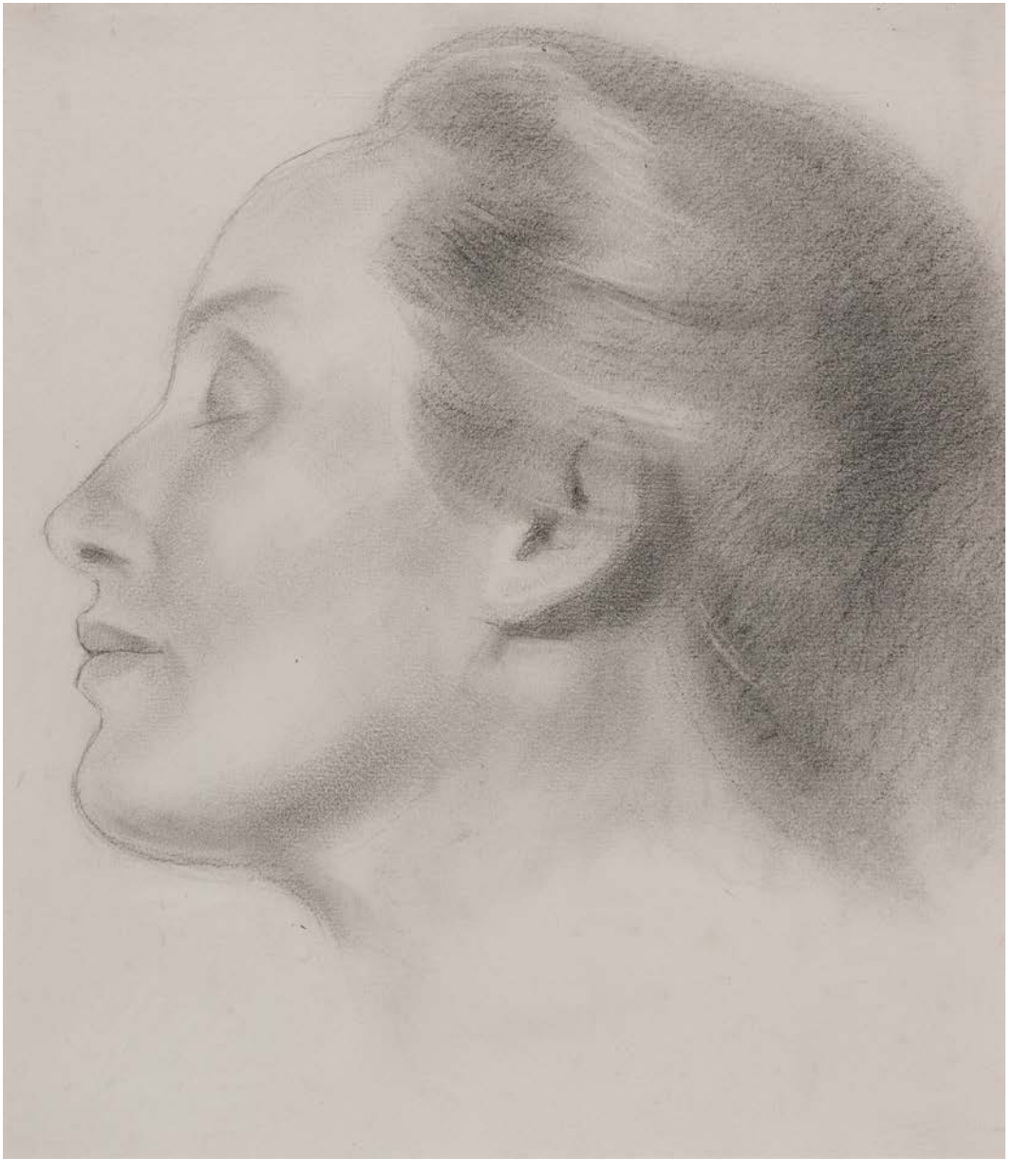
In November, Day's studio burns. Among the considerable collection destroyed in the fire are most of Gibran's works done up to this point.

Gibran develops a relationship with the New York-based Arabic newspaper and publisher *al-Muhājir* (The Immigrant). The paper's editor, Ameen Guraieb, hires Gibran to write a weekly column. Gibran develops a uniquely colloquial and non-traditional style, pulling on the informal language of both rural Lebanon and Boston's South End as well as Syriac from his Maronite background.

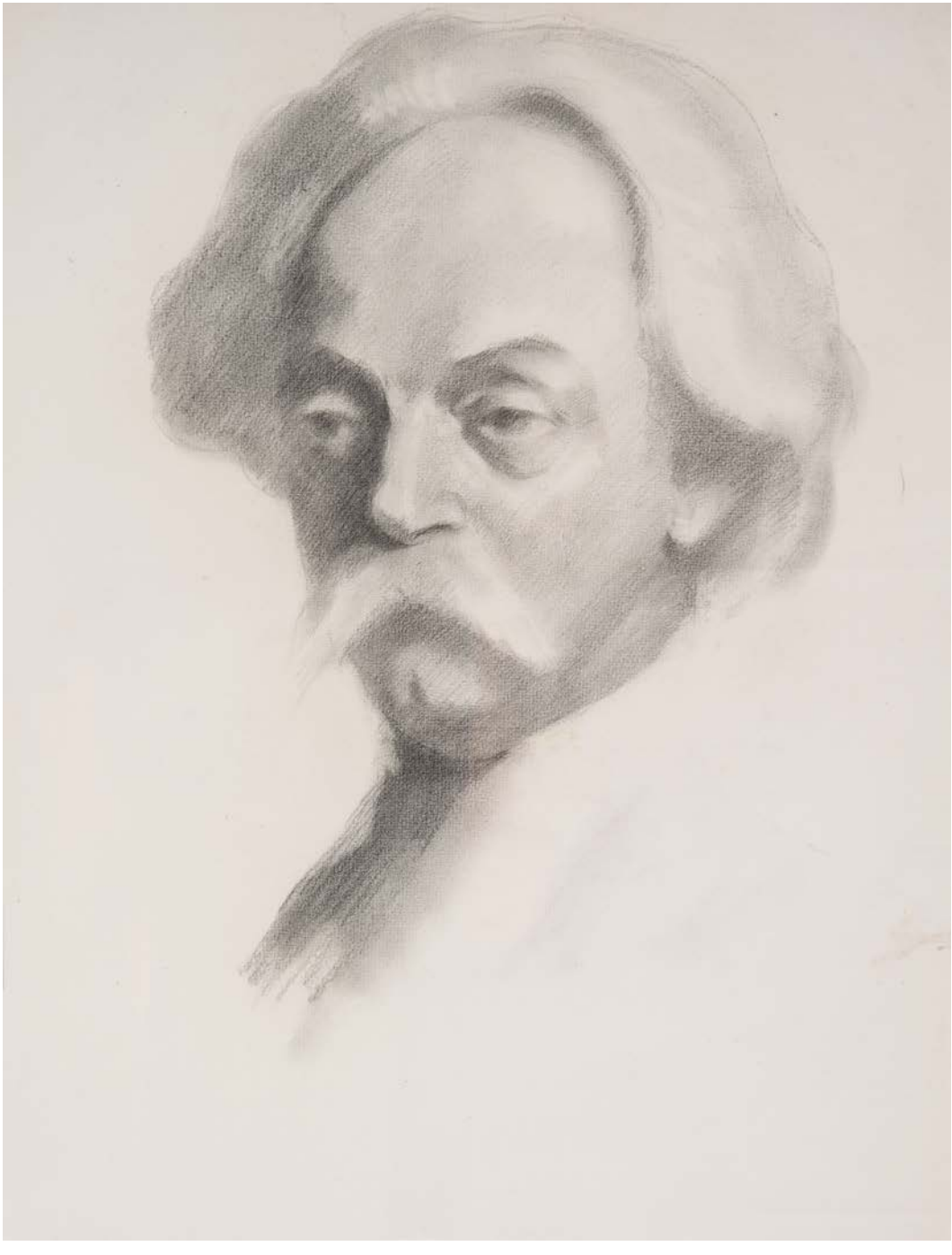
1905, age 22
Gibran's first published writing, *al-Musiqa* (On Music), appears in Arabic in *al-Muhājir*.

1906, age 23
In January, a string of riots involving Syrian American Orthodox and Maronite leaders in New York results in the murder of an innocent bystander, spurring the community to speak out. Gibran contributes a drawing to the front page of an *al-Muhājir* issue that contains an article by fellow Maronite Lebanese American writer Ameen Rihani. The first edition of *'Arā'is al-Murūj* (Spirit Brides), later translated as *Nymphs of the Valley*, is published in Arabic by al-Muhājir. The compilation of three stories by Gibran demonstrates his colloquial writing style and innovative emphasis on lower class protagonists. Josephine Prescott Peabody gets married, ending their friendship. Gibran begins an affair with a pianist, Gertrude Barrie, and later falls in love with aspiring French actress Émilie Michel (aka Micheline) following an introduction through Mary Haskell.

1908, age 25
Al-Arwāḥ al-Mutamirrida (*Spirits Rebellious*) is published in Arabic by al-Muhājir. The book is critical of the rigidity of laws and traditions,



PL. 94
Untitled, n.d.



PL. 95
Portrait of Samuel Clemens, 1907

and it sparks controversy, leading the Syrian government to ban the book. The Maronite Church considers excommunicating Gibran.

On July 1, with financial support from Mary Haskell, Gibran enrolls at Academy Julian in Paris to focus on his technical drawing and painting skills. While in Paris, Gibran encounters the art of William Blake, Auguste Rodin, and Eugene Carriére and the writing of Nietzsche, all of which have a profound impact on his creative output.

That same July, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in Istanbul, also known as the Young Turks, sparks a rebellion against the Ottoman Empire's authoritarian rule under Abdülhamid II leading to the reestablishment of both parliament and the 1876 constitution. Known as the Young Turk Revolution, the event leads, four years later, to CUP commanding full leadership of the Ottoman Empire, and contributes to the empire's eventual dissolution. A good deal of this revolution is planned in Paris, a city with a significant Arab immigrant community. Freshly moved to Paris during this exciting time, Gibran absorbs new political ideas.

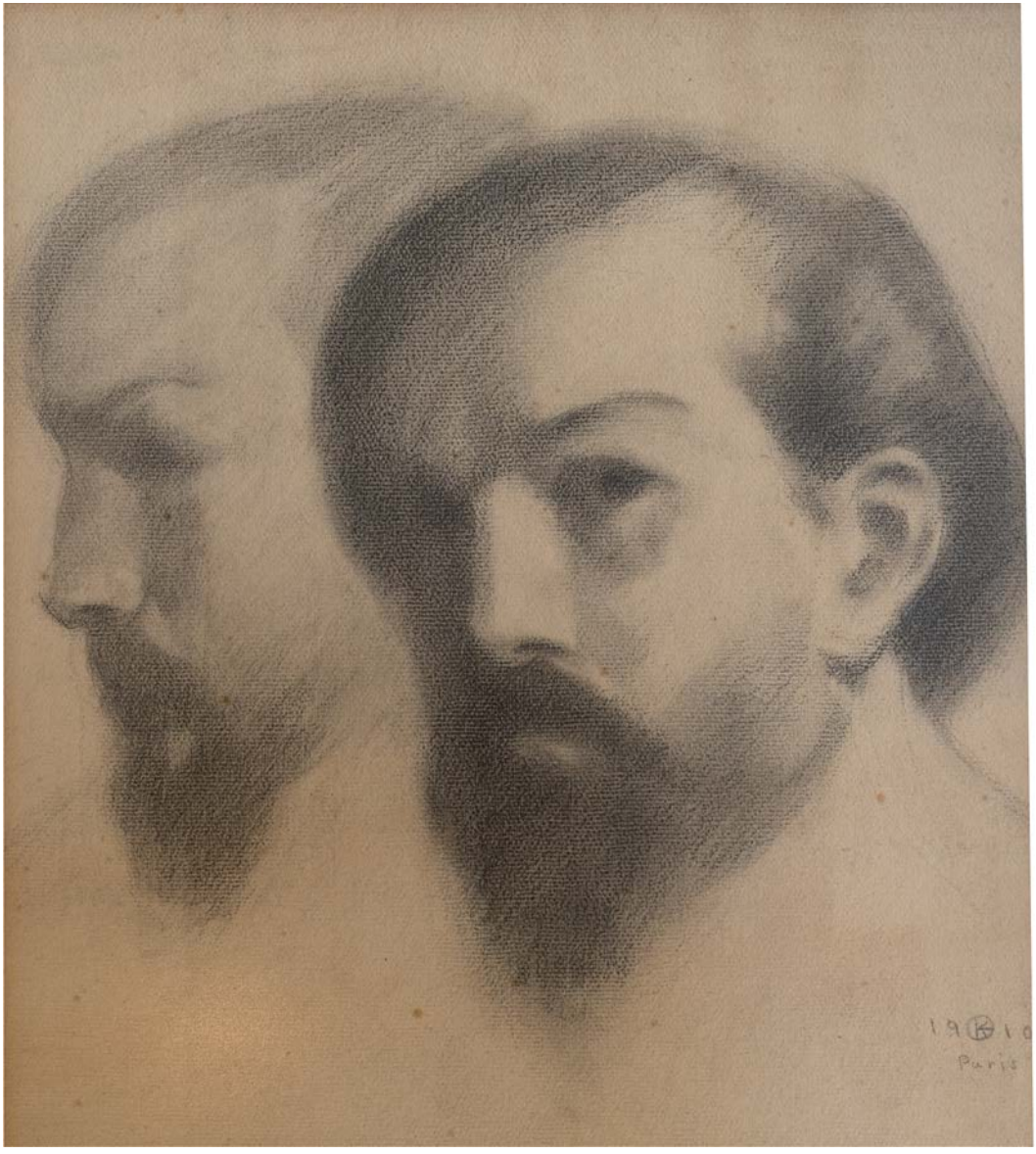
Back in Gibran's home region, the autonomous Mount Lebanon, the emphasis by the new Ottoman government on increased centralization sparks objections. Maronite leaders in Mount Lebanon refuse to send representatives to the new parliament located in Istanbul, in direct defiance of the push towards centralized control within the Ottoman Empire. The Maronite leaders refuse to hold elections for the appointment of representatives and eventually succeed in pushing back at the new Young Turk government's demands. This emphasis on regionalism will inform Gibran's own relationship with Syrian nationalism.

1909, age 26

Gibran leaves Academy Julian first to study with artist Pierre Marcel-Béronneau, himself a student of Gustave Moreau, and then to work on his own. Continuing to explore the Paris art world, Gibran meets and has the opportunity to draw artist Auguste Rodin, American sculptor Paul Bartlett, and French composer Claude Debussy, among others. These drawings form part of Gibran's Temple of Art series, a collection of portraits of artists, political thinkers, poets, and writers with whom Gibran associated over the course of many years.

While in Paris, Gibran learns that his father has died. He becomes involved with the New York-based journal *Mir'āt al-Gharb* (Mirror of the West), which has more revolutionary leanings than *al-Muhājir*.

PL. 96
Head of Micheline, n.d.



PL. 97
Portrait of Composer Claude Debussy, 1910

1910, age 27

Still in Paris in June, Gibran meets Ameen Rihani. The two travel to London together alongside Youssef Howayek. Rihani becomes a significant influence on Gibran, informing his views on Arab Nationalism. Rihani is immediately skeptical of CUP and the capacity of a constitution to right decades of injustice without accompanying cultural and intellectual reform. Back in Paris, Gibran is invited to contribute six paintings to an exhibition at the Union Internationale des Beaux-Arts et des Lettres, but having run out of money, he chooses to return to New York in October.

Gibran's poem "To Syrians" is published in *Mir'āt al-Gharb* in November and marks an overtly political turn in Gibran's work. The work chastises the Syrian people for complacently accepting Ottoman rule and insists that if they cannot stand up for Syria, they should abandon it.

Mary Haskell begins to record her conversations with Gibran in detail, eventually resulting in a thorough record of his life and work spanning the next few decades. In December Gibran proposes marriage to Haskell, who initially declines, before agreeing the next day. The pair end their engagement four months later but remain creative collaborators.

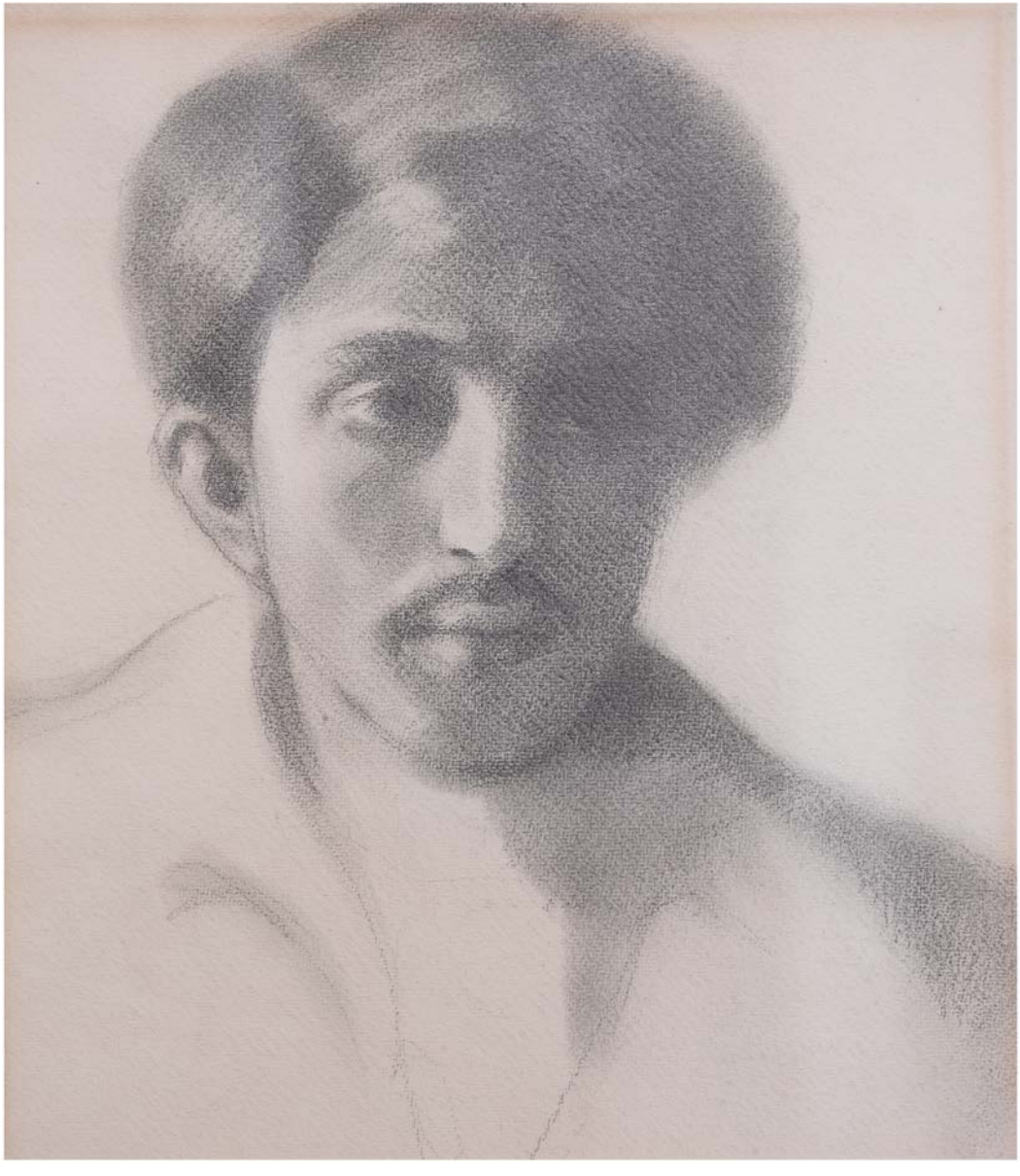
1911, age 28

The Book of Khalid, written by Ameen Rihani and featuring illustrations by Gibran, is published by Dodd, Mead and Company. A transcription of Gibran's speech made for the Golden Links Society, a Syrian diasporic literary and educational society, is published in *Mir'āt al-Gharb*. The speech makes a case for either outwardly revolutionary or inwardly transformational behavior, condemning Syrian reliance on Ottoman and European powers.

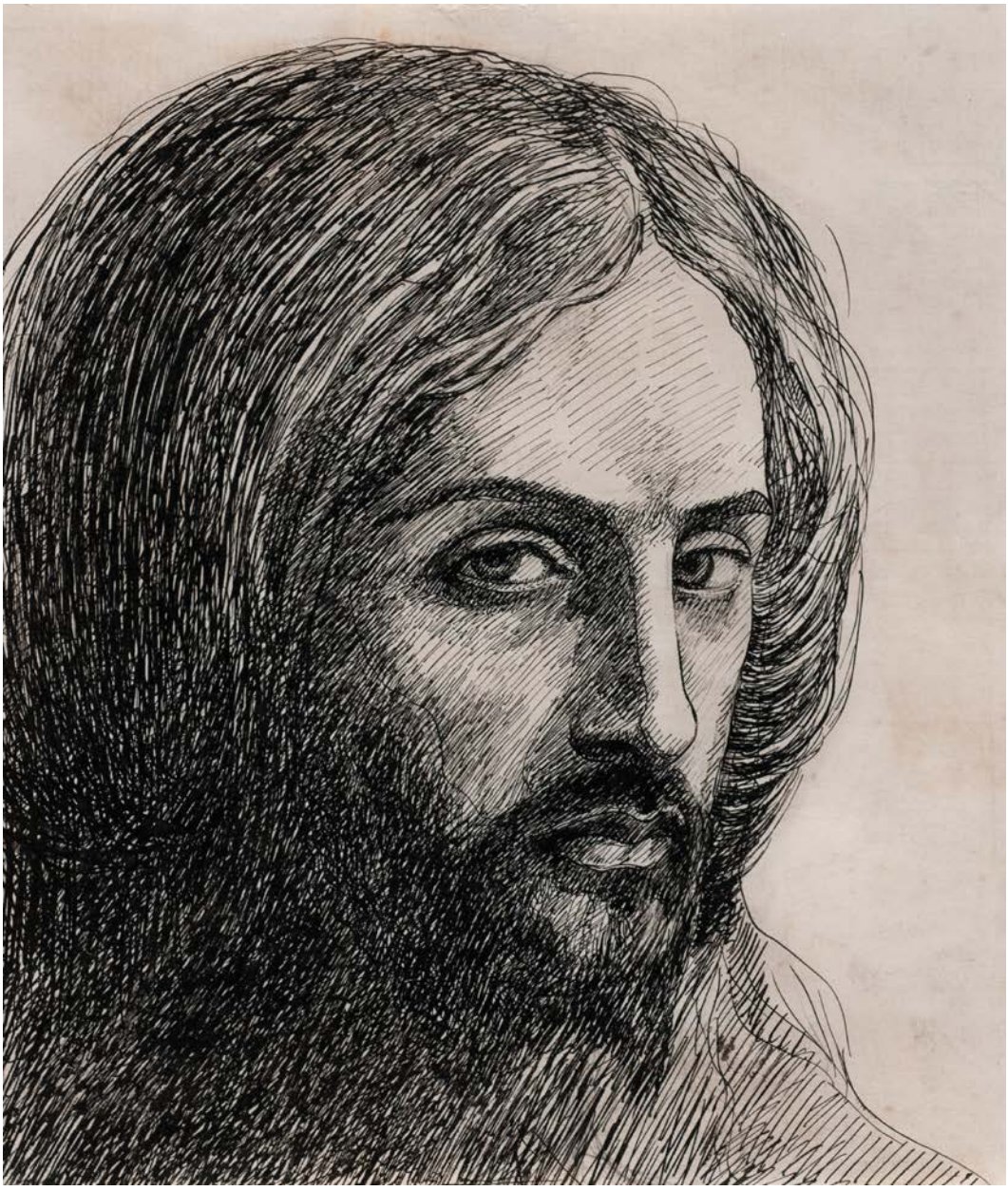
As she had with his move to Paris, Haskell finances Gibran's move to New York in April, providing him with $5000. Settling into 51 West Tenth Street in Greenwich Village, Gibran establishes the studio in which he will reside for many years, calling it his "hermitage." In addition to seeing Ameen Rihani regularly, he meets Carl Jung, William Butler Yeats, and more members of the Arabic literary community.

1912, age 29

Al-Ajniḥa al-Mutakassira (*The Broken Wings*) is published in Arabic by al-Muhājir. Cairo based Lebanese Palestinian writer May Ziadeh reads the novella and contacts Gibran, spurring a lasting



PL. 98
Portrait of Ameen Rihani, 1911



PL. 99
Ameen Rihani, c. 1910-15

correspondence ranging from literary and political discussion to love letters.

In spring of 1912 Gibran meets and draws a portrait of Abdu'l-Bahá, the leader of the Bahá'i faith and the inspiration for *The Prophet*'s protagonist al-Mustafa. The meeting informs Gibran's pantheistic beliefs, but he is strongly opposed to the pacifism upheld by the members of the Bahá'i faith with whom he interacts. Observing the shifting political situation in the Ottoman Empire, Gibran develops a strong belief that only revolution—war—can result in a greater Syrian state free from Ottoman control.

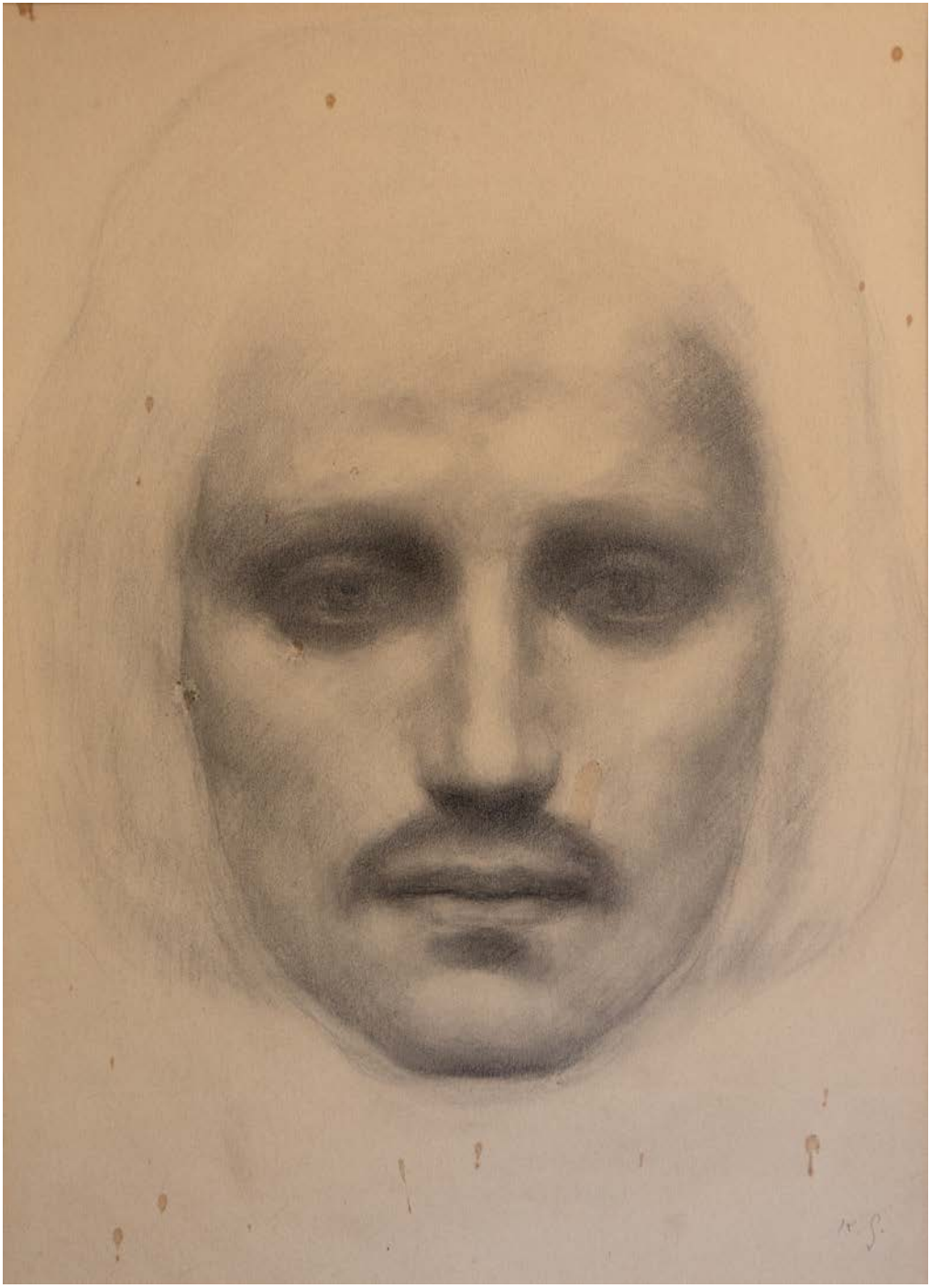
Lending credence to Gibran's calls for revolution, following the loss of Libya and the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire establishes stricter centralized control over its remaining territories to stave off impending collapse. Communities throughout the empire push back, demanding decentralization. Gibran and his contemporaries begin to strategize for the eventual demise of the empire. Three main factions surface: Arab nationalism, advocating for a pan-Arab state; Syrian nationalism, advocating for a state of Greater Syria; and Lebanese nationalism, advocating for a further division of territories that would result in Lebanon as its own nation. Gibran considers all three, but the greater part of his political writing and action is in favor of Syrian nationalism.

Even as politics come to the forefront, Gibran begins to write *The Prophet*. He also moves away from painting to place a greater emphasis on drawing.

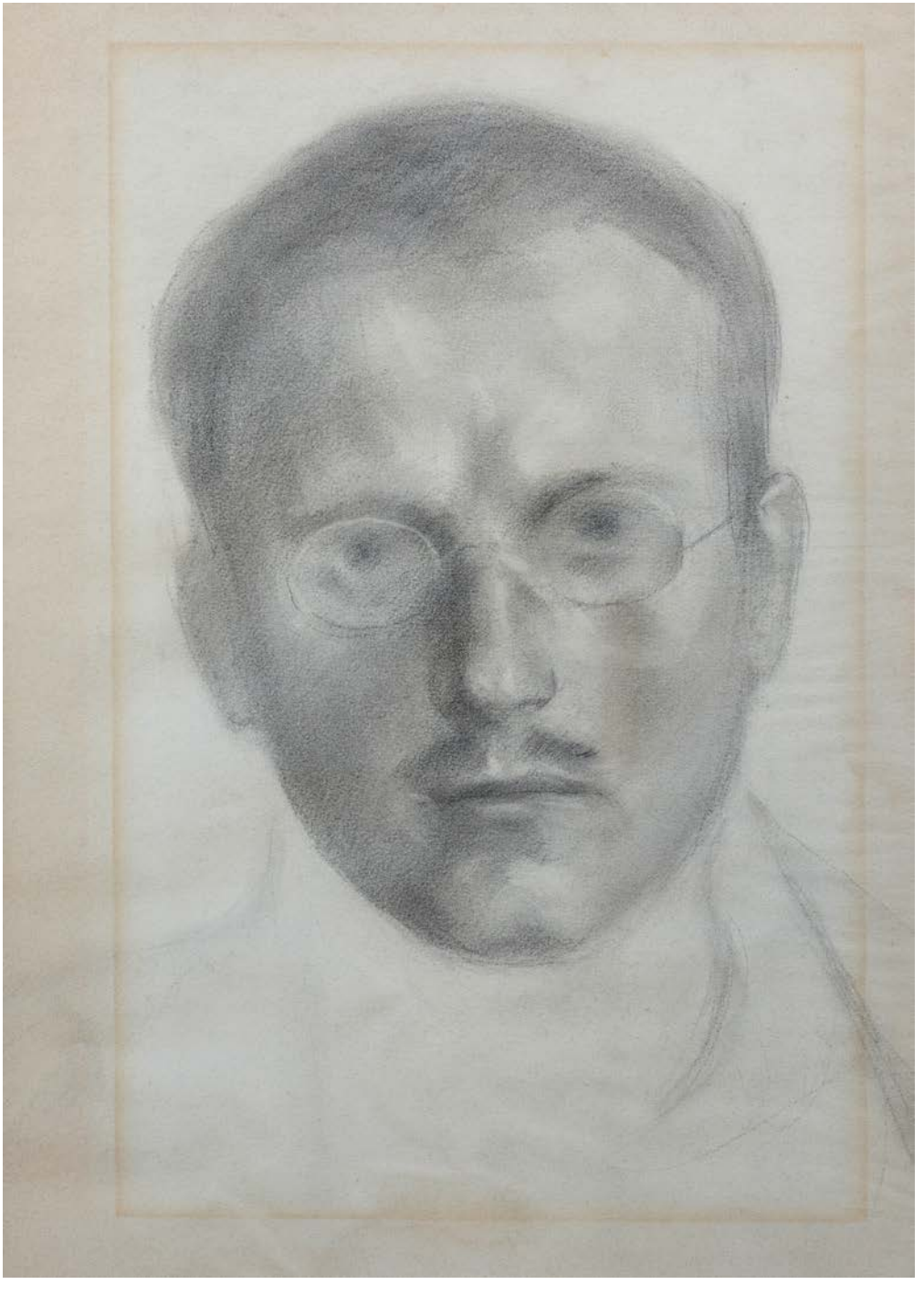
1913, age 30

Early in the year, the First Arab Congress is held in Paris, a gathering of over thirty Syrians from organizations in Paris, the United States, Cairo, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and South America to discuss home rule for Syria. Gibran does not attend because his anti-pacifist position causes an ideological rift between him and his contemporaries at the conference.

The Arab American literary journal *al-Funūn* (The Arts) begins publication under the direction of Nasib Arida. The journal runs until 1918, publishing a total of 29 issues, 25 of which include writings and/or drawings by Gibran. Among his contributions is a series celebrating Arab and Islamic thinkers, leaders, and artists throughout history, demonstrating Gibran's interest in a unifying cultural history. In November, Gibran contributes Ilā al-Muslīmīn min Shāʿir Masīḥī (To Muslims from a Christian Poet), a text sometimes dubbed "An Open Letter to Islam," encouraging unity



PL. 100
Face of al-Mustafa, 1923



PL. 101
Portrait of Carl Gustav Jung, 1913

between religions in opposition to the Ottoman Empire.

Gibran meets Arthur Davies, president of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors and adds several portraits to the Temple of Art series, drawing psychologist Carl Jung, French actress Sarah Bernhardt, dancer and playwright Ruth St. Denis, and Italian revolutionary Guiseppe Garibaldi II.

1914, age 31

In August, the First World War begins, and in November, the Ottoman Empire is drawn into the struggle, joining the Central Powers. Over the next two years, Gibran publishes political tracts anonymously—a precaution taken by many of his peers fearing Ottoman retaliation. Meanwhile, Gibran's book *Dam'a wa Ibtisāma* (*A Tear and a Smile*) is published in Arabic by Atlantic. Hoping that Syrians of all religions will join with the Allies to oust the Ottoman Empire, he donates the proceeds from the book to the developing war effort.

A solo exhibition of Gibran's work opens at Montross Gallery in December. Gibran shows forty-four paintings and drawings, including portraits of people he encountered in both Paris and New York.

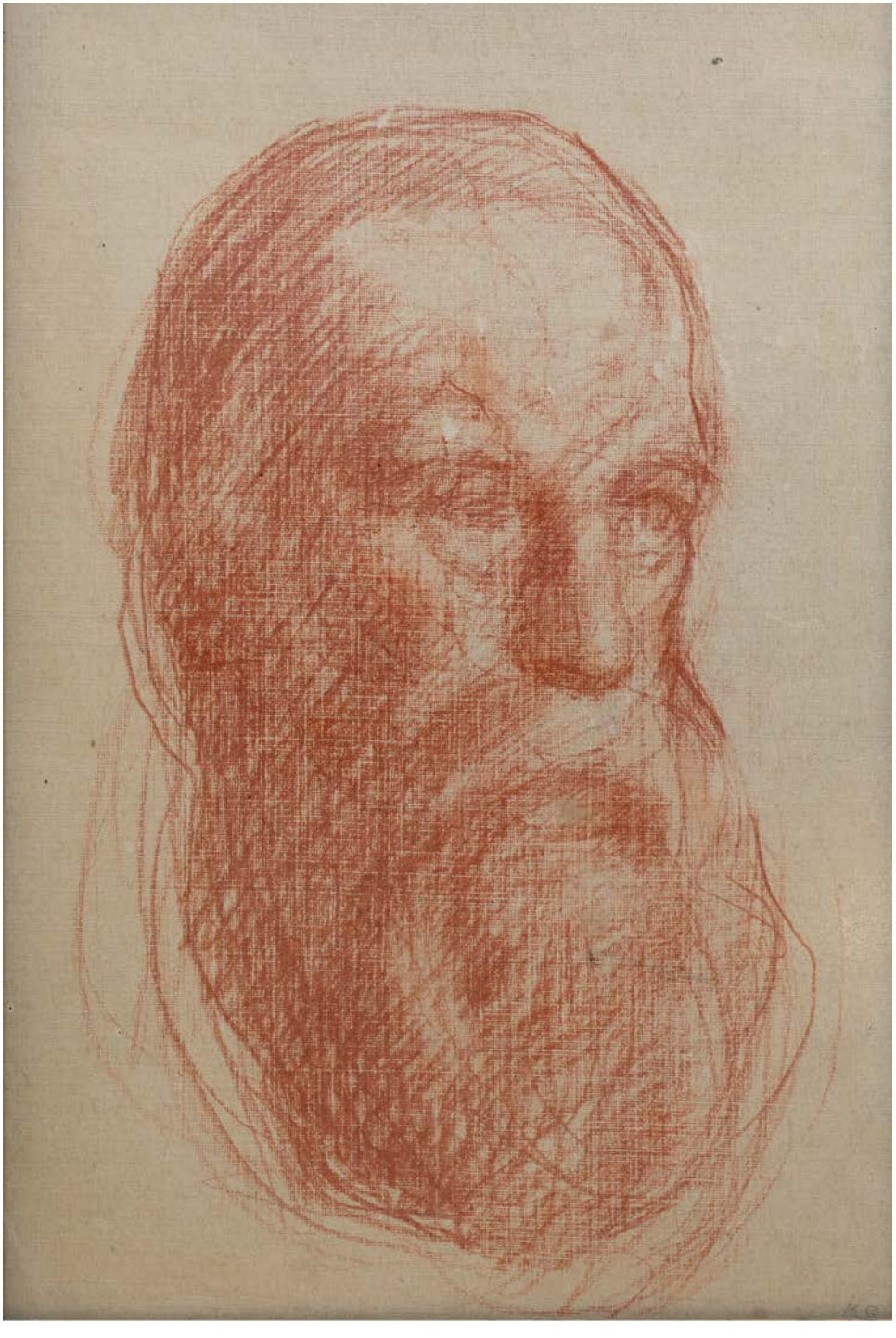
1915, age 32

Gibran continues to expand his artistic circle, drawing several portraits of American painter Albert Pinkham Ryder through whom he meets Corrine Roosevelt Robinson, another wealthy patron of the arts and sister to Theodore. Between late 1915 and early 1916, Nasib Arida and Abd al-Masih Haddad found al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya (the Pen League), a Syrian-Lebanese-American literary collective that Gibran joins alongside Rihani and Lebanese American poets Mikhail Naimy and Elia Abu Madi.

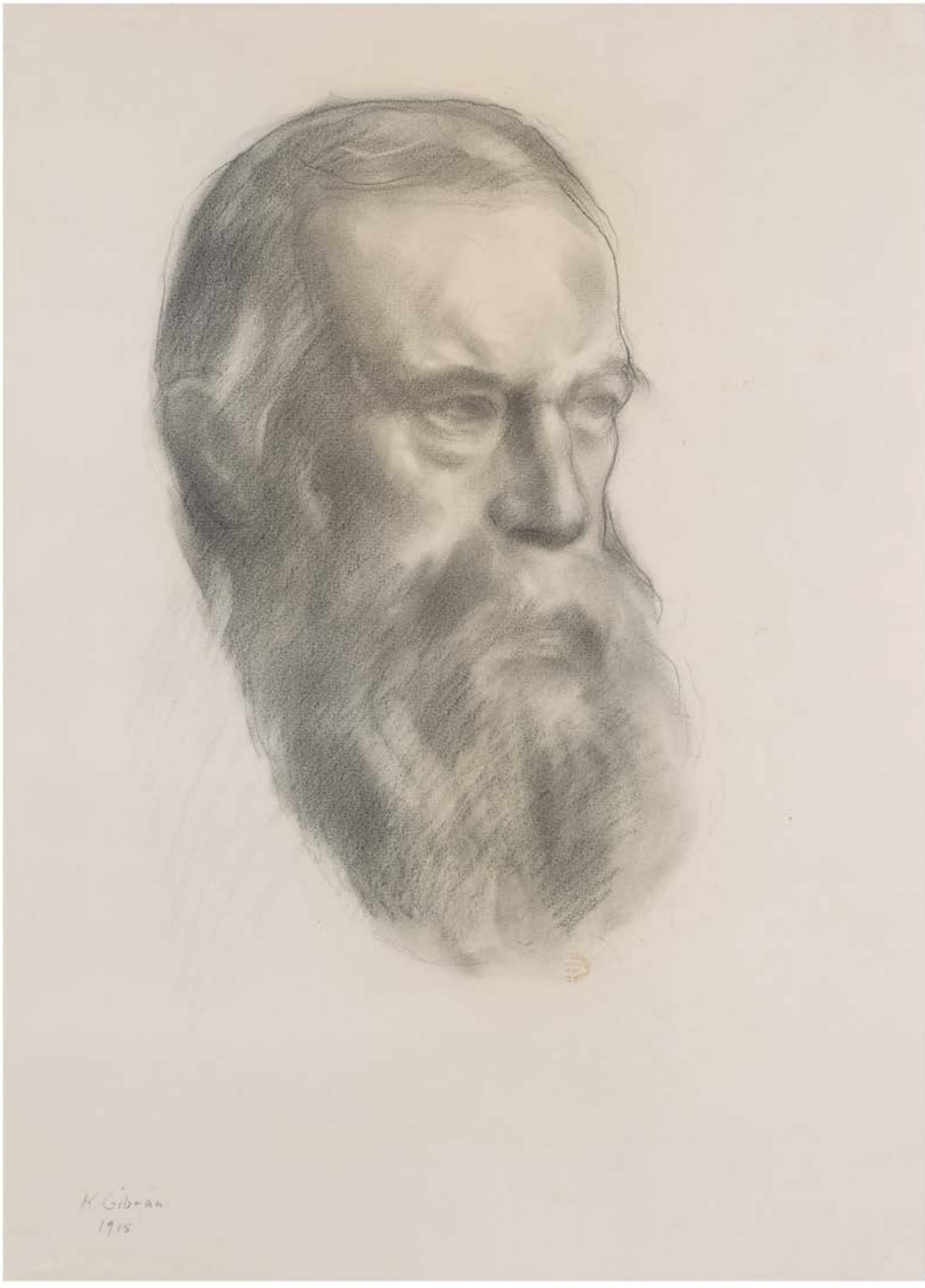
Meanwhile, in Syria, Governor Jamal Pasha begins a bloody consolidation of power, placing his allies, loyal to the Ottoman CUP government, in political office and spying on, torturing, and eventually hanging those advocating for national autonomy.

1916, age 33

In retaliation against Ottoman military control of the region, France blockades the coast of Syria, leading to food shortages, famine, military commandeering of civilian homes and transportation, increased censorship by the military, and a shutdown of contact with the rest of the world. This is swiftly followed by a locust infestation



PL. 102
Portrait of the American Painter Albert Ryder, 1915



PL. 103
Albert Pinkham Ryder, 1915

and a typhus outbreak. These factors combined result in the deaths of between 380,000 and 650,000 people in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and the remainder of Syria combined. Gibran joins the Syrian Aid Society, which is absorbed by the Syrian-Mount Lebanon Relief Committee, for which he serves as secretary. Gibran contributes a poem and drawings to the "Syria in Distress" issue of *al-Funūn* in October.

Gibran draws Nobel Prize winning Bengali poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore during Tagore's anti-nationalist lecture tour. During this time Gibran also meets James Oppenheim, publisher of the magazine *The Seven Arts*, to which the artist contributes alongside such luminaries as Robert Frost and D. H. Lawrence. Even as his new acquaintances oppose the war, Gibran continues to support it, seeing violent upheaval as Greater Syria's only way out of Ottoman control. In December, France establishes a new Near Eastern liberation force, Légion d'Orient, comprising Syrian, Armenian, and Arab volunteers, and Gibran actively recruits for the group.

1917, age 34

In February, Gibran shows his work at the art dealership M. Knoedler & Co. An article about the exhibition, written by Jungian psychologist Alice Raphael, appears in *The Seven Arts* in March. On April 6, the United States enters WWI. The following month, the Syria Mount Lebanon League of Liberation is established by Gibran and other figures in the North American Syrian community with the goal of encouraging volunteers to fight for Syria. Among the tactics employed by the League of Liberation was the publication of several articles in the New York-based journal *al-Sā'iḥ*, which was founded by Abd al-Massih Haddad. Even while attempting to help those in Syria and Lebanon, the diasporic community remained divided along regional and religious lines.

1918, age 35

Poet Witter Bynner introduces Gibran to Alfred A. Knopf, who will become his primary English language publisher. Knopf publishes Gibran's first book written in English, *The Madman: His Parables and Poems*. The book includes Gibran's illustrations alongside his writing.

In September, British and Australian troops push Turkish troops out of Syria, and on November 11, the war ends on the western front. In honor of the event, Gibran contributes the cover illustration to a special Armistice Day issue of *al-Sā'iḥ*. Following the end of the

PL. 104
Portrait of Witter Bynner, 1913

First World War, France begins to establish control over Greater Syria, and Lebanon gains greater autonomy as the Ottoman Empire dissolves. France and Great Britain, despite prior agreements, begin to argue over how to split up the former Ottoman territories between themselves. In this developing political setting, Gibran encourages the Arab world to avoid imitating the state structures of the West. Even as he expresses his admiration for and connection to a pan-Arab history that includes Syria and Lebanon, he emphasizes that creating one large nation would come at the expense of the spiritual and cultural life of the many regions newly emerging from centuries of Ottoman rule.

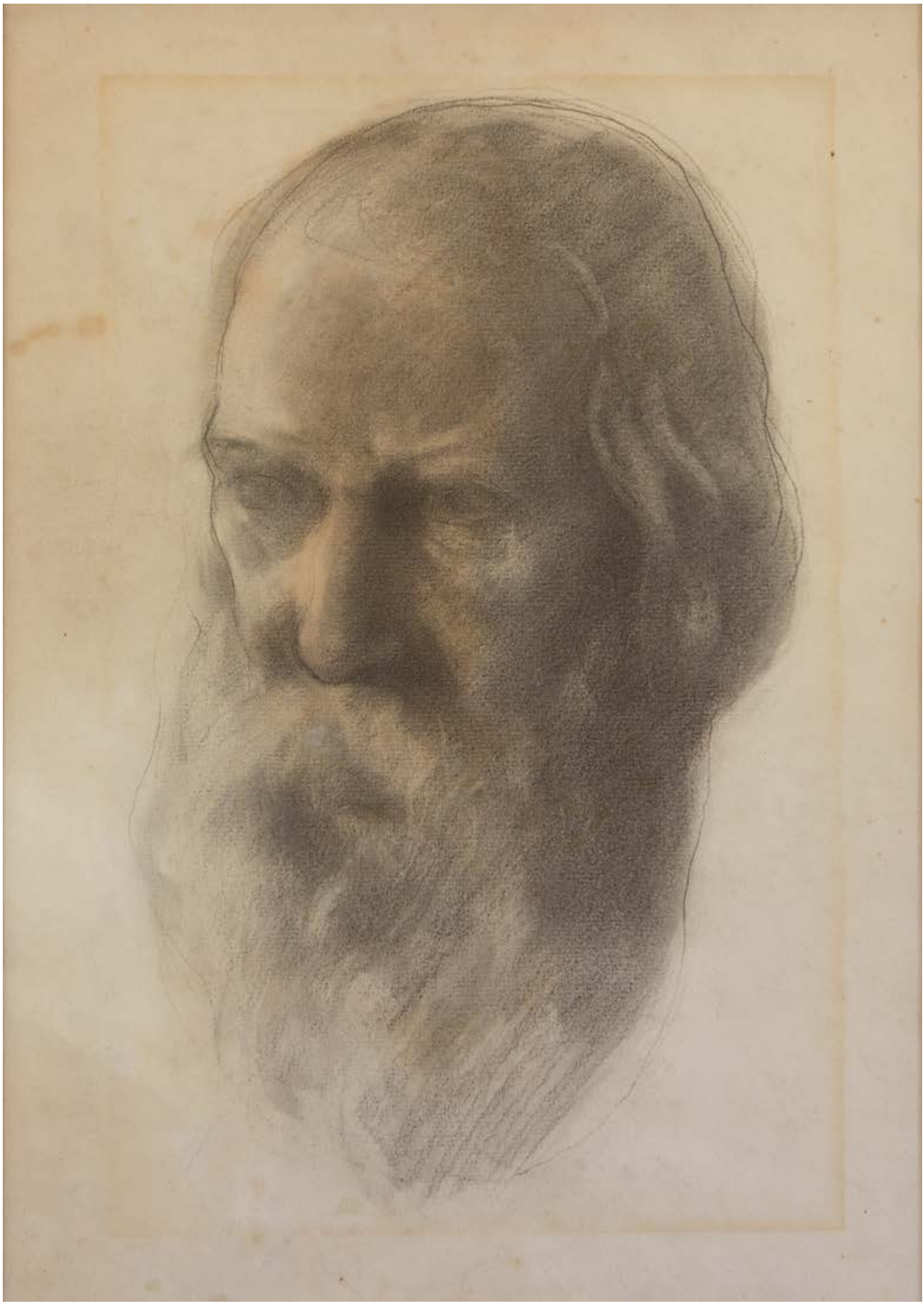
1919, age 36

In January, the Paris Peace Conference begins at Versailles, initiating negotiations over reparations and the distribution of land and power following the war. Greater Syria is separated into Syria and Lebanon. Unhappy with the talks, Gibran writes "War and the Small Nations," a parable that expresses his frustration with the squabbling of the larger nations, especially France and Great Britain, as well as with their power to determine the fates of smaller nations. Gibran also authors his first play, *Bayn al-Layl wa al-Sabah* (Between Night and Morn). Published in *al-Sā'iḥ*, though never performed, the play features five men representative of the different religious factions in Greater Syria and a poet who stands in for Gibran himself as they spend the night in a prison cell debating the future of Syria on the eve of its liberation from Ottoman control.

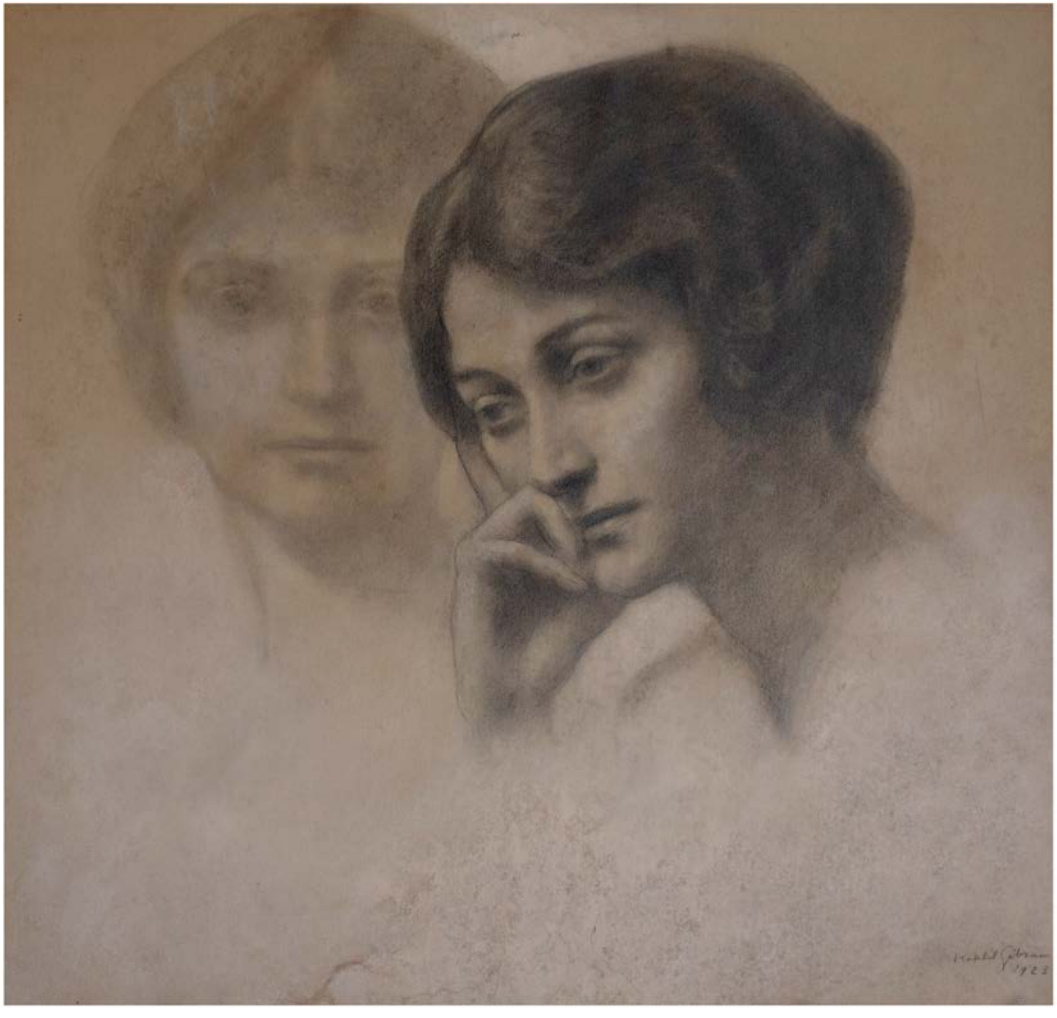
While Gibran is preoccupied by political concerns, *Twenty Drawings*, which includes Alice Raphael's essay, is published by Knopf. Gibran designs a special version of the Knopf borzoi colophon for the publication. His poem *al-Mawākib* (*The Procession*) is published by *Mir'āt al-Gharb*. Amid criticism of this and other poems as well as the frustrations of postwar politics, Gibran shifts away from his Arabic-speaking audience and towards a Western, English-speaking public.

1920, age 37

In March, on the heels of rulings made during the Paris Peace Conference, Faisal I of Iraq is installed as the King of Greater Syria by the Syrian National Congress. Faisal and his family members rule a large portion of the former Ottoman territories, prompting Gibran to fear the creation of a new imperial empire in the region, this time pan-Arab in origin. Instead, in April at the San Remo



PL. 105
Rabindranath Tagore, 1916



PL. 106
Two Faces (Portrait of Elinor Wylie), 1923

conference, the imperial powers finalize the division of Ottoman Territories. France is given control of Greater Syria and violently removes the Arab government under Faisal. Lebanese Nationalists push the new French controlled government for autonomy, and on September 1, Greater Lebanon is established as its own state. That autumn, Gibran writes his self-proclaimed farewell to politics, the poem "You Have Your Lebanon and I Have Mine," printed in *al-Hilāl* in Egypt and *al-Sā'iḥ* in New York.

Gibran devotes more time to his literary writing and art. The first edition of *The Forerunner: His Parables and Poems* is published in English by Knopf and *al-ʿAwāṣif* (The Tempests), a collection of stories and poems from 1912 to 1918, is published in Arabic. Gibran revives al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya (the Pen League), serving as president alongside Mikhail Naimy, who serves as secretary, and writer William Catzeflis, who serves as treasurer. Al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya helps to fill the space left when *al-Funūn* ends its run in 1919, providing a gathering place for those hoping to rejuvenate Arabic literature. Gibran designs the Pen League's logo, featuring an open book accompanied by a quote about poetry from the Prophet Muhammad. Gibran continues to write primarily in English and devotes much of his time to working on *The Prophet*.

1921, age 38

Gibran contributes to the Egyptian journal *al-Hilāl* an article entitled "al-ʿAhd al-Jadīd" (The New Era), which reflects on two consciousnesses in Near Eastern thought according to Gibran: that of the creative and that of the political. Gibran, already in poor health and drifting away from the social connections that defined his youth, begins to reflect on death.

1923, age 40

Mary Haskell moves to Savannah, Georgia, to serve as the companion of Jacob Florance Minis, the widow of her cousin Louise Gilmer Minis. She continues to edit *The Prophet* and correspond with Gibran, though they drift apart slightly under the strain of distance and shifting responsibilities. After years of work by both of them, the first edition of Gibran's most well-known work is published in English by Knopf. Like his other recent books, *The Prophet* includes Gibran's own illustrations alongside his writing. The first edition is carefully designed, down to the type of paper used, by Gibran and Knopf. *Al-Badā'iʿ*

wa-al-Ṭarā'if (The New and The Marvelous), a collection of thirty-five pieces of writing by Gibran, is published in Cairo. During this time, Gibran essentially gives up painting to work in drawing and watercolor. Portrait commissions begin to bring in extra income.

1924, age 41

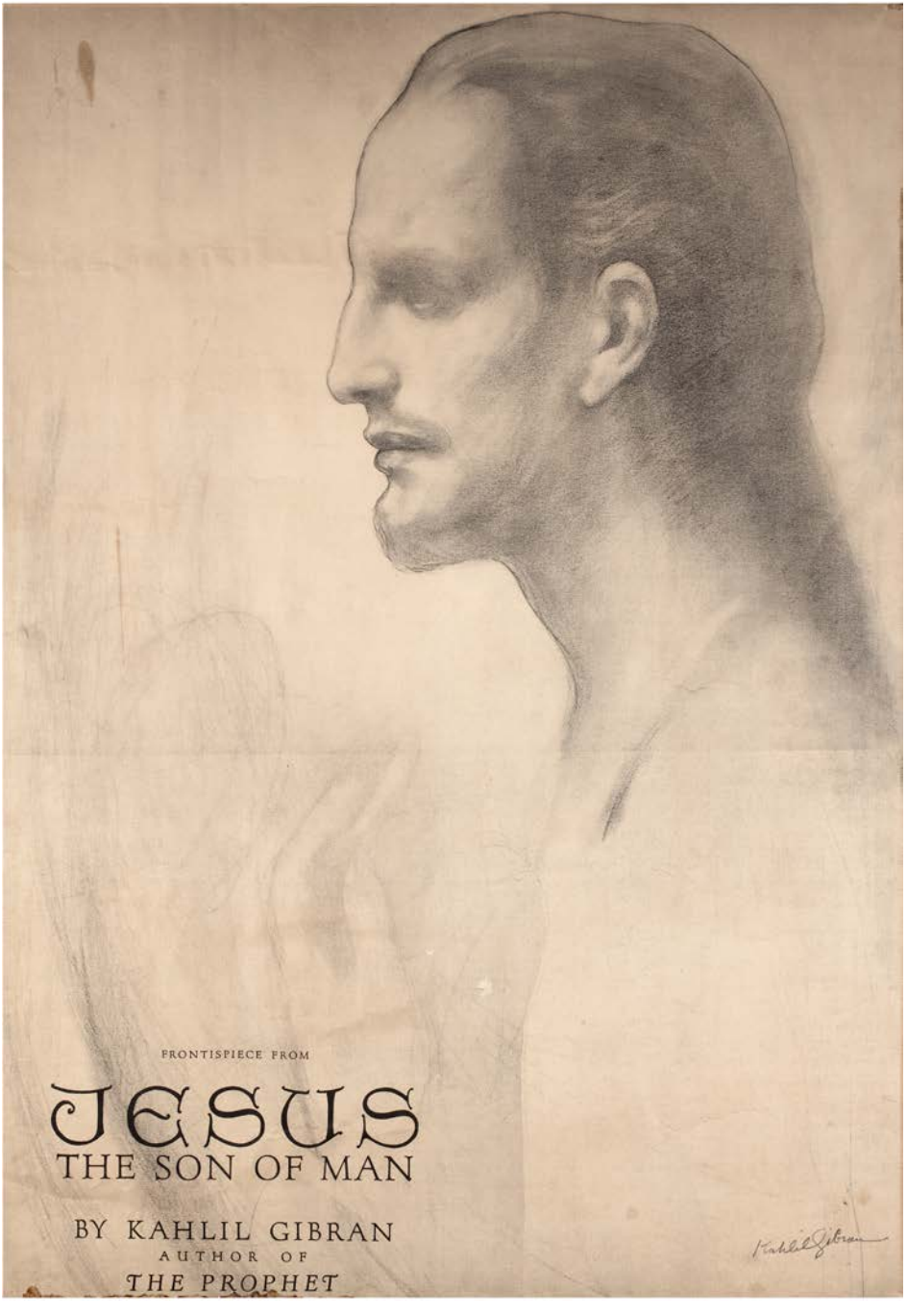
Immigrants to the United States from Eastern Europe, the Near East, and Asia are almost completely prevented from entering the country by the Immigration Act of 1924. This includes Syrian and Lebanese immigrants and demonstrates the pervasive xenophobia Gibran and fellow members of the Syrian diaspora faced in the United States during the early twentieth century. In the early 1920s, Gibran meets the US-based Indian writer and lecturer Syud Hossain, an outspoken opponent of immigration restrictions and colonial rule. In 1924, Hossain invites Gibran to be a board member for his new, internationally-minded organization, the Orient Society. From 1924 to 1928, Gibran and his fellow society members publish *The New Orient*, "a journal of international friendship" that features contributions from H. G. Wells, Witter Bynner, Mahatma Gandhi, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Yone Noguchi, Bertrand Russell, Sarojini Naidu, and Gibran's future secretary, poet Barbara Young, among others.

After a failed real estate venture and in increasingly poor health, Gibran retreats to his New York studio. He proceeds to work on *Jesus the Son of Man* with an advance from Knopf. In the midst of Prohibition, Gibran self-medicates with alcohol, particularly the Lebanese beverage arak. Over the next few years, this compounds his existing health conditions.

1925, age 42

Mary Haskell decides to marry Florance Minis and ends her thorough journaling of her conversations with Gibran, though she remains his editor. Several acquaintances in New York emerge as new colleagues for Gibran, including Frederick Crofts, who purchases the textbook division from Knopf, and his lively wife Margaret Lee Crofts. Poet Henrietta Boughton, who will eventually go by her pen name, Barbara Young, becomes Gibran's secretary and remains so until his death. Antiochian Orthodox Priest Antony Bashir, a fellow Lebanese immigrant, begins to translate Gibran's English language works for Arabic-speaking audiences.

PL. 107
Portrait of Margaret Lee Crofts (Gibran's Friend), 1922



PL. 108
Jesus the Son of Man from *Jesus the Son of Man: His Words and His Deeds as Told and Recorded by Those Who Knew Him*, 1928

1926, age 43
Sand and Foam: A Book of Aphorisms is published by Knopf. From 1926 to 1927, Gibran also works on two English language plays, *Lazarus* and *His Beloved and The Blind*.

1927, age 44
Kalimāt Jubrān (Sayings of Jubran) is published in Cairo. Gibran abandons drawing notable figures and instead focuses on rendering his friends and those close to him. At the end of the year, Gibran passes *Jesus the Son of Man* to Mary Haskell for editing.

1928, age 45
Gibran contributes drawings to *Aghānī al-Darwīsh* (Songs of the Dervish) by Rashid Ayyub. The first edition of *Jesus the Son of Man: His Words and His Deeds as Told and Recorded by Those Who Knew Him* is published in English by Knopf and is positively received by critics and the public. In 1928, New York Socialite Eva Palmer, alongside journalist Alma Reed, founds the Delphic Society, also known as the Ashram, at 12 Fifth Avenue. Gibran joins the society alongside contemporaries including painter José Clemente Orozco, lecturer Syud Hossain, poet Angelos Sikelianos, and architect Claude Bragdon. Those associated with the society and its gallery branch, Delphic Studios, are united by an interest in universal humanity and pantheism, inspired by lessons drawn from ancient Greece. Gibran's health further deteriorates.

1929, age 46
Al-Sanābil (The Spikes of Grain) is published in Arabic by *al-Sā'iḥ*. Gibran suffers from chronic pain and continues to self-medicate by drinking heavily. He develops cirrhosis of the liver but continues to work and does not seek treatment, though he is aware he is dying. Fatigued, his work on *The Garden of the Prophet* slows.

1930, age 47
Gibran drafts the final iteration of his will, dividing the majority of his belongings and assets between his sister Mariana, Mary Haskell, and his hometown of Bsharri.

1931, age 48
The first edition of *The Earth Gods* is published in English by Knopf. On April 10, 1931, Kahlil Gibran dies in New York and, per his wishes, is buried in Lebanon. Mary Haskell and her sister purchase Mar

PL. 109
Hindu Mystic, c. 1918

Sarkis Monastery to serve as Gibran's burial site. Gibran leaves his money and estate to his sister Mariana, his papers and the contents of his studio to Mary Haskell, and the future royalties from his books to his birthplace, Bsharri. Haskell sends much of his work back to Lebanon, including 73 paintings, 366 drawings, material from his studio, and much of the contents of his library.

1932

The Wanderer: His Parables and His Sayings is published posthumously in English by Knopf.

1933

The first edition of *The Garden of the Prophet* is published posthumously in English by Knopf.

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Kahlil Gibran: An Imaginary Bridge Between the Past and the Future

Joseph Geagea

Kahlil Gibran, the writer and the artist, was a treasury of ideas and insights about human life. His literary and artistic creations embody the harmony of wisdom and beauty and are a source of self-assurance and soulful strength for millions of people around the world.

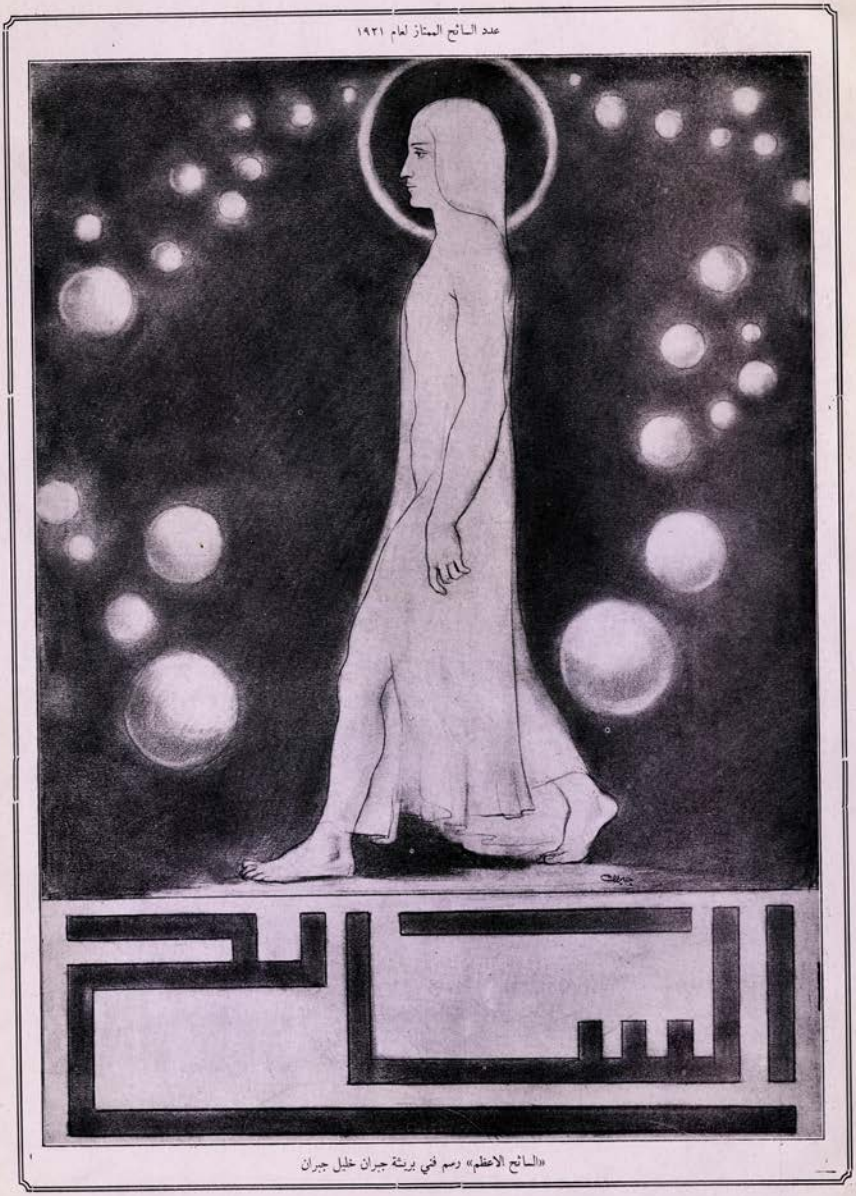
Just as Gibran's Prophet speaks of all aspects and truths of life: of freedom and commitment, of marriage and children, of pain and delight, of love and death, of good and evil, so does the artist himself. His written works, in perfect symbiosis with his drawings, create a bible of a modern faith.

Standing at the crossroads of East and West, both his literary and artistic works address the whole of humanity and simultaneously lead us as individuals to that most sacred place—the human heart.

The earthly place that was equally sacred to Gibran was his homeland and particularly the landscape of his birthplace, Bsharri. In some ways, he never left completely or certainly never lost sight of his homeland—the land of the saints and the holy cedars. His longing for it guided him beyond the horizon, visions of the unreachable manifesting as drawings. He returned again and again through his art, where it remained alive and vibrant through visions of the mountains and the valleys, through the colors of nature.

The art of Kahlil Gibran has always been an enigmatic and complex topic to discuss. Many have puzzled over and posited theories on his inspirations and motivations. Critics have often seen controversial aspects in Gibran's art. The truth, as I understand it, is that Gibran was always skeptical, an ambitious perfectionist who believed he was capable of recreating the world through his art. He

maintained his own notions on art, rebelling against the modern. He was deeply convinced that art must be resistant to time and that wherever his own art should be found, it would be known as his. The simplicity of symbolic material from the past opened a gate to the art of tomorrow. In this way, Gibran's art is a unique current in the creative work of the future.



PL. 110
The Traveler on the cover of *Al-Sā'iḥ*, January 1921

Pictured

PL. 1
Self-portrait, 1908
Charcoal on paper
12 3/8 x 16 7/8 inches (31.5 x 43 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 2
Untitled (A Vestal), 1916
Watercolor on paper
11 3/4 x 8 3/4 inches (29.6 x 22.2 cm)
Nabu Museum Collection

PL. 3
Fifteen-year-old Gibran's illustration
of the title poem from Canadian
writer Duncan Campbell Scott's
Labor and the Angel, c. 1902
Pencil and ink on card
4 1/8 x 6 3/4 inches (10.5 x 17.1 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 4
Nasib Arida (editor), Kahlil Gibran
(illustrator)
Al-Funūn, "Syria in Distress,"
October 1916
Magazine
Middle East, Africa, and Asia Division,
Harvard Library

PL. 5
Untitled, 1917–20
Pencil with red wash on paper
9 3/4 x 8 inches (24.8 x 20.3 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.78

PL. 6
Uplifted Figure, 1915
Pencil and watercolor on paper
10 7/8 x 8 3/8 inches (27.6 x 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.31

PL. 7
Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil and watercolor on paper
8 7/8 x 8 1/2 inches (22.5 x 21.7 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 8
The Dying Man and the Vulture, 1920
Pencil on paper
22 x 16 3/4 inches (55.9 x 42.5 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.40

PL. 9
The Gift, 1923
Watercolor on paper
13 x 10 inches (33 x 25.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 10
*Human Figures Spread Out Below
a Dark Landscape*, 1930
Wash drawing on paper
14 x 11 inches (35.5 x 28 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 11
Nathan Haskell Dole (author),
Kahlil Gibran (illustrator)
Omar the Tentmaker, 1898
Book with relief print on fabric cover
Private collection

PL. 12
Lilla Cabot Perry (author),
Kahlil Gibran (illustrator)
Impressions, 1898
Book
Private collection

PL. 13
Maurice Maeterlinck (author),
Kahlil Gibran (illustrator)
Wisdom and Destiny, 1902
Book, green embossed cover,
with gilt lettering on front and spine
Private collection

PL. 14
Untitled, 1907
Pencil on paper
12 7/16 x 4 5/8 inches (31.6 x 11.7 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.44

PL. 15
Fille en Prière, 1902
Single leaf of cream wove
machine-made paper with graphite
8 3/4 x 6 3/4 inches (22.1 x 17 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Am 2161 (302)

PL. 16
Person with Angel, 1902
Graphite on cream wove
machine-made paper
4 1/2 x 3 3/4 inches (11.4 x 9.5 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Arab 60

PL. 17
The Vision of Adam and Eve, c. 1904
Red conté on wove paper
17 3/8 x 24 1/8 inches (44.1 x 61.3 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.16

PL. 18
Untitled, 1907
Pastel on paper
15 7/8 x 11 3/8 inches (40.3 x 29 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 19
Untitled, 1903
Conté crayon on paper
15 1/4 x 16 1/2 inches (38.7 x 41.9 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis. 1950.8.76

PL. 20
Untitled, 1903
Color pencil and graphite on
cream wove machine-made paper
6 3/4 x 8 3/4 inches (17 x 22.2 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Am 2161 (302)

PL. 21
Untitled, before 1908
Charcoal on paper
7 3/4 x 10 inches (19.5 x 25.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 22
Untitled, 1903
Graphite on cream wove
machine-made paper
11 x 5 7/8 inches (27.8 x 14.9 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Am 2161 (302)

PL. 23
Untitled, 1903
Color pencil and graphite on
cream wove machine-made paper
10 7/8 x 6 7/8 inches (27.7 x 17.5 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Am 2161 (302)

PL. 24
Untitled sketchbook with
drawings, c. 1895
Watercolor on paper in sketchbook
5 1/2 x 8 2/3 inches (14.2 x 22 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 25
Profiles of Rihani, Gibran, and Marie, December 2, 1910
Graphite and ink on paper (facsimile)
Minis Family Papers, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

PL. 26
Ameen Rihani (author), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator), published by Dodd, Mead and Company
The Book of Khalid, 1911
Book
General Research Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

PL. 27
Nasib Arida, Rashid Ayyub, Wadi Bahout, William Catzeflis, Kahlil Gibran, Abd al-Masih Haddad, Nadra Haddad, Ilya Abu Madi, Mikhail Naimy, with cover design by Kahlil Gibran
Majmu'at al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya (The Gathering of the Pen League), 1921
Book
Arab American National Museum Collection, gift of Dr Evelyn Shakir, 2011.01.01

PL. 28
Naẓarāt shā'ir wa-muṣawwir fī al-ayyām wa-al-layālī, plate in *al-Mawākib* (*The Procession*), 1918
Print in bound book (facsimile)
Houghton Library, Harvard University

PL. 29
Kahlil Gibran, published by Alfred A. Knopf
The Earth Gods (first edition), 1931
Book
Private collection

PL. 30
Nude, 1916
Watercolor and graphite on paper
8 1/4 x 5 3/8 inches (21 x 13.5 cm)
Courtesy of Saleh Barakat Gallery

PL. 31
The Greater Self, 1916
Watercolor and graphite on paper
10 15/16 × 8 1/2 inches (27.8 × 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, Museum purchase, 2008.9

PL. 32
Untitled, c. 1910–15
Pencil on paper
9 1/2 x 6 inches (23.2 x 15.2 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.50

PL. 33, COVER
The Waterfall, 1919
Watercolor on paper
12 3/4 x 8 1/2 inches (32.5 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum, Courtesy of the Gibran National Committee

PL. 34
Untitled, 1916
Pencil and watercolor on paper
8 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches (21.6 x 14 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim, Ciudad de México, México

PL. 35
Standing Figure and Child, n.d.
Pencil and watercolor on paper
11 x 7 inches (27.94 X 17.78 cm)
Courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah

PL. 36
Man's Aspiration to Greatness, 1914–20
Watercolor on paper
8 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches (21.5 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum, Courtesy of the Gibran National Committee

PL. 37
The Great Longing, 1916
Watercolor and pencil on paper
10 7/8 x 8 1/2 inches (27.6 x 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.19

PL. 38
Centaur, Woman, and Child, 1916
Watercolor and graphite on paper
8 1/4 x 10 5/8 inches (21 x 27 cm)
Courtesy of Saleh Barakat Gallery

PL. 39
The Triangle, 1918
Wash drawing on paper
10 x 11 3/4 inches (25.3 x 30 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 40
Three Standing Figures, n.d.
Pencil on paper
9 1/2 x 8 inches (24 x 20.3 cm)
Courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation,
Sharjah

PL. 41
Study of a figure with a flame, before 1914
Charcoal on paper
10 2/3 x 7 7/8 inches (27 x 20 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 42
The Flame of Life, c. 1910
Watercolor on paper
6 2/3 x 5 1/8 inches (17 x 13 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 43
Hand and Rose, 1919
Pencil on paper
6 3/4 x 4 3/8 inches (17.3 x 11.2 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 44
Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
The Prophet (first edition), 1923
Book
Collection of Jordan Nassar

PL. 45
Group of seven drawings framed
together, n.d.
Pencil and ink on paper
Sizes various, together 19 2/3 x 19 2/3
inches (50 x 50 cm)
Nabu Museum Collection

PL. 46
Untitled, n.d.
Pencil on paper
10 1/2 x 8 inches (26.5 x 20.3 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia.
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis. 1950.8.47

PL. 47
Study of a Face, 1917
Pencil on paper
9 1/4 x 7 3/8 inches (23.5 x 18.7 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.32

PL. 48
Untitled, n.d.
Pencil on paper
7 x 6 inches (17.8 x 15.2 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.60

PL. 49
Untitled, c. 1918
Pencil and ink on paper
4 1/4 x 5 inches (10.7 x 12.7 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 50
The Mask, c. 1910
Watercolor on paper
12 3/4 x 9 1/2 inches (32.5 x 24 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 51
Head of a Child, n.d.
Pencil and watercolor on paper
7 1/2 x 11 inches (19 x 28 cm)
Private collection

PL. 52
Untitled, n.d.
Pencil on a cardboard flap of
a box (recto); pen and ink
on a cardboard flap of a box (verso)
1 x 2 1/8 inches (2.5 x 5.4 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.77.a-b

PL. 53
Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on paper
5 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches (13.9 x 8.9 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 54
Head of Christ, 1920
Pencil on board
8 x 6 inches (20.3 x 15.2 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia.
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis. 1950.8.25

PL. 55
Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on paper
10 x 7 3/8 inches (25.2 x 18.8 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 56
Portrait, 1917
Graphite and watercolor on
wove translucent paper adhered
to cardstock support
8 3/4 x 10 3/4 inches (22.1 x 27.5 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Am 1891.6 (Box 60: 76a)

PL. 57
Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on paper
8 3/4 x 6 1/8 inches (22.2 x 15.5 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 58
Towards the Infinite, 1916
Watercolor and graphite on paper
8 3/8 x 11 inches (21.3 x 27.9 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of
Mrs. Mary H. Minis, 1932 (32.45.4)

PL. 59
Untitled, 1916
Watercolor on paper
8 1/2 x 11 inches (21.5 x 28 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 60
A Woman with a Blue Veil, 1916
Watercolor on paper
8 1/2 x 10 inches (21.5 x 25.3 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 61
The Three Are One, 1918
Pencil on wove paper
22 1/4 x 15 inches (56.5 x 38.1 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.39

PL. 62
Proof of illustration for frontispiece of
The Madman, c. 1918
Offset print
11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)
Denenberg Fine Arts, Inc.

PL. 63
Nasib Arida (editor), Kahlil Gibran
(illustrator)
Al-Funūn, "Syria in Distress,"
October 1916
Magazine
Middle East, Africa, and Asia Division,
Harvard Library

PL. 64
Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
Twenty Drawings (second edition), 1974
Book
Private collection

PL. 65
Portrait of May Ziadeh, 1920–21
Charcoal
11 x 8 5/8 inches (28 x 22 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 66
Proof of *The Mountain* for
Twenty Drawings, n.d.
Offset print
11 x 8 1/4 inches (27.9 x 21 cm)
Denenberg Fine Arts, Inc.

PL. 67
The Mountain, c. 1916
Wash drawing on paper
9 7/ 8 x 7 7/8 inches (25 x 20 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 68
The Heavenly Mother, 1920
Pencil on wove paper
22 1/4 x 14 1/2 inches (56.5 x 36.8 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.21

PL. 69
Reclining Nudes, 1925
Graphite and watercolor on thin paper
(watermarked "Bond")
7 3/4 x 9 3/4 inches (19 x 25 cm)
Nabu Museum Collection

PL. 70
Untitled, 1921
Watercolor and pencil on paper
5 x 6 inches (12.7 x 15.2 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.57

PL. 71
Spirit of Light or Spiritual Communion,
1921
Watercolor and pencil on paper
11 x 8 inches (27.9 x 20.3 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.

PL. 72
The Triad–Being Descending
Towards the Mother Sea, 1923
Watercolor on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (28 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 73
The Archer, 1923
Watercolor on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (28 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 74
Love, 1923
Watercolor on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (28 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 75
The Divine World, 1923
Charcoal on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (28 x 21.6 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 76
The Summit, c. 1925
Watercolor and pencil on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.14

PL. 77
Untitled, c. 1925
Watercolor and pencil on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.65

PL. 78
The Blessed Mountain, c. 1926
Watercolor on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.7

PL. 79
Sketch for *Jesus the Son of Man*, 1923
Graphite and watercolor on paper
3 5/8 x 3 1/2 inches (9.2 x 8.9 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of
Mrs. Mary H. Minis, 1932 (32.45.5)

PL. 80
Nude Figure Kneeling Among Clouds, c. 1928
Graphite pencil and watercolor on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Gift of Mrs. Mary Haskell Minis, 32.106

PL. 81
I Have Come Down the Ages, n.d.
Watercolor and graphite on paper
14 x 10 1/2 inches (35.6 x 26.7 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Mary H. Minis, 1932 (32.45.3)

PL. 82
Dance and Rhythm, 1920–23
Watercolor on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (28 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 83
The Universal Mother Embracing Two Transcending Spirits, 1920–23
Watercolor on paper
11 x 8 2/3 inches (27.8 x 22 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 84
Life, c. 1931
Watercolor and pencil on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.12

PL. 85
The Outstretched Hand, 1930
Watercolor and pencil on paper
11 x 8 3/8 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.13

PL. 86
Storm, c. 1922
Watercolor on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (28 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 87
Untitled, 1930
Pencil, watercolor, and gouache on paper mounted on cardboard
14 1/8 x 10 7/8 inches (35.9 x 27.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.66

PL. 88
Portrait of Kamila Gibran, 1920
Graphite on thin wove translucent paper adhered to cardstock support
14 x 10 inches (35.5 x 25.3 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Am 1891.6 (Box 60: 75)

PL. 89
Evocation of Sultana Tabit, 1908
Charcoal
23 3/8 x 15 1/8 inches (59.5 x 38.4 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 90
Head of Sultana Tabit, 1908
Pencil on paper
7 1/4 x 4 7/8 inches (18.4 x 12.4 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.61

PL. 91
Head of Micheline and line drawing of Sultana's head, 1908
Pencil and ink on paper
7 3/4 x 4 7/8 inches (19.7 x 12.4 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.62

PL. 92
Portrait of Youssef Howayek, n.d.
Charcoal on paper
10 1/4 x 7 3/4 inches (26 x 19.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 93
Profile of Mary Haskell, 1922
Pencil with watercolor on paper
14 11/16 x 10 3/4 inches (37.3 x 27.3 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.36

PL. 94
Untitled, n.d.
Pencil on paper
11 3/4 x 10 1/8 inches (29.8 x 25.7 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.37

PL. 95
Portrait of Samuel Clemens, 1907
Pencil on paper
23 1/4 x 15 1/3 inches (59 x 39 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim,
Ciudad de México, México

PL. 96
Head of Micheline, n.d.
Pencil on paper
10 7/8 x 8 3/4 inches (27.6 x 22.2 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.23

PL. 97
Portrait of Composer Claude Debussy, 1910
Charcoal on paper
18 x 16 1/8 inches (45.5 x 41 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 98
Portrait of Ameen Rihani, 1911
Charcoal on paper
16 1/2 x 17 3/4 inches (42 x 45 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 99
Ameen Rihani, c. 1910–15
Ink on paper
6 5/8 x 5 3/4 inches (16.8 x 14.6 cm)
Telfair Museum of Art,
Savannah, Georgia,
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis, 1950.8.35

PL. 100
Face of al-Mustafa, 1923
Charcoal on paper
16 1/8 x 13 1/4 inches (41.2 x 33.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 101
Portrait of Carl Gustav Jung, 1913
Charcoal on paper
16 7/8 x 13 1/8 inches (43 x 33.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 102
Portrait of the American Painter Albert Ryder, 1915
Red chalk on paper
9 1/2 x 6 3/4 inches (24 x 17.2 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 103
Albert Pinkham Ryder, 1915
Graphite on paper
30 1/4 x 22 1/4 inches (76.8 x 56.5 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of
Mrs. Mary H. Minis, 1932 (32.45.1)

PL. 104
Portrait of Witter Bynner, 1913
Black ink on cream machine-made paper
6 1/2 x 4 3/4 inches (16.4 x 12.2 cm)
Houghton Library, Harvard University,
MS Am 1891.6 (Box 60: 76)

PL. 105
Rabindranath Tagore, 1916
Charcoal on paper
21 1/2 x 18 1/8 inches (54.5 x 46 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 106
Two Faces (Portrait of Elinor Wylie), 1923
Charcoal on paper
20 x 21 1/2 inches (51 x 54.8 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum,
Courtesy of the
Gibran National Committee

PL. 107
Portrait of Margaret Lee Crofts (Gibran's Friend), 1922
Pencil on cardboard
19 7/8 x 15 inches (50.5 x 38 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim, Ciudad de México, México

PL. 108
Jesus the Son of Man from *Jesus the Son of Man: His Words and His Deeds as Told and Recorded by Those Who Knew Him*, 1928
Print on paper
28 x 19.5 inches (71 x 49.6 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim, Ciudad de México, México

PL. 109
Hindu Mystic, c. 1918
Pencil and watercolor on paper
6 1/2 x 4 7/8 inches (16.5 x 12.5 cm)
Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim, Ciudad de México, México

PL. 110
Al-Sā'iḥ, January 1921, featuring *The Traveler* cover, 1921
Journal (facsimile)
Faris and Yamna Naff Arab American Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Not Pictured

Untitled, 1914
Charcoal on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.8 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum, Courtesy of the Gibran National Committee

Untitled, 1914
Charcoal on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches (28 x 21.5 cm)
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum, Courtesy of the Gibran National Committee

Rocky Shoreline, n.d.
Pencil and watercolor on thin paper
7 7/8 x 7 7/8 inches (20 x 20 cm)
Nabu Museum Collection

Poem on good and evil in Arabic dedicated to MEH, *Mir'āt al-Gharb* 12, no. 1316, 1911
Newspaper (facsimile)
The New York Public Library, *ZY-*O64

Unknown photographer
Portrait of Abdu'l Bahá in Edirne, c. 1868
Photograph (facsimile)
© Bahá'í International Community

Breath on a Window Pane, The Dial, vol. 69, 1920
Magazine (facsimile)
University of Virginia Library

Kahlil Gibran, published by Alfred A. Knopf
The Prophet (first edition), 1923
Book
Arab American National Museum Collection, courtesy of the University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center and Helen Samhan, 2012.03.03

Nasib Arida (editor), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator)
Al-Funūn vol. 1, no. 8, November 1913
Al-Funūn "Syria in Distress," October 1916
Al-Funūn vol. 2, no. 8, January 1917
Magazine (facsimile)
Firestone Library - Near East Collections, NX8 .F868, Princeton University Library

Speech to Boston Golden Links Society, *Mir'āt al-Gharb* vol. 12 no. 1339, 1911
Newspaper
The New York Public Library, *ZY-*O64

Young Kahlil's birthday card to Josephine Preston Peabody, 1905
Ink and watercolor on card (facsimile)
From *Kahlil Gibran: Beyond Borders by Jean Gibran and Kahlil Gibran*, published by Interlink Books, an imprint of Interlink Publishing Group, Inc.

From the collection of Museo Soumaya·Fundación Carlos Slim, Ciudad de México, México

Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on paper
8 3/4 x 6 5/8 inches (22.1 x 17 cm)

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
Twenty Drawings, 1919
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
The Madman: His Parables and Poems (first edition), 1918
Book

Gertrude Smith (author), Ethel Reed (illustrator), Kahlil Gibran (sketches)
Drawings in a dummy copy of *The Arabella and Araminta Stories*, c. 1895
Book used as sketchbook (facsimile)

Gibran family tree, c. 1890
Ink and graphite on paper, double sided (facsimile)
12 7/8 x 12 3/4 inches (32.9 x 32.3 cm)

Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil and ink on cardboard laminated with color paper
2 1/8 x 5 1/4 inches (5.5 x 13.3 cm)

Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on cardboard laminated with color paper
2 3/4 x 2 inches (7 x 5 cm)

Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil, ink, and watercolor on paper
3 x 6 3/8 inches (7.5 x 16.2 cm)

Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on paper
3 7/8 x 2 1/8 inches (10 x 5.5 cm)

Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on paper
3 7/8 x 2 1/8 inches (10 x 5.5 cm)

Untitled, c. 1900–31
Pencil on paper
3 7/8 x 2 1/8 inches (10 x 5.5 cm)

Body parts, c. 1900–31
Graphite on paper
14 x 9 7/8 inches (35.4 x 25.2 cm)

Untitled pair of drawings (Falcons), c. 1900–31
Graphite on matchbox paper
3 3/4 x 1 1/2 inches (9.5 x 3.8 cm)

Kahlil Gibran, published by Alfred A. Knopf
The Forerunner (first edition), c. 1920
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
A Tear and a Smile (first English edition), 1950
Book

Letter to Gertrude Berrie, April 18, 1909
Letter

The Princess in the manuscript for *The Forerunner*, 1921
Pencil and ink on paper

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
The Prophet (first edition), 1923
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
Sand and Foam (first edition), 1926
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
Sand and Foam (limited edition signed by Gibran), 1927
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
Jesus the Son of Man (first edition), 1928
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
The Wanderer (first posthumous edition), 1931
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
The Garden of the Prophet (first edition), 1933
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
Spirits Rebellious (first English edition), 1948
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by
Alfred A. Knopf
Twenty Drawings (second edition), 1974
Book

The Prophet manuscript, c. 1903-23
Ink on lined paper

"On Marriage," chapter of
The Prophet manuscript, c. 1903-23
Ink on lined paper

Sand and Foam manuscript, c. 1924-26
Ink on lined paper

From the collection of
Middle East, Africa, and Asia Division,
Harvard Library

Nasib Arida (editor),
Kahlil Gibran (illustrator)
Al-Funūn, vol. 2, no. 9, January 1917
Journal

Kahlil Gibran published by al-Muhājir
Nubdha fī Fann al-Mūsīqā
(The Art of Music), 1905
Magazine

From the collection of
Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah,
Georgia, Gift of Mary Haskell Minis

Untitled, n.d.
Watercolor and pencil
1 7/8 x 5 1/4 inches (4.8 x 13.3 cm)
1950.8.95

Untitled, n.d.
Pen and ink on paper
2 1/4 x 1 1/8 inches (5.7 x 2.9 cm)
1950.8.59.a-b

From the collection of
Minis Family Papers, The Louis Round
Wilson Special Collections Library,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell
Diagram of the human spirit,
June 14, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Letter to Mary Haskell, January 3, 1917
Three page letter (facsimile)

Letter to Mary Haskell, May 26, 1916
One page letter (facsimile)

Letter to Mary Haskell, June 29, 1916
Two page letter (facsimile)

Letter to Mary Haskell, October 22, 1912
Two page letter (facsimile)

Poem on good and evil in Arabic
dedicated to MEH, Jan 12, 1911
Ink on paper

Letter to Mary Haskell, April 22, 1924
Two page letter (facsimile)

Letter to Mary Haskell, November 10, 1911
Four page letter (facsimile)

Sketch of Mary Haskell and Gibran
reading Nietzsche together, n.d.
Graphite on lined paper (facsimile)

K.G. age 29 and 5 months and 10 days, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, June 11, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Mary Haskell
Three-page diary entry, June 1, 1912
Ink on paper (facsimile)

Mary Haskell
Four-page diary entry, December 25, 1912
Ink on paper (facsimile)

Mary Haskell
Ten-page diary entry, June 22, 1913
Ink on paper (facsimile)

Kahlil Gibran (drawing),
Mary Haskell (notes)
Drawings on form and human development, December 22, 1911
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Kahlil Gibran, Mary Haskell
Page breaking down the languages of the Maronite Church, January 20, 1911
Ink and graphite on paper (facsimile)

Ameen Rihani (Arabic and translation),
Mary Haskell (notes)
Lines in Arabic to explain the language, June 3, 1911
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Page breaking down Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac, 1911
Ink on paper

Page practicing Arabic, 1911
Ink on paper

Small drawings of paintings, one featuring Abdu'l Bahá, 1911
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Two-page letter to Mary Haskell, April 19, 1912
Ink on paper (facsimile)

Untitled (Figure with oil lamp), 1911
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

The Gray Prophet With A Flame In His Hand, 1911
Graphite and ink on paper (facsimile)

Drawings of forms of monuments, February 24, 1911
Graphite and ink on paper (facsimile)

Untitled, 1912
Graphite on paper (facsimile)

Kahlil Gibran, published by Mir'āt al-Gharb
Al-Ajniḥa al-Mutakassira (*The Broken Wings*) (first Arabic edition), 1912
Book

From the collection of
Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum, Courtesy of the Gibran National Committee

YOU my other self, n.d.
Notebook page (facsimile)

Woman cupping hands around phrase "Salam to you," n.d.
Pencil on lined paper (facsimile)

Noses becoming mudra-type signs, n.d
Pencil on lined paper (facsimile)

From the collection of
Arab American National Museum Collection, gift of
Dr Evelyn Shakir, 2011.01.01

Letter from Kahlil Gibran to the president of the Syrian American Club of Boston asking him to support those affected by the famine during World War I, July 28, 1916
Ink on paper

Nasib Arida (editor), Mikhail Naimy (writer), Ameen Rihani (writer), Kahlil Gibran (illustrator)
Al-Funūn vol. 3, no. 2, September 1917
Journal

Kahlil Gibran, published by al-Muhājir
'Arā'is al-Murūj (Spirit Brides), 1906
Book

Kahlil Gibran, published by al-Muhājir
Al-Arwāḥ al-Mutamirrida (*Spirits Rebellious*), 1908
Book

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1948
Book

Additional Images

FIG. 1
Auguste Rodin
Femme nue, genou en terre et bras levé,
n.d.
Graphite, pencil, and watercolor on
vellum
12 5/8 x 9 1/4 inches (32.2 x 24.7 cm)
musée Rodin
© musée Rodin

FIG. 2
Fred Holland Day
Kahlil Gibran with Book, 1896
Platinum print
6 5/16 x 4 5/8 inches (16.0 x 11.8 cm)
Artokoloro / Alamy Stock Photo

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Contributors

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Jordan Nassar (b. 1985, New York, NY) is an artist based in New York City. His work has been featured in exhibitions and is held in the collections of numerous institutions globally. He is the recipient of the 2021 Unbound United States Artists Fellowship in craft. His solo exhibition *Jordan Nassar: Fantasy and Truth* was held at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston in 2022-23.

Mounira Al Solh
Biography

Star signs?
And a Muslim feminist.
They blossom.
Shipped roses from Mexico to Syria and then to Beirut most importantly. Facing the sea.
The night of Destiny.
A new family of 3 exiled, and another one of 3 as well.
3 +3 = 7
Dreams and plants and, and time and broken languages, arak machines and guns. Powder, red sand and facial creams. Aywa!
Thick rings on a finger that was just cut out of a hand naturally died with Tyrian Murex purple, and another hand that flew out of a body cage.
Before or after that date: ....

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Published on the occasion of the exhibition *A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran*

Organized by Claire Gilman, Chief Curator, with Isabella Kapur, Curatorial Associate, and Anneka Lenssen, Associate Professor of Global Modern Art, University of California, Berkeley

The Drawing Center
June 2–September 3, 2023

Lead support for *A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran* is provided by Dominique Lévy. Generous funding is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Karim F. Tabet and Family, Sandra and Tony Tamer, the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, Zaza and Philippe Jabre, and Tony and Elham Salamé. Additional support is provided by Carla Chammas and Judi Roaman, Isabel Stainow Wilcox, Joumana Rizk, Sara and Hussein Khalifa, Frances Beatty Adler and Allen Adler, Dita Amory, Jane Dresner Sadaka and Ned Sadaka, the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, Harry Tappan Heher and Jean-Edouard van Praet d'Amerloo, and Waqas Wajahat.

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GIBRAN MUSEUM

THE DRAWING CENTER

This is number 153 of the *Drawing Papers*, a series of publications documenting The Drawing Center's exhibitions and programs and providing a forum for the study of drawing.

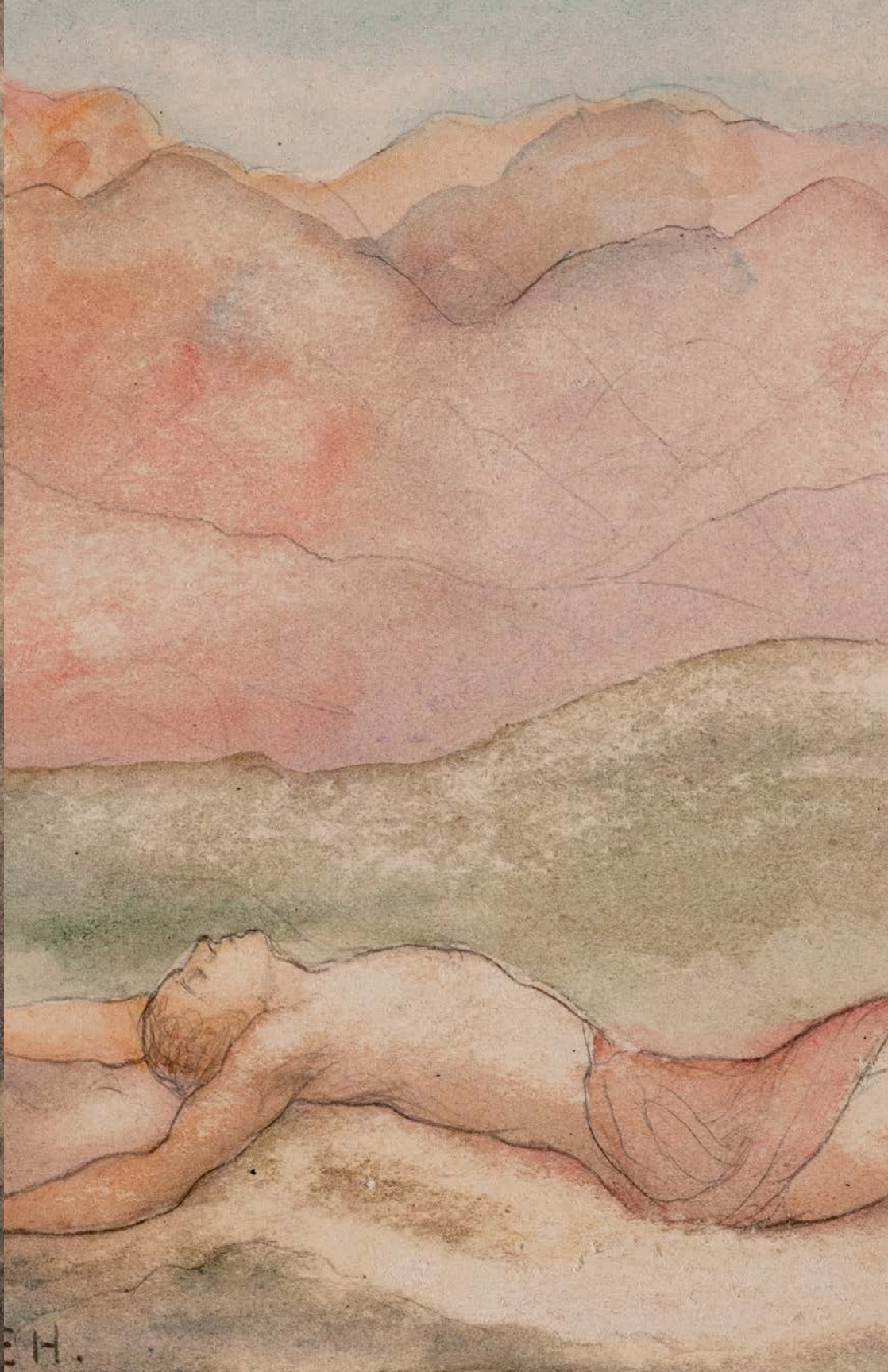
Editor
Joanna Ahlberg

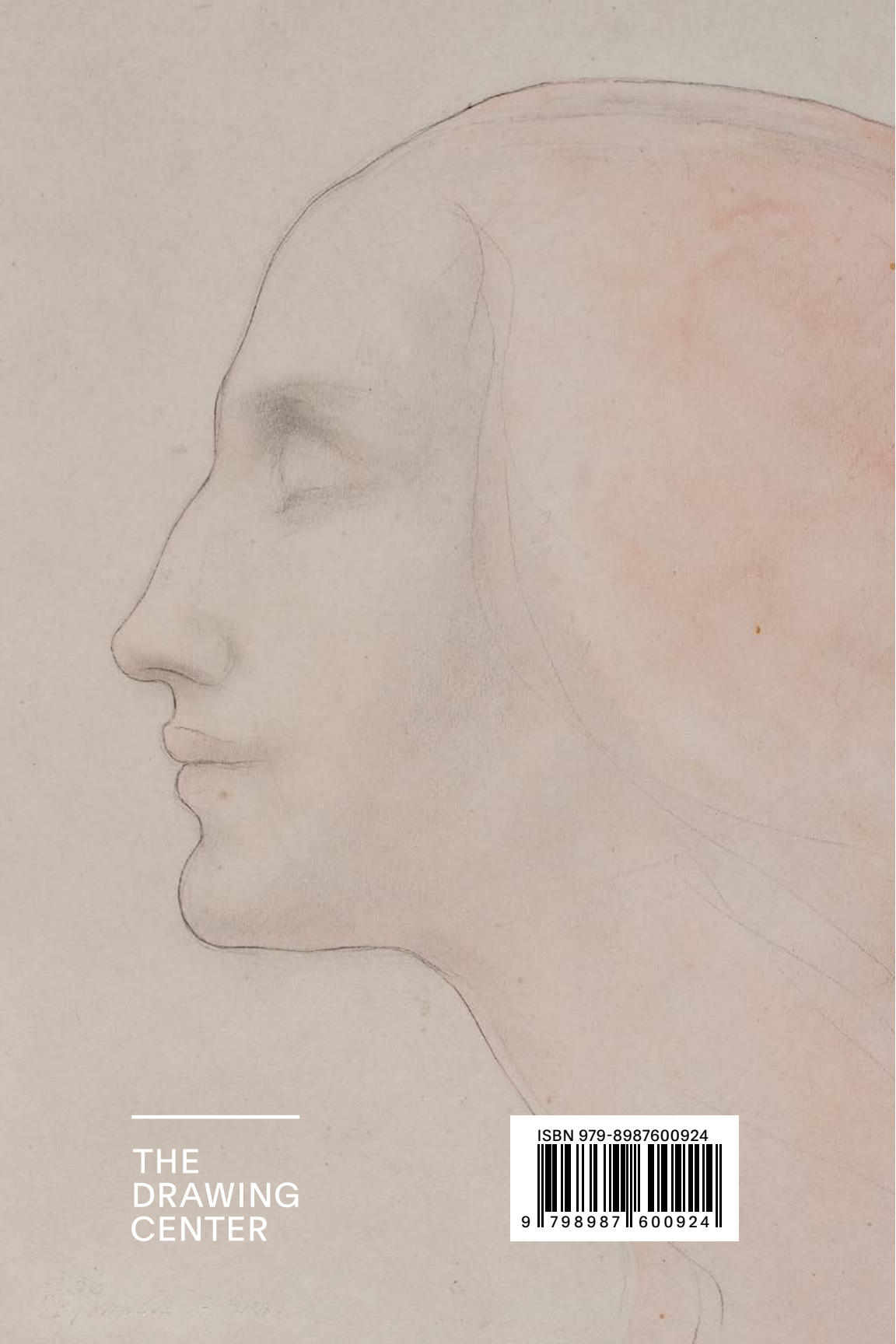
Design
Dandelion / Peter Ahlberg

Printing & Binding
Shapco Printing, Minneapolis

About the Type
This book is set in Publico Text (Roman, Italic, and Bold). It is part of the Publico Collection, designed by Ross Milne, Christian Schwartz, Paul Barnes, Kai Bernau, and Greg Gazdowicz, and released incrementally by Commercial Type in 2009, 2013, and 2014. This book also uses Plain (Regular and Italic), which was designed by François Rappo and released by Optimo Type Foundry in 2014.

ISBN 979-8-9876009-2-4





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