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| Corm, Daoud (1852-1930) |
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| Recognised as the father of modern art in Lebanon, Daoud Corm was a pioneer in establishing a market for oil painting in the country’s private sector. Born in Mount Lebanon, then part of the Ottoman Empire, Corm traveled to Rome in the late 1860s to study at the Accademia di San Luca. He returned to Beirut in 1878. Working mainly in oil on canvas and pastel on paper, Corm depicted Beirut’s emerging mercantile class in his signature style: a pared down, formal, three-quarter length portrait against a dark background with an attention to the individual’s social and professional standing. In addition to his portraits, Corm created a substantial body of religious works, the majority of which were commissioned by the Maronite Church and many of which remain in churches throughout Mount Lebanon. Before Corm, oil painting was limited to clerics in the church, many of whom had been trained by Italian missionaries and clerics at the Maronite College of Rome, established in 1584. Corm’s historical significance thus lies in his ability to forge a local market for oil portraits, previously reserved for religious figures. Corm exhibited his work abroad in Egypt and Europe, most notably at the 1889 Versailles Exhibition in France and at the 1900 Paris Exhibition, where he received the Prize of Honor of Excellence. |
| Further reading:  (Barbican Center)  (Daoud Corm)  (Fani)  (Lahoud)  (Rogers)  (Sultun) |