

Press Release

The Baltimore Museum of Art Acquires Hend Samir's *Ride on a Trackless Train*

Saturday, July 1, 2023



Harkawik is pleased to announce the acquisition of Hend Samir's *A Ride on a Trackless Train* by The Baltimore Museum of Art. Executed in 2023, *Trackless Train* is a remarkably compelling work, and one of the few Samir has executed with a primarily monochromatic color palette. In these paintings, Samir often adds one color and uses it selectively, "pushing it" through the painting and allowing it to inflect all it touches. In this case, the work contains subtle shifts between cool and warm grays, which are used to build depth and spatial complexity. Beginning with *Protective* in 2018 and *A Disruptive Impulse* in 2022, Samir's monochromatic works allow her to develop her unique process without the heavy emotional and sociological associations that come with color interaction. Samir's investment in themes of youthful innocence and

the formation of early memory are evident here, and the monochromes allow her to address the malleability of history and memory in a more direct way. The selective color found in these works occasionally signifies shifts in mood, faded photographs, or bursts of water or ash. *Trackless Train* began in 2022 and was completed in 2023, and is a marvelous example of her newest and most daring compositional strategies, in which the figure-ground relationship is eliminated in favor of a freeform organic process that unifies subject and environment. The children in Samir's paintings often betray the worldly concerns of adults, and their expressions of wonder and yearning are often tempered by fear. In this work, a cluster of children ride a "trackless train," a vehicle borne of the work's evolving marbled ground, one that is overtaken at every turn. The children look up, alternately hopeful, inquisitive, cautious, frozen in galeful motion. Two figures frame the scene—a celestial apparition, and a menacing hooded figure emerging from the lower left, riding a vehicle of its own. *Trackless Train* is a stunning testament to Samir's dynamic vision and singular process.

A Ride on a Trackless Train will join the permanent collection of one of the most relevant and publicly engaged institutions in the country, furthering the museum's mission toward "socially relevant, cutting-edge acquisitions [that] embody its commitment to excellence, fairness, relevance, and social justice." Harkawik extends our heartfelt congratulations to Hend and thanks to the team at the BMA.

Over 100 years ago, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) was founded on the belief that access to art and ideas is integral to a vibrant and healthy civic life. This belief is at the heart of the BMA and remains our core value. The BMA has long focused on acquiring the art of the present moment, while maintaining and deepening a historic collection made relevant through vigorous development and reinterpretation in all collecting areas. Through the courageous and risk-taking vision of previous Museum leaders, the BMA assembled and presented one of the most important collections of 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century art in the United States. These visionary actions established the fundamental character of this Museum.