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| Halaby, Sophie (1906-1998) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Sophie Halaby was born in 1906 in Jerusalem to a Palestinian father and Russian mother. She pursued her higher education in France and Italy between 1928 and 1933 before returning to the city of her birth, later fleeing from West Jerusalem to East Jerusalem during the 1948 Palestine War. In the 1950s she opened a small shop on Zahra Street where she sold handcrafted goods and her watercolour paintings, and she participated in several exhibitions in the 1980s. Halaby often portrayed the landscape surrounding Jerusalem, one of her primary inspirations, in watercolour and oil. Often painted from the perspective of a window or balcony view, many of her works are absent of human presence and have a melancholic and foreboding atmosphere. Unlike European painters of the Holy Land, Halaby did not focus on religious sites and grand panoramas in orientalist traditions, expressing instead a more intimate relationship to the land and its details in her landscape watercolours, which moved increasingly towards abstraction over the course of her life.  Her domestic sketches are some of the few images of Palestinian women working in the home during the period, and they reveal a facet of upper class life during her time rarely seen or documented, recalling sketches of impressionist artists. Halaby passed away in 1998 at the age of 92. Several Palestinian collectors, including Mazen Qupty, purchased her work. The significance of Halaby’s work was discovered in the late 1990s, and she is now considered one of Jerusalem’s pioneering woman artists. |
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| Further reading:  (Sherwell and Deis)  (Boullata and Berger) |