

14.05.09 - UNDERCURRENT

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UNDERCURRENT

Contemporary Egyptian Art

artsquad



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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, YOUTH
& COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة الثقافة والشباب
والتنمية المجتمعية



Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Culture

I am pleased to have assumed patronage of this event and consider it an enjoyable duty to deliver a short foreward here. I would like to start by thanking everyone who contributed to the organisation of this unique exhibition, which I see as an excellent platform for Egyptian and Emirates artists to interact and share experiences and creative ideas. I believe that art galleries are an essential part of any society. Their primary role is to share thoughts, issues and promote better understanding between people with the public.

When we decided to hold this exhibition, we did not think twice, as Egypt enjoys a very special relationship and historical ties with the UAE, shared by His Highness Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Excellency President Hosni Mubarak. This exceptional relationship, which has been growing steadily and rapidly in all fields, including literary and artistic, has helped in strengthening the cross-cultural communications between the two countries, preserve Arab identity, and support joint cultural projects.

Hosting an art exhibition of this size and value in the UAE serves as recognition of the emergence of the country as an important contributor to contemporary art. The creative art works of artists from the Emirates are becoming a regional language understood by broad segments of the UAE's citizens and residents and have become an extraordinary ambassador for the country's values, cultural heritage and creativity.

This exhibition represents the wealth and variety of artistic talent in Egypt. Through these wonderful pieces, the Egyptian artists tried to describe the small details of the Egyptian culture and the realities of human society, which visitors will surely enjoy. This exhibition of Contemporary Egyptian Art is undoubtedly a great opportunity to learn more about the Egyptian school of contemporary art as well as an opportunity to promote artistic excellence in our region.

By offering a platform for artistic collaboration, exhibitions like this will serve significantly to raise the profile of Arab art and artists.

H.E. Abdul Rahman Mohammad Al Owais,
Minister for Culture, Youth & Community Development
The United Arab Emirates

Art is a universal language that does not require translation; it is a mirror of people and feelings. The history of plastic arts in the Arab World goes back to the beginnings of the last century and the arts now inhabit a prominent social space. Throughout this period, Egypt held the torch and produced a great group of men and women who represented the first modern generation of artists, soon followed by other multi-faceted perspectives that have enriched the art movement in the Arab world.

Ambitious Arab countries, leveraging artists' production in the region, have managed to establish a cultural and artistic mood that has helped to create an internationally recognised market for plastic arts.

I was delighted to become the guest of honour of 14.05.09 - Undercurrent, Art Sawa's exhibition of Contemporary Egyptian Art in Dubai, in which a group of Egyptian artists express the momentum of the region's rich and diversified styles that merit our awe and admiration.

This exhibition is an important initiative, one where both established and up-and-coming Egyptian artists display their work in a generous gesture destined to propel the Arab art movement to the prospects it so deserves. I commend Art Sawa and this group of artists for this endeavour.

H.E. Farouk Hosny
Minister of Culture of Egypt

Acknowledgements

Art Sawa is deeply grateful to:

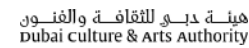
H.E. Abdul Rahman Mohammad Al Owais, Minister for Culture, Youth & Community Development of the United Arab Emirates for his high patronage and unwavering support



H.E. Farouk Hosny, Minister of Culture of Egypt, our guest of honour for his patronage



Dubai Culture and Arts Authority for its support



Mr. Abd El Raouf Samy, Chairman of Heliopolis Electric Co. and Chairman of the Egyptian Business Board for his Individual Sponsorship

An Individual Sponsor and friend who wishes to remain anonymous

Algebra Capital for its faith in Art Sawa and its continued support



Egypt Air for its kind sponsorship of airline tickets



Emirates Airlines for its kind sponsorship of airline tickets

Contemporary Practices Magazine, our media partner on this occasion, and Aida Eltorie for her editorial contribution to this publication



Mohamed Talaat, Director of the Palace of the Arts in Cairo for his invaluable assistance in the coordination with the artists

Nadine Farah and Francis John Contreras for this, Art Sawa's first publication

Modern Printing Press for its support in publishing this book

The friends of Art Sawa: Anmarie, Barry, Benita, Dina, Geralyn, John, Josee, Nadine, Nasser, Sovan, Tony and Raju for all their hard work in making this exhibition possible and special thanks to Ibrahim El Dessouki for his gracious support.

Foreward

I would especially like to thank H.E. Abdul Rahman Mohammad Al Owais, Minister for Culture, Youth & Community Development of the United Arab Emirates and H.E. Farouk Hosny, Minister of Culture of Egypt for their patronage and unwavering support. I also thank Dubai Culture and Arts Authority for its support and all the 29 participating artists for their enthusiastic participation in this adventure.

Art Sawa, with its impressive roster of artists from the region, is a distinctive art platform featuring artists from the Middle East, North Africa and neighbouring countries. Art Sawa, which translates to Art Together, is a vision and aspiration that its space be a venue that facilitates and fosters interaction and dialogue, and inspires an exchange between artists and the public through art and passion.

It is in this spirit that Art Sawa has brought together 29 influential contemporary Egyptian artists for 14.05.09 – Undercurrent. This collective of contemporary Egyptian art spans many Schools and Practices, and artists both well-established and at the cutting-edge of the Egyptian art scene have specifically created new works for this outstanding group show.

To many Egyptian contemporary artists, the urban landscape provides a central focus and inspiration. Cairo represents the main focus of 14.05.09 - Undercurrent, its growing metropolis, its energy, its geographical, political and socio-economic environment and the impact of these forces on Egyptian culture and art.

Dubai and Cairo's growth demonstrate an impact and electric energy, though each coming from entirely different places. One rooted in millennia of history and civilisation, of human artistic expression dating back thousands of years; the other emanating from a small trading community that in a moment of great opportunity decided to stand up and be counted, to create a major 21st Century hub for Commerce, Finance, Logistics, Media and the Arts. These two energies and their coming together is a major catalyst for a deeper dialogue and the rationale for bringing 14.05.09 – Undercurrent to the UAE.

Amel B. Makkawi
Founder & Director, Art Sawa

14.05.09 - UNDERCURRENT, Against the common and the hackneyed...

All too often, those who curate Egyptian art abroad find themselves drawn to the common, stereotyped, and accessible. As the western media drums up the hackneyed impressions of contemporary Egypt, the average curator finds himself, or herself, caught up in a web of political, social, and cultural stereotypes. Consequently, a certain type of aesthetics evolves, eclipsing all other possibilities.

You will hear curators claiming that the alternatives they rule out were not contemporary enough, urgent enough, or real enough. The reason is that such curators are incapable of traversing the geographical boundaries of local, ethnic, or religious spectrums. Their outlook often detracts from the immense potential of the region, blocking the way for art work that transcend the immediacies of politics, equity, religion and identity. The champions of contemporary art often subscribe to stereotypes that distort their perspective and thereby hinder the faithful presentation of contemporary Egyptian art and diminish the scope of what the viewers are offered in terms of artistic variety.

The main aim of 14.05.09 - Undercurrent is to go beyond such limitations and explore the fullness of the Egyptian art scene. In the scope of this exhibition, Art Sawa made sure to provide you with a vision of reality that maintains the intricacy of context without sacrificing the colourfulness of mood. The works shown in this exhibition emphasise the diversity of style and extensiveness of material representative of the inexhaustible reservoir of Egyptian artistic talent.

Egypt is a country with artistic substance and depth, as well as an energetic past maintained by generations of creative men and women. The extensive array of work that describes this legacy is as colourful in its inimitability as it is sharp in its intuition and focus. It is a legacy that still strives for new values that dwell outside the familiar concepts of the common and the hackneyed, the typical and the marketable.

Mohamed Talaat
Director, The Palace of Arts, Cairo

UNDERCURRENTS

The politics of art and culture in contemporary Egypt are a genuine reflection of the country's historical affluence. As a result of the vast social and political undercurrents that swept the country's civil functions into social apathy, the space that artists inhabit today is naturally quite different from that of a century ago. The opening of the first fine arts school in 1908 had marked a turning point in the country's cultural privation, and this development was to survive an Occidental-driven society thanks to a group of passionate virtuosos who occasionally travelled to Europe and returned to their monarchist land with concepts of identity. What seemed like a conscious decision to disregard the overwhelming experiences of a colonised entity finally gave realisation to a Modern Egypt.

The first weighted notion of Modernity in Egyptian art gave birth to artists such as Mahmoud Mokhtar, Ragheb Ayyad, Mohamed Nagy, Mahmoud Said, and later Abdel Hady El-Gazzar and Hamed Nada among others. At a time when Egypt was at its most prosperous, they brought forward a body of work that, though romantic, was also reflective of cultural determination. Egypt, heir to the ancient civilizations, a progeny of Islamic governance overcome by Ottoman defeat and French and British occupation, finally shaken by the end of the monarchy in 1952, remained a land that transpired through many cultures. Egypt will always be commonly recognised as Oum El Donia ("Mother of the World" in Arabic), regardless of the stand it takes in the pan-Arab Republic.

The founding fathers of the modern artistic movement identified Egypt with placid scenes from the village, reminiscences of the fertile farmland, the Nile River and harbouring seaports. The mother of the world was indeed the nurturing mother of the land. She stood tall above the Sphinx in red granite, petting its feline head in the middle of a bustling square by Cairo University.ⁱ She was also the blonde blue-eyed beauty with large gold earrings hinting a timid smile, draped in a black veil beside the Mediterranean Sea.ⁱⁱ

Art was accompanied by modernity and it brought a variety of real, surreal and folkloric aspects to cultural heritage and identity. This was the era of the pioneers, of figures such as Sobhi Guergues, whose experiment in avant-garde sculpture saw a move away from the more sedate practice of other artists of his generation.

Interestingly, it was the pioneers who first formulated the concept of the institutions that now nurture art in contemporary Cairo. In passing on the torch from artists to newly created institutions, they laid down the groundwork for the organisms that have arisen since – those that house worlds of culture, biennials of painting and salons of young artists. This facilitating environment continues to evolve to this day, with the function of a space taking on a whole new dimension in our digital age, as the clamour grows for new media, installation and video art.

Until 1967,ⁱⁱⁱ social and national developments had been taking place at a regular pace. The farmer tilled the land and grazed his livestock, feeding the economy with natural resources, and the consumer traded goods in and out of the region with his neighbours within the United Arab Republic. With the Six-Day War came a decline of the socialist movement, consequently ending the Socialist Realism trends in Egyptian art^{iv} that had evolved from the early pioneers. The art of the Proletariat, adopted through eastern European associations during the time of the socio-communist movements in Egypt since 1958, came to an abrupt end with the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser on September 28, 1970. After the 1973 war, with the total collapse of the Pan-Arab movement, Egypt abandoned its soviet pattern of socialism and adopted an open market policy.

This allowed for the emergence of two directions in the art movement in the 1970s: one an echo of the Socialist Realist's approach and the other, an innovative approach to non-figurative and social political art. Artists such as Hazem Taha Hussein, Farghali Abdel-Hafeez, Mustafa Farid Al-Razaz, Abdelsalam Eid, Farouk Wahba and Ahmed Nawar adopted non-figurative approaches amidst the decline in figurative propaganda, bringing the first wave of alternative artists to shore.

ⁱ Sculpture of Nahdet Masr, (aka Renaissance of Egypt), the first National Project; the funding for the public sculpture came from community mobilization that led to Egyptian citizens successfully raising the funds for the casting and molding of the sculpture.

ⁱⁱ The depiction of the Alexandria girl, daughter of the Mediterranean Sea, is a recurring theme in Mahmoud Said's paintings.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Arab Israeli-conflict, also known as the Six Day War took place from June 5-10, 1967 between Israel and the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

THE CONFIRMATION OF THE MODERN

In 1981 the Axis Group was created by four artists: Ahmed Nawar, Abdul Rahman al-Nashar, Farghali Abdul Hafeez and Mustafa Farid Al-Razaz. The influence of such a group on social modernity, established in a pop-culture period, was a marked one, reinforced by the unearthing of a new political leader.^v That same year the regime was under threat due to the assassination of Sadat, marking a new turning point in the plastic arts sector since 1930. A renewal of principles seeking an international recognition of the contemporary platform was recognized, and the plastic fine arts sector developed a language that promoted new forms of visual media evolving under the same umbrella as the socio-political contemporary movement.

In an echo of the Socialist Realist approach, the 1980s saw a new wave of artists including Mohamed Abla, Mohsen Shaalan, Mohamed Al Fayoumi and Fathi Afifi come out of a changing world, one with a different international political economy that had grown out of the turmoil of war. In contrast to artists such as Ahmed Nawar, their works combined neo-expressionist approaches, with a gradual return to the figuration abandoned by prominent artists of the effervescent seventies.

Attiat Sayed, an advocate in her own right, was a press illustrator in two prominent and mass-produced political journals in Cairo: Al Gomhouriyya (The Republic) and Al Masaa (The Evening). Today, a painter, illustrator of poetry and literature, her classical approach takes on a deeply subjective attitude, giving her canvases a certain sense of humour. The objects in her art continue to convey through the simplicity of her lines the stories behind her social narratives, as though each object had its own character and relayed its own story. This was a local voice, well-reserved and maintained in an ever-changing establishment.

Mohamed Abla, Mohsen Shaalan and Fathi Afifi however, continued to move inexorably onto an international platform. As students and workers in the 1970s and practicing career artists since the 1980s, they gained their recognition through semi-figurative paintings that typically reflected the masses. While Abla's eye was ironic and politically astute, Shaalan's offered a satirical look at society and Afifi's was empathic with the conditions of the population. Whether mass appeal or mass population, these artists are an example of the post-socialist realism movement. Mohamed Al Fayoumi, also a champion of the common people, translated his approach to sculpture, by often singling out individual figures from those same masses that concerned his contemporaries.

Whether or not these artists' genres can be referred to as a post-national project for their collective views on portraits of the city, and for the mass mediated portraits of a neo-cultural identity, these artists are an example of the neo-pop culture in the 1980s and 1990s.

THE WAVES OF THE CONTEMPORARY

Meanwhile, on an institutional level, an important development occurred with the creation of the first Salon of Young Artists (Youth Salon) in 1989. The value of such an initiative became immediately apparent as these collective exhibitions not only provided a platform for young artists to show their work, but also gave early recognition to a number of subsequently prominent artists such as Khaled Sorour, Atef Ahmed Ibrahim, Howaida El Sabaee, Hanan El Sheikh, Hazem El Mestikawy, Hanafy Mahmoud, Ehab Ellaban, Ahmed El Shaer, Marwa Adel, Ahmed Askalany, Wael Darwesh and Ibrahim El Dessouki. These are just some of the names of the group of artists showing in 14.05.09 – Undercurrent, who have granted a new criterion to the themed genres of nationality, identity and social initiatives and have steadily brought their creativity to the contemporary Egyptian art scene, in what will be identified here in four waves.

THE FIRST WAVE

The first wave consists of artists including Hazem El Mestikawy, Armen Agop, Ibrahim El Dessouki, Essam Marouf, and Khaled Sorour to name but those represented in this exhibition.

Hazem El Mestikawy, living and working between Cairo and Vienna, is originally from Beni Suef (Middle Egypt) and grew up in the suburbs of Cairo. Greatly influenced by the sculpture and architecture of Al Amarna, El Mestikawy clearly bridges both practices in his installations. Addressing the concepts of mappings, stampings, and archival findings, there is a clear sensibility in the systematic representation of his work.

^{iv} Specifically referred to as a Socialist Realism movement due to its political and economical theories of social organization that advocated the means of production, distribution, and exchange owned and regulated by the nation as a whole.

According to Wikipedia's definition of Socialist Realism "a teleologically-oriented style of realistic art which has as its purpose the furtherance of the goals of socialism and communism. Although related, it should not be confused with social realism, a type of art that realistically depicts subjects of social concern."

Another sculptor living and working abroad is Armen Agop who moved to Italy in 2000. Agop formulates his sculptures into simple shapes. Working in granite, basalt or bronze, he delivers what initially seems to be finely cut convex and concave curves reflecting a meditative volume to an absolutely weighty object. Usurped by a gravitational pull, Agop elongates the rounded form with a finely pointed end that routes the straight lines and undulating curves in uplifting directions.

Essam Marouf and Ibrahim El Dessouki are two essential examples of portrait painting that will be met in this exhibit. They tend more towards romanticised portraitures, but the concept of romance here is both beautiful and eerie. El Dessouki reserves Gauguin-esque qualities to his figures, while Marouf is the renaissance of the contemporary self. What might typically seem to be a Monalisa-like pose, takes on a monochrome backdrop, fore fronted by a clear layer, a façade that reflects a separation of the figure from its spectator. Held back by a revelation of a mysterious subject matter, Marouf without a doubt preserved and mastered contemporary frescoes of Egyptian portraiture. His schooling following the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo saw him move on to Rome and then Amsterdam, allowing him to establish a two-dimensional element to his portrait painting genre that combined a classical European approach with an assumed second identity, not necessarily directed towards another ethnic style.

Khaled Sorour, a painter, illustrator, graphic designer and draughtsman offers an early example of the contribution to fine arts made by the multi-disciplinary artists so prevalent today. His is a very personal and individual look at contemporary Egypt.

THE SECOND WAVE

The second wave represented in this exhibition includes figurative artists such as Hanan El Sheikh, Hend Adnan and Atef Ahmed Ibrahim, and Howaida El Sebaee, a more abstract painter.

Hanan El Sheikh is the epitome of simplicity. She uses an underappreciated form of painting that directs your attention to how uncomplicated mundane objects can be only to then become recognized according to our own personal narratives. Her bicycles for example, shadow the simplicity of the white/grey negative space, allowing for the loneliness of the object to take on a character as it tilts to the side, leaning against the wall, identifying with its perspective as it lays on the ground, knocked over and out of shape.

Atef Ahmed Ibrahim takes us back to the folkloric arts in a second and third form of artistic practices after the traditional two-dimensional formats. Firstly, he seeks to occupy body arts as a form of theatrical expression, and secondly, he actualizes his theatre using folkloric designs on sets. Combining both abstraction and figural painting with photography in what was initially divided into two plastic schools, allowed Ibrahim to develop a multimedia approach to his art.

Hend Adnan, a classically trained artist who continues to work with models, infuses her profoundly atmospheric paintings with a near lyrical quality, drawing not only on the mood suggestions of her models but also on the viewer's participation, creating what is in effect a three-way conversation. In contrast, Howaida El Sebaee's abstract treatments of a very real concern, that of the effects of industrialisation on humanity and society, offer a very contemporary and personal outlook on a deeply pressing social issue.

THE THIRD WAVE

The third wave of artists proposed and encountered in this exhibition, consists of Ahmed Askalany, Wael Darwesh and Hanafy Mahmoud who address their internal consideration of the soul and their observation of figural behaviours in varied forms. Ehab El Labban and Haytham Nawar are two other artists of this wave to have made their mark in a multitude of ways.

Ehab El Labban is a practicing sculptor and newly appointed commissaire of the Cairo International Biennial. He is also the Director of Horizon One Gallery located on the Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil Museum site. He, and other prominent figures such as Mohamed Talaat, Director of the Palace of Arts and an artist in his own

^vPresent-dayPresidentHosniMubarakcametopower14October1981, following the assassination of Anwar Sadat (r. 1970-1981)

right, exemplify the very tight relationship that exists in Egypt between the establishment, represented by the Cairo International Biennial, the major museums and galleries on the one hand, and working artists on the other hand.

Haytham Nawar defines a more multi-disciplinary approach through his training in print-making and graphic design. A very talented draughtsman, he also experiments with light, sound and video, producing spectacular lighting installations.

Wael Darwesh is another example of a multi-disciplinary artist, whose experimentation in different genres is an exercise in finding the best voice for his message. A painter with a tendency towards abstraction, his use of colour and brushstroke suggest myriad possibilities of interpretation.

One fast emerging and recognised artist, Ahmed Askalany, a sculptor from a village in Qena of Upper Egypt called Nagi Hammadi, offers a great insight into the mindset of the countryside and its encounters with the city as he seeks to identify his subjects with vigorous determination and more than a touch of humour. His use of unconventional and inexpensive materials, mainly palm leaves and polyester is a perfect example of an artist's ingenuity in the face of dwindling financial and institutional support.

Another artist to make use of unusual media is Hanafy Mahmoud, also concerned with the human condition, who has chosen to explore his own preoccupations through a combination of striking visual expression and arresting materials.

Another undercurrent, as yet unspoken of in this essay, is that composed of some of the photographers represented in this exhibition: Randa Shaath, Nagla Samir, and Maha Maamoun. Shaath, Samir and Maamoun are all three women who have worked professionally as press photographers, graphic designers and curators, in addition to their photographic practice. They have all chosen to document their encounter with the city and confront the emotions engendered by that encounter photographically.

Randa Shaath and Maha Maamoun have opened a new dimension to Cairo-based photography. Shaath's images are simple black and white photographs that completely capture and isolate daily scenarios in the streets of Cairo, and what might come off as motion in stills, have been transfigured and transliterated into new happenings that existed all along only to serve a new meaning. Well recognised for her Rooftop Series, Shaath had also published her work in the book *Under The Same Sky: Cairo*.^{vi} She documents the lives of the people living in rooftop apartments. What deems towards congestion also brings forth a sense of vertical relief towards local migration.

From another perspective, Maha Maamoun established her signature for her *Cairoscapes* Series with horizontal shots capturing a strip of a woman's dress, specifically in what serves a commonly seen floral design against a backdrop of defragmented traffic. It is through this utopian-sought motif on a dress, amongst the pressures of urban environments, that the elongated coloured print can offer a mundane yet significant perspective on a social hubbub.

Nagla Samir's images are a fusion of her photography and graphic skills, and her work is right on the pulse of the street – she does not document the street so much as draw us off it, engaging us in her thought process and making us active participants of her inner discussion.

In the late 1990s, the institutional support previously available to young artists emerging from the Youth Salon began to be replaced by support from alternative sources. This development resulted in the rise and strengthening of non-commercial privately funded spaces also considered alternative-media spaces due to the support they began to provide to new and experimental projects. The Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum^{vii} and the Contemporary Image Collective (CiC)^{viii} are both examples of such initiatives. These organisations, alongside galleries supported by the Ministry of Culture such as Horizon One and Mahmoud Mokhtar Gallery, began nurturing a strong and emerging body of artists, coming out of not only the Cairo and Alexandria art scenes but also the performing arts scene from Minia, Beni Suef, and Qena.

vi Randa Shaath: *Under The Same Sky*, Cairo, Ed. Catherine David. Witte de With/ Fundacio Antoni Tapies (April 2, 2004)

vii Founded in 2005 by Artist Mona Marzouk and Critic Bassam El Baroni.

viii Founded in 2004 by a collective of Artists also a Board of Directors including

Heba Farid, Hala Elkoussy, Rana El Nemr, Maha Maamoun, Barry Iverson, Paul Geday and Thomas Hartwell.

ix Under the direction of Mohammed Allam

THE FOURTH WAVE

The fourth and last wave represented here is composed of students of the prevalent undercurrents, such as Ahmed El Shaer, George Azmy and Marwa Adel. One example of the success of these newly created partnerships between artists and innovative institutions and spaces is to be found in the work of Ahmed El Shaer, a prominent video art expressionist and instructor. He collaborates with Medrar^{ix}, a newly founded space for contemporary arts and emerging video artists. El Shaer combines video games with street scenes, overlapping congestion of the mind with the congestion of reality. What is usually disassociated as dreams and nightmares, formulates non-secular commentaries on social apathies in Egypt today. El Shaer's work is suggestive of the strength of the grandchild of the revolution who has not seen war but has heard the stories, played the video games and is conscious of the continuous allusion to it in the media.

Of the youngest of the fleet graduating from the Faculty of Fine Arts is George Azmy. He came to recognize his illustrations as comic narratives of the daily happenings in Cairo's swarming streets. His images occupy popular realities. Varying from street scenes of bridges, buses and crowds to obese self-portraits cloned over one another, allowing the commotion of the self to be repeated in daily contexts. Marwa Adel is one of the several young talents nurtured by some of the spontaneous initiatives by practicing artists to encourage and support the work of the youngest generation. Using her art as a form of escapism, she seeks an eternal element such as "universality" to maintain and preserve her outlook on existentialism. Involved in design and advertising, such elements are beautifully relayed in her combined photo and computer graphic prints. Fusing her words with her art, she seeks to unite her thought process in visual fragments.

Such artists are just a few examples of what might not have been conventionally encouraged by an official establishment, but have thrived alongside it nonetheless.

THE UNDERCURRENT

There is no doubt that without the early support of a Ministry of Culture as active and influential as Egypt's has been, the contemporary art scene today would not have developed in such diverse and energetic ways. Both the official support given to the arts by the Ministry over the years, and more recent development of alternative venues and art incubators have been crucial additions in the positioning of Egypt as one of the most exciting centres of contemporary art in the world today.

A recent work that won the Grand Prize at the Youth Salon in March 2009 is a good example of this perhaps unintended collaboration between official and unofficial sources of support for the arts. It is a video produced by two very young artists, Mohamed Zayan and Eslam Zein, entitled "80 Million". The video shows two men (themselves) performing on an instrument that is not there. Drumming fast with their hands to the rhythm of a Tabla, the sounds overwhelm the screen with a simple image of two young men in a semi-dark space zoning into a sense of a crowd, an overflowing current of sounds that reflect the population density in the city today. Such a work produced by two artists no older than 22, is a keen reflection on the type of critical arts that are yet to emerge from this new generation.

14.05.09 – Undercurrent has come to Dubai to serve the direction of this streaming traffic with works by twenty-nine artists offering bold and palpable narratives. The ideas encountered in this exhibition are suggestions as to the diverse body of works that can emerge from one country fused with a diversity of perspectives. This is a collective of artists' works that reflects their thoughts, tastes and desires as an example of what can come out from behind the scenes, from behind the surface currents and from behind the direction institutions tend to recognize them for. From within the country, a group of leading and emerging artists have decided to be a part of a collective show that will offer a resilient body of works under the theme of a "direction" or a "purpose" initiated by a historical foundation, and clued with a present-day reportage on what more can come out of contemporary arts in Egypt.

Aida Eltorie
Editor, Contemporary Practices

For references and further reading, please turn to page No. 125

THE ARTISTS

AHMED ASKALANY
AHMED EL SHAER
AHMED NAWAR
ARMEN AGOP
ATEF AHMED IBRAHIM
ATTIAT SAYED
EHAB ELLABAN
ESLAM ZEIN
ESSAM MAROUF
FATHI AFIFI
GEORGE AZMY
HANAFY MAHMOUD
HANAN EL SHEIKH
HAYTHAM NAWAR
HAZEM EL MESTIKAWY
HEND ADNAN
HOWAIDA EL SEBAEE
IBRAHIM EL DESSOUKI
KHALED SOROUR
MAHA MAAMOUN
MARWA ADEL
MOHAMED ABLA
MOHAMED AL FAYOUMI
MOHAMED ZAYAN
MOHSEN SHAALAN
NAGLA SAMIR
RANDA SHAATH
SOBHI GUERGUES
WAEEL DARWESH

AHMED ASKALANY

Born in 1978, Nag Hammadi, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Sculptor Ahmed Askalany is an artist who can rouse emotions and provoke thoughts from stone. His cheeky human and animal figures are a sassy fray into the genre, and the artist does not just display idealised figures, but shows them in all their gaseous and bloated glory. In a manner that pokes gentle fun at himself and others, Askalany's figures are the mirror image of his attitude to life. I like to bring happiness to people - there is no need to bring sadness.

His figures are cartoonish in their physicality. There is more lard in them than sinew. Corpulent and obese, they recline in ungainly poses. He strives to make an immediate connection with his audience. His sculptures, like toys with which they share a certain caricaturish joyfulness, speak up front. Askalany is not one for doing things simply for their inner meanings. His art is more a matter of the gut than the heart. He speaks directly. But his expressiveness does not stop there – there is also emotion in his work

Askalany's use of palm leaves and resin to show figures in prayer are profoundly moving. With a few deft weaves of the leaves, he envelops his figures in a sacred, spiritual aura. If he is influenced by Henry Moore's reclining figures, Adam Henein's depiction of animals and Rodin's physicality, Askalany is no less connected to the traditional materials and craft methods of ancient Egypt. Woven palm leaves and resin offer him an essential association with his native roots in Upper Egypt.

Humour is ever present in his creations. Askalany cocks a snook at the concept of the ideal human body. The heads on his figures are very small when compared to the bulbous bodies and hands, legs and bellies are swollen. I exaggerate the body to show that people use their muscles more than their brains. Most people are all power and no brain. An Askalany creature is Everyman who wants to make space for himself in a world that does not acknowledge his existence. He is the person who makes himself ridiculous because he does not have the wits to match his ambition. Therein lies the humour.

Askalany works mainly with four materials: polyester, palm leaves, bronze and stone. Every medium has a message - and I can say things with all media. He has his ear to the ground and his basic inspiration comes from people. He relates to life through everyday situations and his subjects come from all walks of life.

Askalany's short career has thus far been blessed with success. He won the best young artist award at the Cairo International Sculpture Biennial in 1998, claimed first prize for sculpture at the 10th Youth Salon in Cairo in 1999 and has been selected to represent Egypt at the 2009 Venice Biennial.

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SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 17.02.09 – Ahmed Askalany, Art Sawa, Dubai 2008 17.12.08 - Creative Expressions, Art Sawa, Dubai; Art Sawa, Art Paris Abu Dhabi art fair, Abu Dhabi; 22.10.08 – Opening, Art Sawa, Dubai 2007 What's Happening Now, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2006 Giardini Urbani, Galleria Magenta 52, Milan 2004 Delusion, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Musulmanes, Musulmans dans la Ville, Le Parc de la Villette, Paris 2003 Cairo Here, Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo 2002 Heaven and Earth's Evil, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Egyptian Faces, Doroub Gallery, Cairo; 5th Miniature Exhibition, Opera House, Cairo 2001 Cairo Modern Art, Circus Theatre, The Hague; Rat's Room and Other Tales, Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo 2000 12th Youth Salon, Opera House, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2009 17.02.09 – Ahmed Askalany, Art Sawa, exhibition catalogue 2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2005 Ahmed Askalany Sculpture, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo 2003 Carving out a Future, Cairo Times, vol. 7, issue 2; Ahmed Askalany, Sullivan, Francesca, Egypt's Insight Magazine, vol. 7, issue.1 2002 Personal Perceptions, Egyptian Reporter Magazine, vol. 7, issue 1 2001 In the Rat's Room, Cairo Times, vol. 5, issue 38 1999 Ahmed Askalany, a Spontaneous Artist from Upper-Egypt, Heliopolis Magazine, vol.5, issue 1

AWARDS

2004 Grant from the Egyptian Ministry of Culture 2000 First Salon Prize, 12th Youth Salon, Cairo 1999 Grant from the Cultural Palaces organisation, Cairo; Aida Abdel Karim Prize, Fine Arts Association, Cairo 1998 First Sculpture Prize, 10th Youth Salon, Cairo; Young Artist Prize, Cairo International Sculpture Biennial, Cairo

1 Donkey and Three Children, 2008, woven palm leaves and steel wire, 105 x 45 x 118 cm
2 Hens, 2008, woven palm leaves and steel wire, 38 X 20 X 35 cm and 40 X 20 X 43 cm



"Simplicity is my philosophy
– to convey the idea directly to the viewer without going into too much detail."

Ahmed Askalany



AHMED EL SHAER

Born in 1980, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Ahmed El Shaer completed his BFA in art education at the Helwan University of Cairo and works as a web and multimedia designer at the Ministry of Culture. His work is mainly in Video art and he has exhibited over twelve video films at national and international exhibitions and biennials, works for which he was awarded the Honorary and the First Award for Video Art at the Youth Salon. He has also received two grants from the Summer Academy for Fine Arts in Salzburg, Austria, the first one of these a nomination by renowned artist Mohamed Abla in 2006 and the second grant in 2007 with artist Vale Export. He has studied a new form of video art 'Machinima' (video game video art) with Chinese artist Fengmeng Bo, who chose him as Best Student in Class. His work forms part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art in Cairo.

CAIRO UNDER ATTACK

Cairo - the capital's long history and vocabulary are full of contrasts between the loaded historical neighbourhoods, the rich and the poor, and the indiscriminate inclusion of all in this huge city. Cairo Under Attack represents the internal aggression of people and pollution and Mtnaqdadtha. The first part builds on a combination of live video, the third dimension and video games, and the second part utilises a different visual as a parallel expression of the same concept.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 MidEast Cut, International festival for alternative film and video, Denmark & Finland; AllArtNow, 1st International Video Art Festival, Damascus; Final Exhibition of the Cairo - Alicante Media Art Workshop, Alicante Art Centre, Alicante, Spain 2008 Final Exhibition of the Cairo - Alicante Media Art Workshop, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Örebro International Videoart Festival, Curator/Programme: Contemporary Practices, Örebro; 3rd Bienal de Arte Contemporáneo de Sevilla (Biacs3), Curator: MEDRAR (Egypt) Within the region, Seville; Daleky Blizky Vychod, short film festival, Slovakia; The International Association of the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM), Bari; Dubai Art Fair, Video Art Programme curated by Contemporary Practices Magazine, SherifAwad, Dubai; SaidDarwishFestival, MahmoudMokhtarMuseum, Cairo; CairoAtelier, Salon for Egyptian Artists, Cairo; 19th Youth Salon, video art film Barcode, Cairo; Solo, Alcatraz Gallery, Summer Academy of Fine Arts, Salzburg 2007 Group Exhibition, Summer

Academy of Fine Arts, Salzburg; 2nd International Youth Salon, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria; After Urban, Videoart and architecture Festival, curator: Luca Curci, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Cairo Atelier, Salon for Egyptian Artists, Cairo; 1st Group Exhibition for Interactive Art, Mahmoud Mokhtar Museum, Cairo; 18th Youth Salon, video art film My Dream ... Your Dream, Cairo; Solo, Cairo Atelier, Cairo 2006 Group Exhibition, Summer Academy of Fine Arts, Salzburg; Solo, Alcatraz Gallery, Summer Academy of Fine Arts, Salzburg 2005 1st Video Art Festival, CIC, Cairo; 17th Youth Salon, video art film News Every Day, Cairo; Cairo- Alexandria, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria; Rateb Sediq Prize, Cairo Atelier, Cairo; Solo, Conversation, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2009 A Diverse Take on a Contemporary Urban Experience, Daily News, Egypt.

"Cairo Under Attack is the completion of my project of working with concepts from my society and with my technique of mixing live video and 3d elements."

Ahmed Al Shaer



Cairo Under Attack, 2008, video, 2.40 minutes.



AHMED NAWAR

Born in 1945, Gharbia, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Ahmed Nawar graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1967 and pursued his studies in Spain with a scholarship between 1971 and 1975, obtaining a professorship in Graphic Arts and Mural Painting from the San Fernando Academy in Madrid. From the very beginning, Nawar has been recognised as a genius of his age, a ground-breaking artist who has remained at the forefront because of a consuming need to discover, experiment and speak of his convictions through his art.

His artistic achievements, both individual and as part of the Axis group which he co-founded in 1981 to renew and energise the art scene in Egypt, have been outstanding, earning him prizes, awards and distinctions throughout the world. He holds the Egyptian State Order of Arts and Science (1979), a Nobel Gold Medal for his participation in the Nobel Commemorative Festival (1983), the Order of Merit of King Juan Carlos of Spain (1992), the French Order of Officer of Arts and Sciences (1995), The Medal of Honour of Russia (2006), to name but a few. His work is collected by individuals, museums and cultural institutions worldwide, including the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art in Cairo, the Spanish Museum of Modern Art in Madrid, the National Museum in Amman, the National Museum of Modern Art in Cracow, the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and countless others.

If his influential approach to art and his international recognition were not enough to confirm Nawar as a central figure in the development of the arts in Egypt, his official capacity would surely do so. He has been pivotal in the furthering of the arts, a tireless and selfless supporter of arts education, promotion and creativity. He has been the Head of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture's Sector for Plastic Arts since 1988 and, previous to that, had founded and directed the Faculty of Fine Art at Menia University. While Head of the Museums department of the Higher Council for Antiquities between 1994 and 1999, he was instrumental in the rescue of Nubian heritage in his role as General Supervisor of the Nubia Rescue Fund.

Like traditional aesthetic and plastic art values, the process of artistic creativity, throughout history, has been largely inspired by certain social, economic, political and spiritual circumstances. Since the beginning, not only has man been haunted by the absolute authority of a supreme, uncanny power but he has also been aware of the battle between good and evil. Such an eternal struggle between good and evil became a traditional aspect of life. The process of creativity, therefore, became the product of its age.



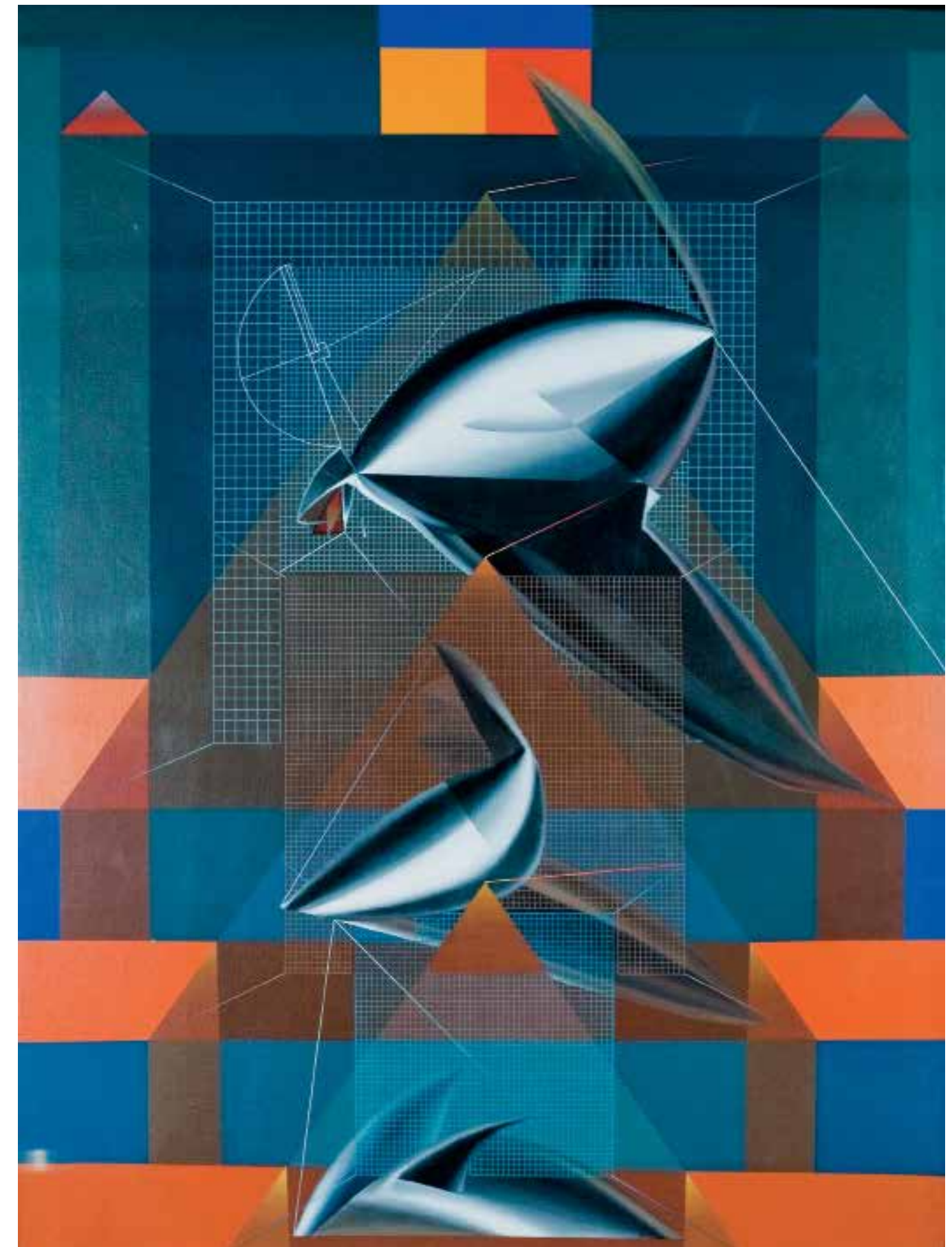
SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2003 50th Venice Biennial; 100 Artists, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria 2002 Solo, Palestine, 54 Years of Occupation, Zamalek Art Centre, Cairo; 25 Years, Zaalek Art Centre, Cairo; Victims of Upper Egypt Train, Al Ahram newspaper gallery, Cairo; Pioneer Photographers, Faculty of Fine Art, Cairo 2001 Egyptian Contemporary Art, Ebdaa Gallery, Cairo; Palestinian Intifada, federation of Arab Journalists, Cairo; Contemporary Egyptian Print, Cairo Atelier, Cairo; Generation 1, Diga Gallery, Cairo; Guest of Honour, El-Shouf International Symposium of Multimedia, Lebanon 2000 Solo, From Fayoum Portraits to Jabel Abou Ghoneim, Centre of Arts, Cairo, Picasso Gallery, Cairo; Grant Gallery, Cairo 1999 Guest of Honour, 4th Malta International Biennial, Malta; Solo, Museum of Modern Art, Vienna; Sketches, Droub Gallery, Cairo 1998 Solo, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Solo, Droub Gallery, Cairo; Solo, Jeddah Arts Atelier, Jeddah; Creative Artists, Picasso Gallery, Cairo 1997 Guest of Honour, 3rd International Art Biennial, Sharjah; Solo, Arts Centre, Cairo 1995 Egyptian Contemporary Art, Beirut 1994 Zamalek Extra Gallery, Cairo;

Solo, Cultural Council, Abu Dhabi 1993 Solo, Ismailia Centre for Plastic Arts, Egypt; Solo, National Council for Culture and Arts, Kuwait; Modern Art Museum, Rome 1992 1991 Solo, Spanish Cultural Centre, Cairo 1990 Solo, French Cultural Centre, Cairo 1989 Guest of Honour, Havana International Biennial, Havana; Solo, Akhenaton Gallery 4, Cairo; 1988 Solo, Arabesque Art Gallery, Cairo, and exhibitions with the Axis Group, Group-15, and participations in International Biennials in Paris, Venice, Cairo, ... since 1964.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

1998 Ahmed Nawar, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris 1997 Ahmed Nawar, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 1996 Melody of Peace and War, Bikar, Hussein 1995 Ahmed Nawar, Carmine Siniscalco 1994 The Peace of Forms, Strano, Carmelo 1992 War, Art and Peace, Al-Attar, Mukhtar, Al Mousawar magazine, Cairo 1976 Ahmed Nawar, Hierro, Jose, Nuevo Diario, Spain 1975 Ahmed Nawar of prizes is back in town, El Ideal Gallego 1974 Ahmed Nawar – An Egyptian painter



Further, the process of creativity developed into an attempt at seeking to explore and analyze its own essence, references and signs. Accordingly, under the traumatised change of human values, intellectual and creative aspirations underwent a state of restlessness. These human values, so deeply entrenched over centuries, were sought to deepen peace, prosperity and equality. These much-sought-after values were also conceived to reinforce man's freedom, sovereignty and his religious and political rights.

Such beliefs are at the very core of Ahmed Nawar's body of work, be it his painting, engraving, installations, architectural constructions and art for the public domain. He is often referred to as one of the few artists of the 'Egyptian Movement' who is able to practice 'thinking in art' and the belief that creativity is as much inspiration as it is a mental state.

His groundbreaking Trilogy, the graduation project that won him unanimous acclaim, incorporated mathematical and geometric shapes and Islamic inspired designs and patterns. He has been at the forefront of innovation ever since, combining oil painting with new developments in graphic art, installation and technologies such as video, laser and sound to bring his creations into being.

The triangle has accompanied him from the start, and is a strong leitmotiv of his work. His triangular muse traces its roots to the triangle of the Nile Delta, which is the source of the underlying rhythm and original myth of Egypt. When combined with the square, the inspiration of Islamic architecture, the resulting octagonal and star shapes take on a new significance and initiate a dialogue between geometric and physical figures. The seemingly inexhaustible permutations of the geometric shapes so central to his art over the years are testament to their enduring significance and inherent transformational qualities. They can in turn be representational of stars, screens, weapons or even simple pyramids, or be elements of composition, or convey a sense of movement – their pure beauty makes the possibilities endless.

A highly skilled graphic artist, his impressive technique and craft are heightened by a harmonious sense of composition and colour. The aesthetic value of his work is in no way overshadowed by his technical brilliance, but rather served by it, so that his emotional and intellectual inspiration carry his humanist message through.

and a unique artist, Ceretho, Antonio Martineth, La Graceto del Norte, Santander, Spain

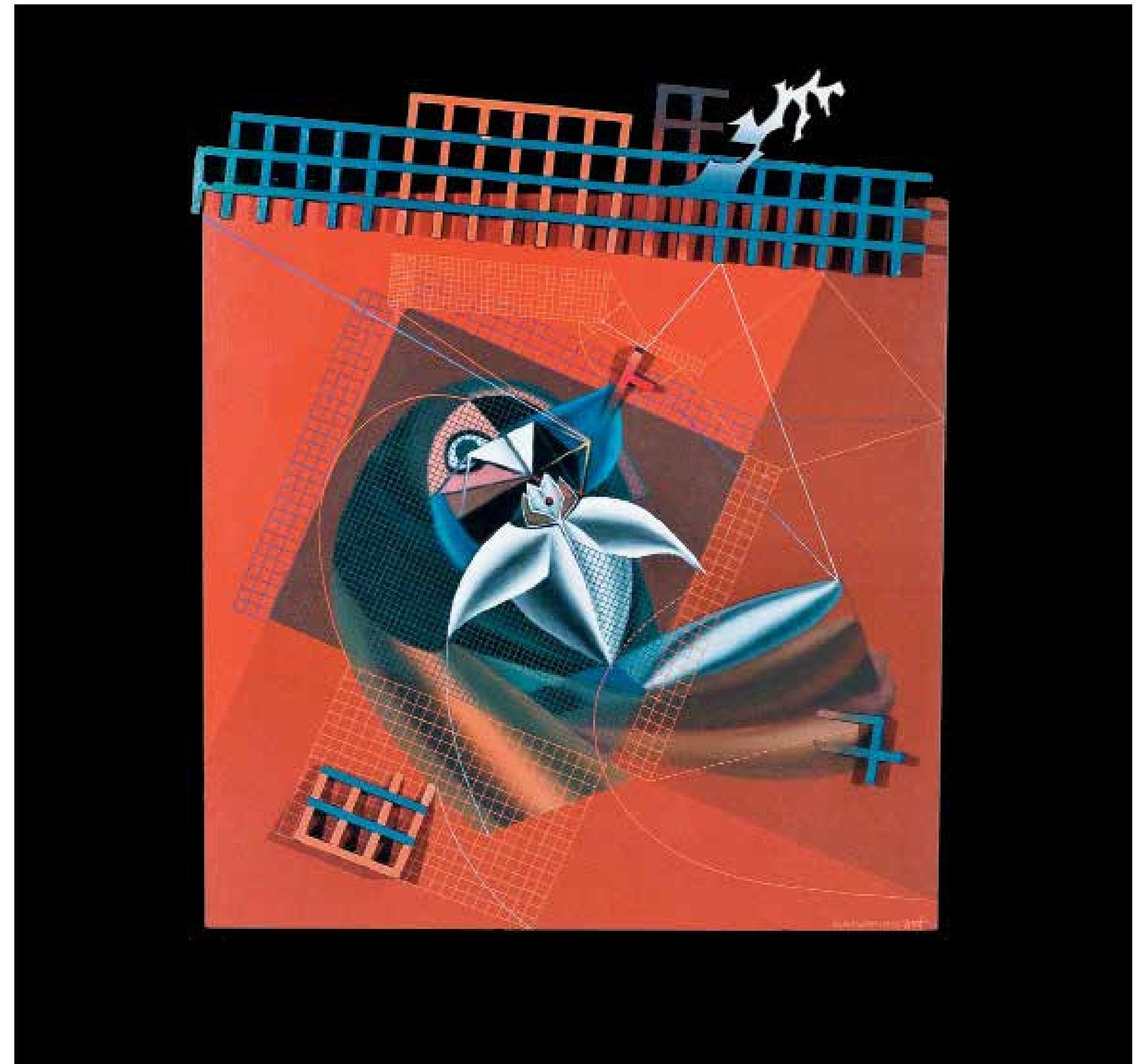
SELECTED ESSAYS

Ahmed Nawar: Art Prompts Will, Selim, Ahmed; Conversion from chessboard to physical mythology, Orabi, Dr. Assad; Unique techniques of Ahmed Nawar's world of symbols, Bakshish, Mahmoud; The world of Ahmed Nawar, Bahnassi, Dr. Afifi; Thinking and Talent, Romero, Dr. Manuel

SELECTED AWARDS & PRIZES

2003 Prize for distinguished Work for 21st Century Egypt, Beijing Biennial 1989 Graphics Prize, Friedrichshtad Triennial, Norway 1986 The Golden Sail Prize, Kuwait Print International Biennial; The International Selection Prize of the 40th Anniversary UNESCO Exhibition held in collaboration with the International Federation for Plastic Arts; The Honourary International Prize, 11th Cracow International Biennial for Graphic Art; Second Prize for graphic art, 2nd Cairo International Biennial 1984 First Prize for drawing, General Exhibition, Cairo 1982 Acquisition Prize, Conference staged

to commemorate great poets Hafez Ibrahim and Ahmed Shawki, Cairo; Third prize for drawing, Cairo 1980 Second prize, Painting Competition of Spanish Islands, Honourary Prize, Norwegian International Print Biennale 1979 The State Encouragement Prize 1978 First prize for graphics, Alexandria Biennial 1974 First prize for graphics, San Fernando Academy, Madrid, Spain; Second prize for painting, Small Painting & Sculptures Competition, Madrid 1973 Honourary prize for painting, Sargasso Biennale, Spain 1973 First prize for graphics, San Fernando Academy, Madrid; Third prize for painting, Pollensa International Competition, Spain 1972 First Prize for graphics, Alexandria Biennial 1971 Acquisition Prize, International Biennial of Sports, Barcelona 1968 First Prize for drawing, Ibiza International Biennale, Spain 1967 First prize for graphics, the Revolution Glories Exhibition, Cairo 1966 First prize, Youth Exhibition, Cairo; First prize for graphics, the Revolution Glories Exhibition, Cairo 1961 First prize for Painting, Tanta

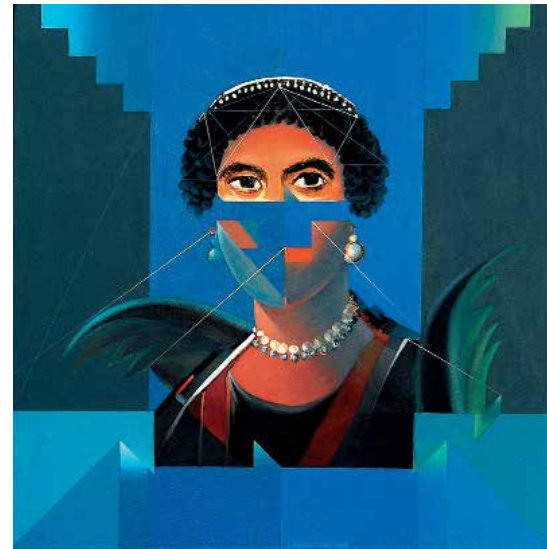


"Art does not limit itself to recording or documenting events. Art has established itself as a universal outcry and as a sign of condemnation. Ongoing conflict has prompted the production of outstanding works, which can be considered a chronicle and an expressive testimony to mankind's folly. There is no doubt that the collective will of artists, and their determination, will remain decisive weapons in the struggle to safeguard the future and to strengthen principles of justice, humanity, hopes and dreams."

Ahmed Nawar



3

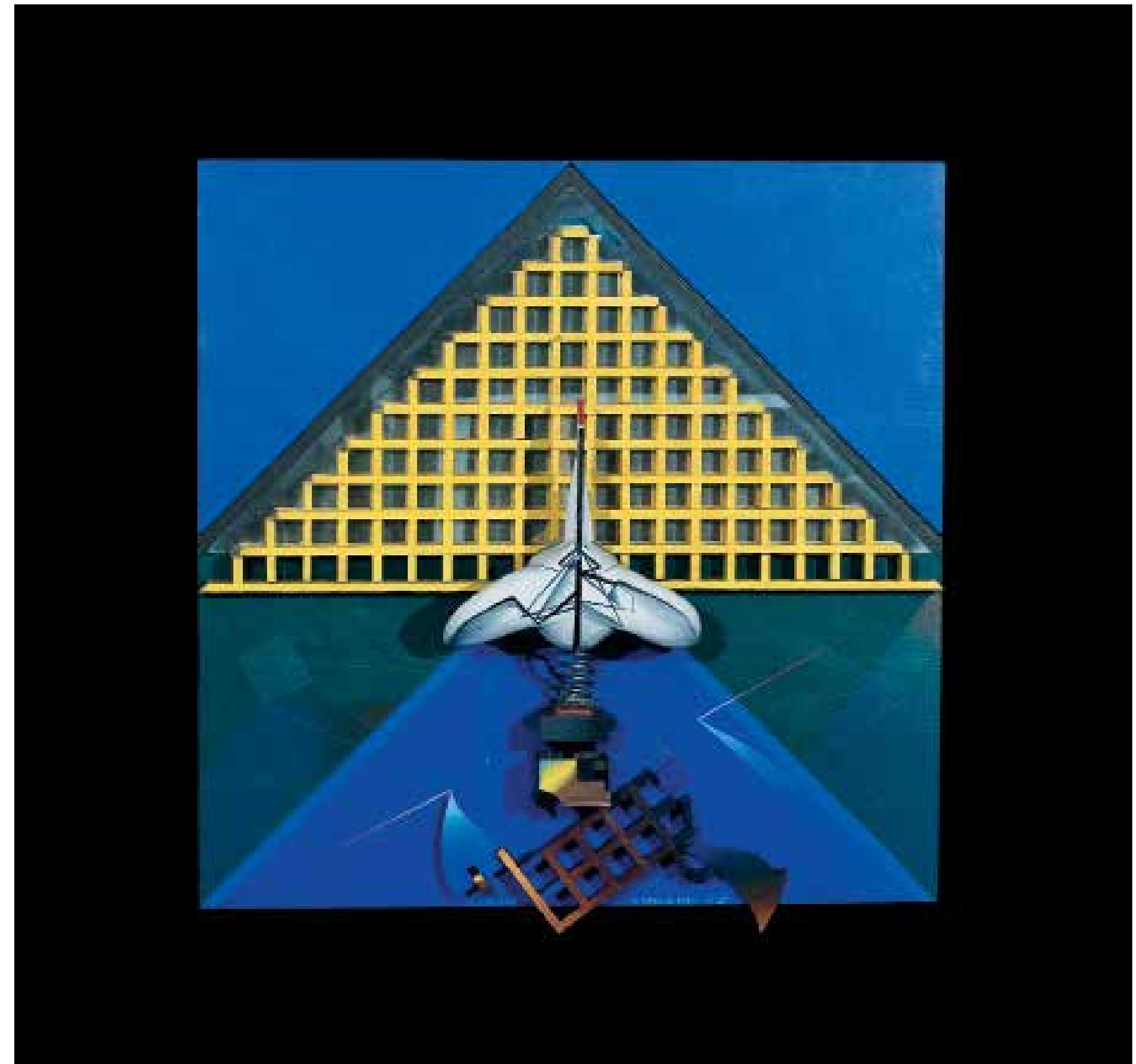


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5

- 1 Egypt 21st Century, 1996, mixed media (acrylic), 120 x 85 cm
- 2 Man & Energy (9), 1995, mixed media (acrylic and construct art), 60 x 60 cm
- 3 The Spirit of Civilisation A, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 cm
- 4 The Spirit of Civilisation B, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 cm
- 5 The Spirit of Civilisation C, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 cm
- 6 Man & Energy (7), 1994, mixed media (acrylic and construct art), 60 x 60 cm



6

ARMEN AGOP

Born in 1969, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Italy.

Armen Agop first apprenticed in the studio of artist Simon Shahrigian in Cairo before graduating from the sculpture department of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Helwan University, Cairo in 1992. He subsequently received an Assistant Researcher Scholarship from the Faculty of Fine Arts and taught there between 1997 and 2000.

Agop participated in many diverse shows throughout Egypt before receiving the State Prize of Artistic Creativity, "Prix de Rome", in 2000. After moving to Italy, he began to show at the National Gallery of Modern Art with the exhibition Diario degli artisti stranieri a Roma and has continued to show internationally ever since. He has participated in several international exhibitions such as the Guilin Yuzi Paradise International Sculpture Exhibition in China and the Toyamura International Sculpture Biennial in Japan, both in 2003, the Egyptian Contemporary Art Exhibition in Spain and the Bergen Fylkesgalleri Exhibition in Norway.

Agop's works are represented in the Egyptian Modern Art Museum in Cairo and the Open Air Museum in Aswan, the Open Air Museum of St Martin Park, Comblain-au-Pont, Belgium, and Coral Springs Museum of Art in Florida, USA.

In the hands of Armen Agop, sculptures speak a language of sensuality and curves. They are graceful both in form and movement, while articulating their own individuality. Peaks and ridges give way to curves and sinews. When the peaks are pronounced they lend a clear sharpness to the composition and when they are a mere suggestion, the piece takes on a softer, more peaceful tone.

A Sufi spirit is expressed within the dense and strong character of each essential form. In quiet confidence they sit, content within themselves, making no requests. Each work is complete and yet they exemplify a unifying thread that runs through all Agop's work - a thread that melds conviction, austerity and optimism.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 Rosa Parks Museum, Montgomery, Alabama, USA 2008 Cairo International Biennial, Cairo; Solo, Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo; Salon Gallery 2, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2007 Veksolund, Vekso, Denmark; Rassegna Internazionale D'arte Contemporanea, Sulmona, Italy 2006 Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo; Veksolund, Vekso, Denmark 2005 Solo, Centre of Art Ekhnaton I Gallery, Cairo; Lo Spirito della Pietra, Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome; Egyptian Contemporary Art, Toledo, Spain; Solo, Centro Culturale L. Russo, Pietrasanta, Italy 2004 Palazzo Pretorio, Volterra, Italy 2003 Bergen Fylkesgalleri, Bergen, Norway; Galleri Stensalen KKV-Bohuslan, Sweden; Toyamura International Sculpture Biennial, Japan 2002 State Prize of Artistic Creativity Exhibition, Egyptian Academy, Rome; Scultori dalla Provincia di Lucca, Florida International University, Miami, USA 2001 Winter Art Festival, Sarajevo; Young Egyptian Artists, Egyptian Academy, Rome; National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome

AWARDS

2008 K.V. Bohuslan Stone Grant, Sweden 2006 Artist In Residence, Coral Springs Museum of Art, Florida, USA 2001 Second Prize, Biennale Internazionale d'Arte Contemporanea di Firenze, Italy 2000/2001 "Prix de Rome" Premio Statale Per La Creatività Artistica, Cairo/Roma 1998 Sculpture prize, Autumn Salon, Cairo, Egypt

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Salon Gallery 2, exhibition catalogue, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Other, 11th Cairo Biennial, Cairo; Armen Agop, Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo 2007 Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 2006 Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo 2005 Armen Agop, Edizione Monte Altissimo, Pietrasanta, Italy; Modern Egyptian Art 1910-2003, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo; Arte Egipcio Contemporánea En Toledo, Spain



- 1 Untitled 3, 2008, bronze, 114 x 38 x 24 cm
- 2 Untitled 2, 2008, bronze, 102 x 24 x 24 cm
- 3 Untitled 1, 2008 bronze, 65 x 21 x 11 cm



2

"Simplicity is very complicated."

Armed Agop



3

ATEF AHMED IBRAHIM

Born in 1969, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Atef Ahmed Ibrahim completed a License in Education and Arts in 1995, followed by a Diploma in Folklore from the Arts Academy in 1999. He was granted a full scholarship by the Ministry of Culture of Egypt in 2001-2009.

His work appears in private collections in the United Kingdom, Holland and Germany, as well as in public institutions in Egypt, such as the Ministry of Culture, the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art, the Cultural Development Fund and Tanta University.

Ibrahim's work includes a study on tattoos as a method of expression in folk art, stage design for theatre, workshops and participation in documentary films. He is a member of the Cairo Atelier, of the Egyptian Society of Folk Arts and of the Syndicate of Plastic Artists.

IN HIS WORDS

I began with painting and am now experimenting with combining aspects of painting and photography to develop a new form of surface expression. I layer a chromatic treatment over the techniques and materials of photographic prints on paper, wood and canvas. My style encompasses abstractions and figures and often blends the two. At the source of my work is the Egyptian character and person, who, though seen in his local element, is connected through the meeting of minds and ideas with others. This is a dialogue between coeval forces, sharing the same era and the same instinct to break out from the traditional.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 Egyptian Art, Kazakhstan 2007 Solo, Cairo Atelier, Mohamed Nagi Gallery, Cairo; International Tashkent Biennale, Tashkent; Al Madina, Ebdaa Art Gallery, Cairo; The First International Symposium For Artists Books, Cairo Atelier, Cairo; Self Portrait, Ahmed Shawky Museum, Cairo; Agenda Exhibition, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria 2006 Family photography, Marcilya, Al Azm Palace, Damascus 2005 Salon of Cairo Atelier (2005-2008), Cairo; Plastic Vision, Hanager Art Centre, Cairo; The Mediterranean Festival - Artists in Town, Mahmoud Said Museum, Alexandria 2004 Solo, Future Library, Heliopolis; 5th Nile Salon of Photography, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Glimpse of Coeval Egyptian Art, Journalists Syndicate, Egypt; Frankfurt International Book Fair, Frankfurt 2003 Solo, Cairo Atelier, Mohamed Nagi Gallery, Cairo; Solo, Centre of Arts, Akhenaton Gallery no. 5, Cairo Nitaq Festival of Art, Cleopatra Hotel, the Consulate of Italy, Cairo

Also

Regular participant in the National Exhibitions for Plastic Arts and the Youth Salons at the Opera House, Palace of the Arts, Egyptian Modern Art Museum, between 1999 and 2008. Regular participant in the Salon of Small Art Works, Akhenaton Gallery, Cairo, between 1998 and 2003. Participated in the Luxor ceremonies in 1999 and the Cultural Exchange in Doha, Qatar in 1997.

AWARDS

2004 Third prize, 5th Nile Salon for experimental photography 2001 Third Prize, 13th Youth Salon 1997 Arbitration committee prize, 9th Youth Salon 1995 First Prize, Higher Council for Youth
1991 Third Prize, Higher Council for Youth
And several other awards, prizes, medals and merit certificates.

“The ability to persevere in life stems from the ability to express feelings and thoughts through Art. It is a means of finding an alternative to the material life. Excluded people and human ideas are what most stimulate my desire to express myself.”

Atef Ahmed Ibrahim

- 1 Raheel (Departure), 2008, oil on wood, 200 x 90 cm
- 2 Tawahod (Lonely), 2008, oil on wood, 120 x 180 cm
- 3 Mokabalah (Meeting), 2008, oil on wood, 120 x 180 cm





2



3

ATTIAT SAYED

Born in 1935, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Following obtaining her Diploma of Fine Arts from the High Institute of Art Education in Cairo in 1958, Attiat Sayed spent her working career as a press illustrator journalist at Cairo's daily newspapers Al Gomhuria (The Republic) and Al Masaa (The Evening). She then devoted herself full time to painting and developed her artistic experience ever since.

Sayed's approach to painting is one of exploitation and organic development. She never begins a painting with a finished image in mind, but rather discovers every detail, line, colour and volume by altering, replacing, deleting and adding according to the cues uncovered by this experimental process. The result is a surprising, unexpected form, that generates new relationships of colours and lines which endows her work with exaggerations and distortions, departing considerably from the actual real features of her models, objects and landscapes.

Sayed's enriching blend of perspectives, vectors and lines in the very same painting is reminiscent of the different narrative lines in a modern novel. The richness of her palette in both her oil paintings and gouache colours doesn't leave much room for lyrical pastel effects, but her contrasting strong colours take her painting beyond realism, into a daring exploitation of the profound element of dramatic imagination.

Artist Sayed excels in line-drawing, engraving, etching and experimentation with black and white techniques, such as using charcoal and black oil pastel, owing to her long experience as a press illustrator during which she depicted and interpreted short stories, poems, novels and portraits with special mastership of her drawings. She usually paints at a continuous non-stop pace, which requires huge psychic and physical energy and is testimony to her extraordinary ability for giving in a flow of inventive distortions.

- 1 Bikes, 2009, oil on canvas, 150 x 130 cm
- 2 Untitled 5, 2009, oil pastel, 35 x 50 cm
- 3 Untitled 4, 2009, oil pastel, 35 x 50 cm
- 4 Untitled 3, 2009, oil pastel, 35 x 50 cm
- 5 Bottles, 2003, oil on canvas, 130 x 80 cm



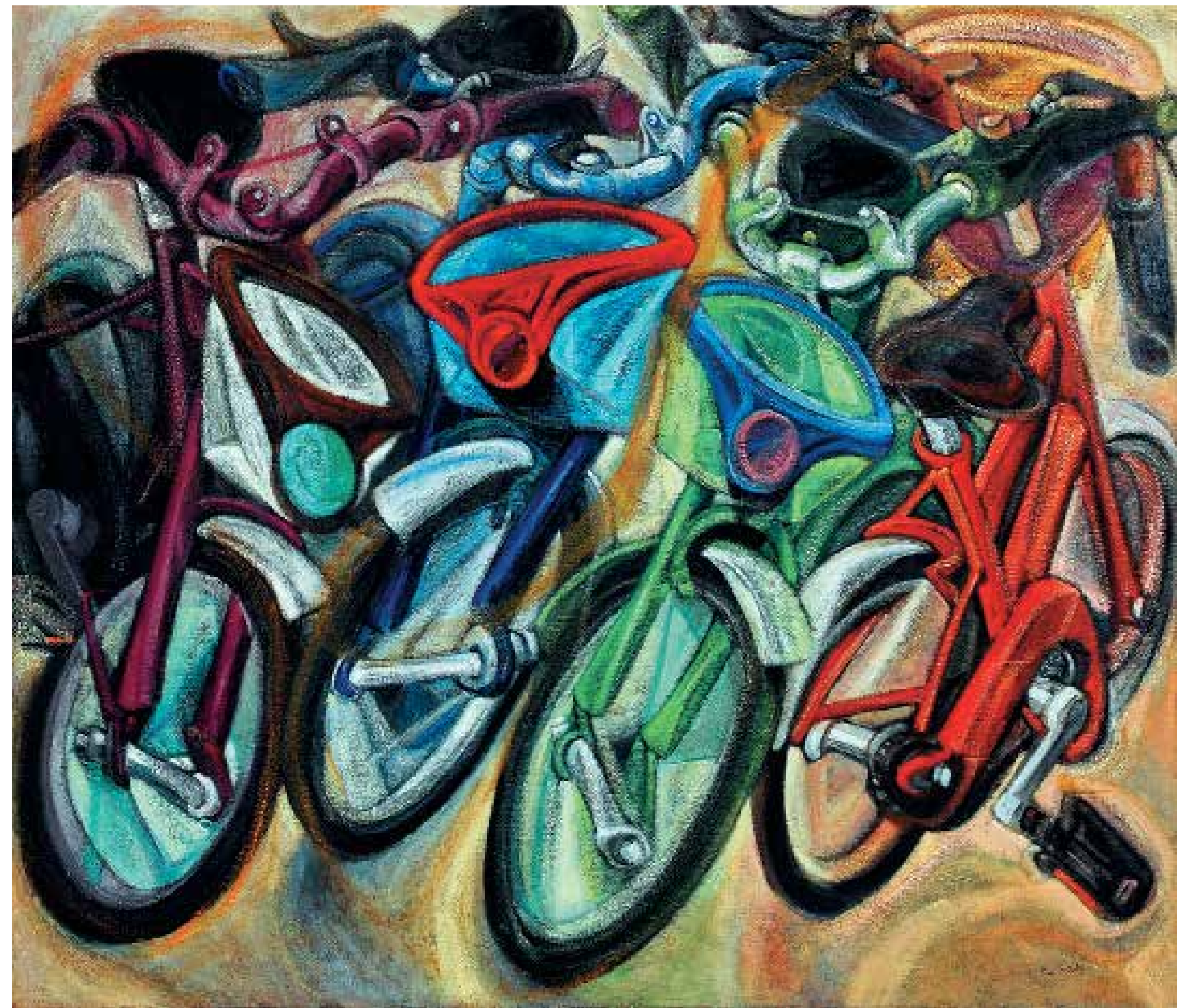
SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2006 Landscape, Two Visions, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art, Dubai Cultural Council, Dubai 2005 Still Life, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; A Flight with an Earthly Wing, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art, Seoul 2004 Egyptian Contemporary Art, Beijing 2002 Yearning for Inspiring Shapes, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo 2000 Four Aspects of the Pyramid, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo

Participations in several collective exhibitions of women artists between 1970 and 2000 and exhibitions at Al-Gumhuria newspaper's gallery.

MEMBERSHIPS

Member, Egyptian Press Syndicate, since 1960,
Founder member, Egyptian Syndicate of Plastic Artists, since 1976.



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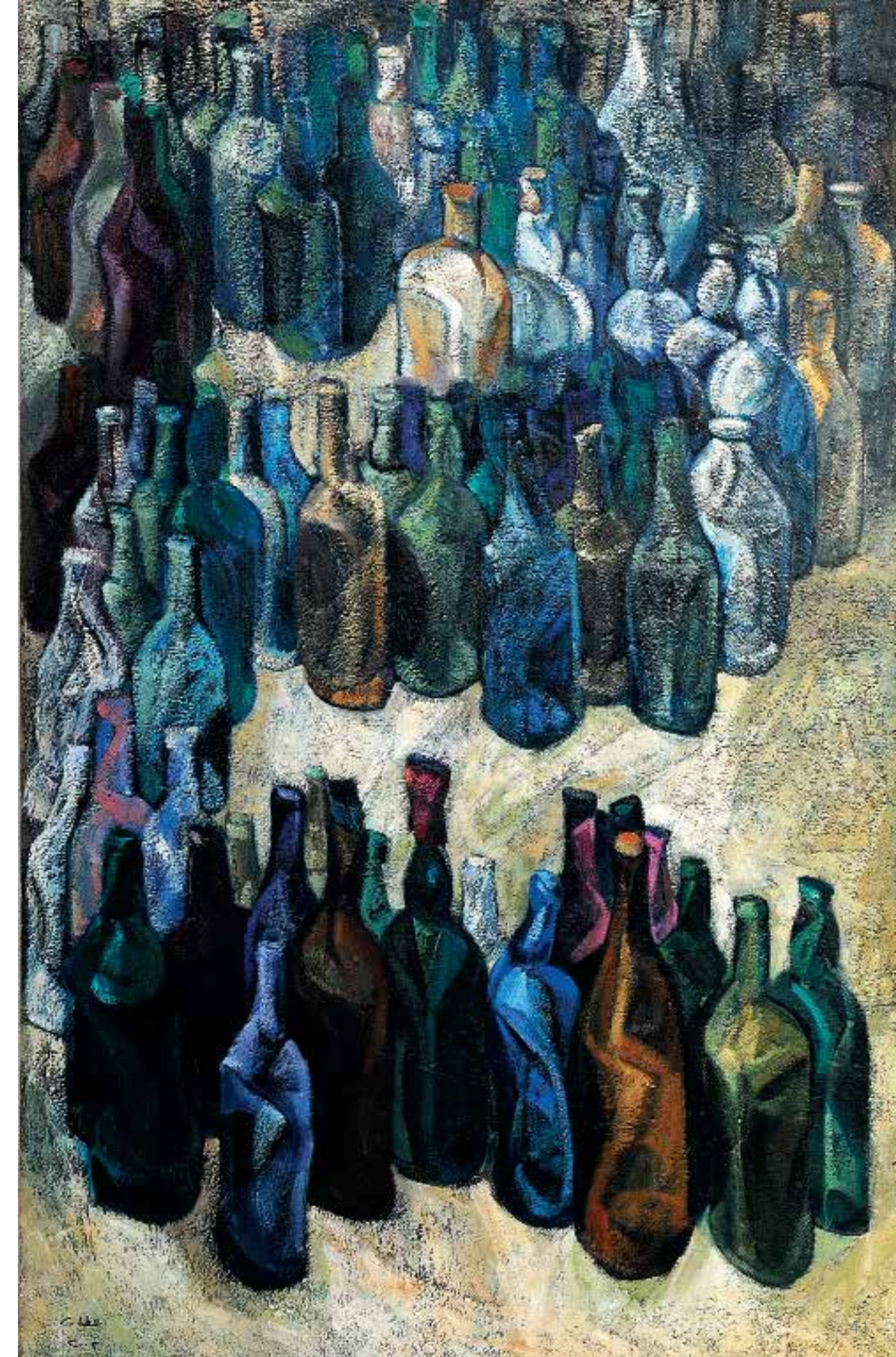
“The private creation process is a unique adventure in transforming inner anxiety into a tangible visual scene, a pressing experiment that must continue until it becomes a deep rooted habit, contrasting with the temporal or occasional decorative or just loose smearing of paint.

The genuine creative practice is therefore a hard, extended routine of anxiety and tension, that can only end in becoming a renewed inner taut movement, a fire that is never extinguished. Its climax is a newly created art work, the crystallisation and fusion of the inner soul of the artist and the outer visual world.

This process is therefore highly psychic, generous and sacrificing, always experimental and envisioning. It condenses the visual scene of the private soul, until the incarnation of this inner soul becomes a tangible thumbprint of the artist’s self in a work that is simultaneously scrupulous and definitive, yet vague and hazy.”

Attiat Sayed

5



EHAB ELLABBAN

Born in 1976, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Ehab Ellaban graduated in Fine Arts from Helwan University in 2000 and began his career as a sculptor while teaching at the Faculty of Arts in Cairo. He works as an independent artist and, since 2005, has served as the Director of the Horizon One Gallery, part of the Fine Arts Sector of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture. In this position, his responsibilities have included curating a number of exhibitions of Egyptian and international artists, photographers and sculptors and participation in the annual editions of the Egypt Salon and the Egyptian Youth Salon. In 2008/2009 he became the youngest ever Director of the 11th session of the Cairo International Biennial and a member of the Jury for the mural competition of the 19th Youth Salon. Between 2002 and 2005, Ellaban was the Director of Artistic Programming at the Palace of Arts in Cairo where he curated several exhibitions and participated in curating the Cairo International Biennial and the First Salon of Sculpture.

Drawing inspiration from age-old statuary traditions, Ellaban pronounces heights, shapes and lengths in a disproportionately exaggerated way. Although his work is a play on volumes, his attachment to purity of form maintains a link with the more traditional expression of classical Egyptian statuary art. This particularity won him a selection to participate in the Aswan International Sculpture Symposium, an event that offers sculptors the opportunity to work with granite for the first time, in the traditions of pharaonic sculptors.

Ellaban's sculptures are represented in private collections and in public spaces in Egypt, such as the Kaitbay Citadel in Alexandria and the open Air Museum in Aswan, as well as in Rotia Montana in Romania.



Woman, 2007, bronze, 70 x 70 x 15 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 Egyptian Sculpture in Serbia 2008 3rd Beijing Biennial, Beijing 2006 Accommodation Fellowship and Exhibition, Cité des Arts, Paris; First International Sculpture Symposium, Romania; First International Sculpture Symposium, Kuwait 2005 Exhibition of the Grand Prix de Rome winning artists, Rome 2004 Celebration of the Egypt-Italy Cultural Year Exhibition, Rome; Ninth Aswan International Sculpture Symposium, Aswan; Programme for International Visitors, Art, USA 2003 Sixth Small Art Works Exhibition, Cairo, Egypt;

First Prize for Sculpture, 15th Youth Salon, Cairo; Eighth International Symposium of Sculpture, Aswan 2002 5th Small Art Works Exhibition, Cairo; Grand Prize, 14th Youth Salon, Cairo 2001 4th Small Art Works Exhibition, Cairo; Jury Prize, 13th Youth Salon, Cairo; 27th National Exhibition for Fine Arts, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Oum Kalsoum, The Fourth Pyramid, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

ESLAM ZEIN & MOHAMED ZAYAN

ESLAM ZEIN

Born in 1988, Shoubra, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

IN HIS WORDS

I love all arts, contemporary or other, going to exhibitions and shows as they contribute to my artistic and thought development, and participating in workshops for all forms of plastic arts, but above all, I adore my work in the field of video art. I love singing and acting and often sit alone imagining what my future may be. My favourite pastime is listening to music, especially to Mohammed Monir and watching video art films.

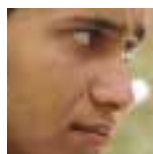
I am a transparent and pure person, and this shows in my work. I like to represent ordinary and popular people and to do so simply and directly.

I hope that I will always have the opportunity to show my work in an open environment with no limitations or conditions, that my work reaches audiences throughout the world and that I continue to progress so that I may be an honour to myself, my family and my nation.

MOHAMED ZAYAN

Born in 1987, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Although only recently exhibiting, Zayan has shown his video art at several events. In 2007, he participated in a video art workshop at Passage 35, showing his resulting work *The Dream*, and his video *Soldier in your soldiers* was given a public showing. In that year he also came Second in the Video Art Category at the Salon of the Higher Institute of Applied Arts. In 2008, his video-media installation *The Hole* was shown at the 1st International Media Art Forum for Youth (IMAFY) in Cairo and he came First in the Video Art Category at the Salon of the Higher Institute of Applied Arts. His participation in the Salon was under the supervision of Passage 35.



Eslam Zein and Mohamed Zayan are very recent graduates of the Higher Institute of Applied Arts. Their video co-operation, *80 Million*, won the Grand Prize at the 20th edition of the Youth Salon in Cairo in March 2009.



80 MILLION

An attempt to focus on aspects of the Egyptian environment and to transfer these aspects into a rhythmic and visual expression.

1



80 Million, 2009, video, 3 minutes and 30 seconds

ESSAM MAROUF

Born in 1958 in Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works between Egypt and the Netherlands.

Essam Marouf graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts' Painting section of the Helwan University in Cairo in 1981. He pursued his art studies between 1982 and 1985 at the Accademia di Bella Arte, Painting section in Rome, before moving to Amsterdam in 1986. His works are represented in the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art in Cairo, the ING Bank Collection and other public and private collections in Egypt, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Switzerland, Kuwait, South Africa, the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Australia.

Marouf's works are characterised by clear precision of form and the absence of any visible references to paint texture. Yet, a degree of sensitivity is expressed in the face, aided by the application of clear tones and the way in which the canvass' structure is suggested. Marouf's works are solidly two-dimensional, maintaining minimal anatomy and an essentially Byzantine frontality. Essam Marouf has succeeded in pushing the limits of portraiture, resulting in truly contemporary painting.

- 1 #0201, 2008, acrylic on linen, 230 x 195 cm
- 2 Detail, #EM0109, 2008, acrylic on linen, 230 x 195 cm
- 3 #EM0109, 2008, acrylic on linen, 230 x 195 cm
- 4 #0902, 2008, acrylic on linen, 150 x 195 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 11th Cairo International Biennial, Cairo; 17.12.08 - Creative Expressions, Art Sawa, Dubai; 12.11.08 - Same story... different people, Art Sawa, Dubai; Art Sawa, Art Paris Abu Dhabi art fair, Abu Dhabi; 22.10.08 - Opening, Art Sawa, Dubai; Oum Kalsoum, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Salon Gallery 2, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Art Amsterdam, Galerie Smarius, Sonnega, Netherlands 2007 L'uomo del Mediterraneo, Museo Complesso del Vittoriano, Rome; Solo, Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo (Also 2006, 2001, 1998, 1997, 1995, 1993, 1991); Solo, Galerie Smarius, Sonnega 2006 Solo, Galerie Smarius, Sonnega 2004 Galerie Witteveen, Amsterdam 2002 Op de Huid Gekeken, SBK - Kunsthal de Remise, Amsterdam 1998 Eeuwig Kwetsbaar, Provinciaal Museum Begijnhofkerk St. Truiden,

Belgium 1995 One Hour Art, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam 1993 Kleine werken, Grote Dromen, Beurs van Berlage, Amsterdam 1989 Solo, Nile Gallery, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Other, 11th Cairo International Biennial, Cairo; Same story... different people, exhibition catalogue, Art Sawa, Dubai; Oum Kalsoum, The Fourth Pyramid, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Salon Gallery 2, exhibition catalogue, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2006 Essam Marouf, Galerie Smarius, Kunst van de Dag, exhibition brochure, Sonnega; Herinneringsportretten van Essam Marouf, Leeuwarder Courant, exhibition brochure 1993 Essam Marouf, Mashrabia Gallery, exhibition catalogue, Cairo





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"Painting... a magnificent medium to express myself... A magnificent way to build, in all freedom, my own and different world. With minimalism in form and colour, I try to give my paintings inner power and spiritual energy. These are the two factors that give paintings - in my eyes - their inconceivable power. This manner of seeing painting began over 25 years ago, when, while studying in Italy, I saw and fell in love with the work of the great masters, Giotto and Piero della Francesca."

Essam Marouf



FATHI AFIFI

Born in 1950, Sayeda Zeinab, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Fathi Afifi obtained his diploma of Technical Secondary Schools in 1968 and qualifications in Fine Arts in 1974, 1975 and 1981. He was a specialist technician in military factories and has worked committedly with the General Workers Union in the field of theatrical stage design. He has overseen the establishment of the Department of Fine Arts for the General Federation of Youth and has painted murals for the Minerals and Engineering industries. His involvement in industry has greatly influenced the direction of his work.

He has participated in numerous exhibitions and biennials, both in Egypt and internationally, and won the award for the 7th Cairo International Biennial.

His works are represented in private and public collections, such as the Museum of Egyptian Contemporary Art in Cairo, the Conference Centre in Nasr City, and in the city of Graz in Austria.

Afifi is a talented painter and draughtsman who began his journey in art in the mid-eighties, painting the daily routine of workers, showing factories, machines and tools and unsparingly expressing the weariness of his subjects. His power of observation, occasional nostalgia and the empathy he so clearly feels towards his fellow Cairenes as they go about their daily lives of work and family, tragedies and festivities, results in a powerful translation of his own memories and understanding of his environment.

Work and labourers feature strongly in Afifi's art. With the rise of Egypt's ambition to become an industrialised and powerful nation, labour, industry and the machine took on huge value and in Afifi's art, labourers are the heroes who realise this ambition. Many Egyptian artists in the 1960s were heavily influenced by images of machinery, cranes, gigantic metallic structures and industry, representing these images in their art or producing art generated by their new found understanding of welding and industrial techniques. Afifi, through his experience of working in military factories, among molten iron, huge pipes, steam, extreme heat and grinding sound had his own unique view of the world of industry and labour. His art reflects his compassion and empathy for the men at the centre of this industrialised world, and avoiding pathos, his work is a lyrical homage to these men.

- 1 Untitled 2, 2007, oil on canvas, 194 x 150 cm
- 2 Untitled 3, 2008, oil on canvas, 100 x 150 cm
- 3 Untitled 1, 2008, mixed media on canvas, 100 x 150 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 Colors of Art, Zara Gallery, Amman; 2nd Festival of Fine Creation, Cairo 2007 In Frame, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; Solo, Alley and Factory, Gougan Gallery, Cairo 2006 Egyptian Contemporary Art, Romanian National Museum, Bucharest; Identity, Karma Ibn Hanees Cultural Centre, Ahmed Shawky Museum, Cairo; Solo, Arts Hall, Dokki, Egypt; 2005 Metro- boulot - dodo, Zara Gallery, Amman; 29th National Exhibition for Fine Arts, Cairo (also 2003, 1999); Still Life, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo 2004 1st Black & White Drawing Salon, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo 2002 The Wedding Party, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo 1999 Solo, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo 1998 7th International Cairo Biennial (Jury Award), Cairo; Solo, Cairo Atelier, Cairo (also 1995, 1994, 1993, 1988, 1986); 1997 Solo, Museum of Egyptian Modern Art, Cairo; 1st Exhibition, Private rooms, Egypt

Gallery, Berlin 1996 International Havana Biennial, Havana ; Solo, Cairo- Berlin Gallery, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art, Mexico City

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007 Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 2005 Passions, Wahbeh, Ica, The Canvas Guide, Canvas Magazine, Issue 4, Volume 1, Dubai 2002 Egypt, my Egypt, Al-Ahram Weekly (May)

MEMBERSHIPS

Union of Writers and Artists Cairo Atelier, Ahlia Art Society, the Fine Artists Association and Artists of Al-Ghury Agency.



"I rely on the truth to remain free from traditional formulations. It is the original source that enables an artist to distinguish himself from the traditional, or from a form of creativity that is essentially copied, and it is that original source that imbues a character with its novelty, originality and distinctiveness."

Fathi Affi



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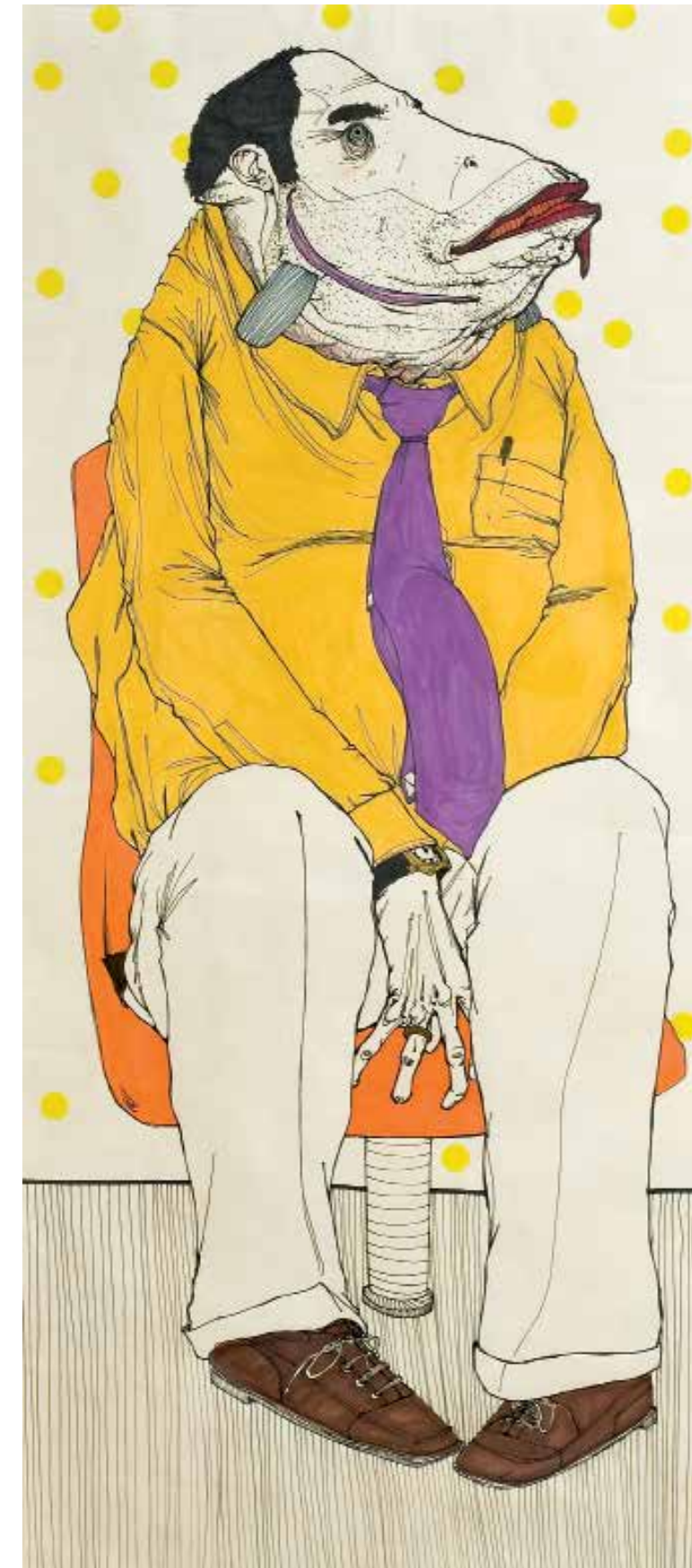
GEORGE AZMY

Born in 1983, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

George Azmy is an Egyptian illustrator based in Cairo. During his bachelor years at the Fine Arts Faculty of Helwan University in Cairo, Azmy worked in several design houses, which established him as a reputed graphic designer on graduation. He was later awarded the Cannes Lion and Clio advertising awards for his art direction at several global advertising agencies.

In 2007, he held his first solo exhibition Planet Cairo, followed by a group exhibition Breaking Boredom, both held at the Townhouse Gallery in Cairo.

Azmy is also a prominent stand up comedian and his skits feed off the sharp observational skills that he employs in his art work. Spanning subjects from the day to day bureaucracies of a city, to the most intimate details of a young man's life, Azmy's work is as darkly humoured as it is deeply insightful.



1 Untitled 2, 2009, drawing, 107 x 46 cm
2 Untitled 1, 2008, drawing, 150 x 90 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS
2008 Solo, Planet Cairo, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Breaking Boredom, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS
2008 In the Arab World Now, Bousteau, Fabrice, Enrico Navarra Gallery, Paris

HANAFY MAHMOUD

Born in 1970, Al-Wady Al-Gadid, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Hanafy Mahmoud received his B.A. in Art Education with honours in 1993. He was a researcher at the faculty of Art Education at Helwan University in Cairo between 1997 and 2002 and has been teaching at the Faculty since 2002.

The work of Hanafy Mahmoud demonstrates the artist's deeply felt engagement with some of the central issues of existence and the meaning of life. Fundamental to his art is the close observation of the sensual and psychological dimensions of humankind.

His paintings consist of life size individual figures or groups of men and women, often nude, set against dream-like backgrounds. He breaks with tradition in his use of surfaces and materials and the result is truly individual and untraditional.

IN HIS WORDS

Many faces moving here and there, in a mass of expressions and silent eyes. Faces frowning but expressing intensely what thoughts are going on inside this external border. This deep-seated silence that is simultaneously intense and loudly expressive preoccupies, affects and influences me a great deal.

The prime source of my inspiration in my works is the human condition and the events that surround it.

The crowded street, public transport packed with silent, frowning faces filled with expressions of refusal and objection and discontent, this affects me. All that is related to the social, political or economic situation of man.

Humanity is pivotal to my works and my concerns.

- 1 Same Face C, 2009, oil on canvas, 155 x 155 cm
- 2 Two, 2009, mixed media on plexiglass, 100 x 140 cm
- 3 One, 2009, mixed media on plexiglass, 100 x 140 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

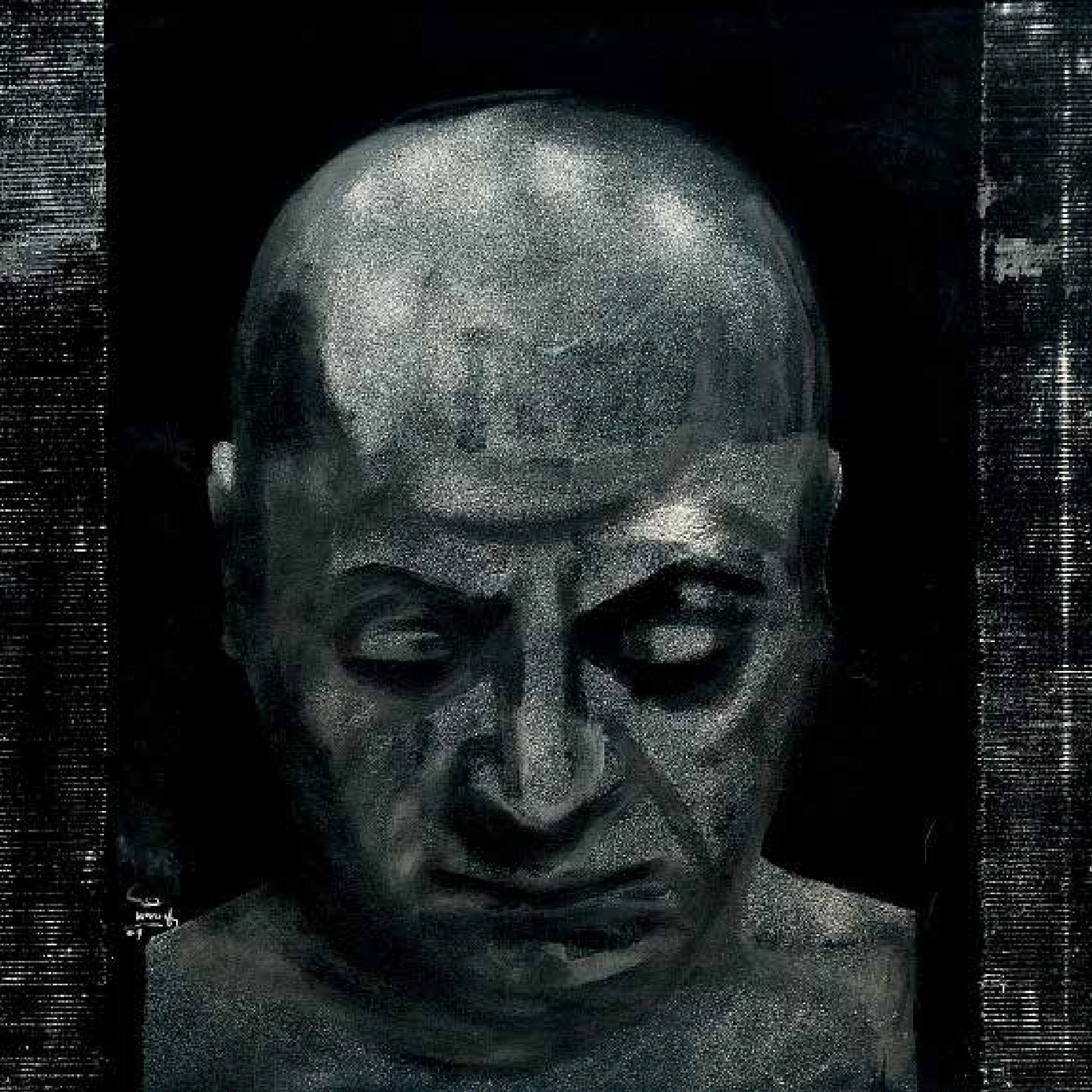
2009 Solo, Ebdaa Art Gallery, Cairo 2008 11th Cairo International Biennial, Cairo; 17.12.08 - Creative Expressions, Art Sawa, Dubai; Art Sawa, Art Paris Abu Dhabi art fair, Abu Dhabi; 22.10.08 - Opening, Art Sawa, Dubai; Salon Gallery 2, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Festival of Art Creativity, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; The International Day of the Environment, Artistic View, Sa'ad Zaghloul Cultural Centre, Cairo 2007 Festival of Art Creativity, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Solo, Khalifa Gallery, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Egipto Artes Plásticas, Alicante, Spain 2006 Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Dubai Cultural Council, Dubai 2005 29th National Exhibition for Fine Arts, Cairo; Solo, Ekhnaton Galleries 4A, 4B and 6, Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo; Ramadaniat, Cairo Atelier, Cairo 2004 Frankfurt International Book Fair; Youth Salon, Cairo (also in 2004, 2003, 2002, 2000, 1999, 1997, 1995); Solo, Rateb Sedik Gallery, Cairo Atelier, Cairo; Light of the Shape, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2003 28th National Exhibition for Fine Arts, Cairo 2002 Solo, Karim Francis Gallery, Cairo 2000 Solo, Hanafy Mahmoud Mohammed, Akhenaton Gallery (4) Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo; Salon of Miniature Works of Art (also in 1998), Cairo

AWARDS

2004 Golden Pyramid for Painting, Youth Salon, Cairo 2000 Jury Prize, Youth Salon, Cairo 1997 Prize, Youth Salon, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Other, 11th Cairo Biennale, Cairo; The International Day of the Environment, Artistic View, Sa'ad Zaghloul Cultural Centre, Cairo; Salon Gallery 2, exhibition catalogue, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2006 Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, exhibition catalogue, Cairo; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Ali, Fatima, exhibition brochure, Dubai 2003 Cairo Times (October), Cairo; Folding Forward - Hanafy Mahmoud's look at the forms that capture our humanity, Cairo Times (February), Cairo 2002 Youth Salon Encyclopaedia, 2nd Edition, Cairo 2000 Madina (September), Cairo; Madina (January), Cairo 1994 Youth Salon Encyclopaedia, 1st Edition, Cairo



"The human being, in all his gladness and concerns. This is the central element in my painting, and the reason that I always use the human figure to express my concepts."

Hanafy Mahmoud



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HANAN EL SHEIKH

Born in 1973, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Hanan El Sheikh graduated with a B.Sc. from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Helwan University in Cairo in 1996 and an M.A. in Islamic painting in 2003. She has taught at the Faculty of Fine Arts since 1998. El Sheikh has devoted much time to arts education for children since 1996, teaching at the El Gezira Club, the summer school of the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Neda pre-school for deaf children and as an ABACUS instructor at UC MAS Egypt.

El Sheikh has also set her talent to the stage, painting most of the backdrops of the stage scenes for the Cairo Opera House Theatre between 1996-2001, for productions by companies such as Opera Taiess and Ballet of Osiers. She has participated in numerous exhibitions, biennials and events, in Egypt and abroad, and received several awards for her work, which is now represented in private national and international collections.

IN HER WORDS

I think of an idea, a simple one, the simplest idea around which to build a painting, and search for an object that has a meaning for everyone, such as bicycle. We all know the bicycle, but how do we perceive it? It may represent a child at play, or a worker using it as a daily mode of transport or as a work tool, or something else altogether. For me, it is an object of great balance. I take the image and begin to play with it. I balance it visually, but it is not really in balance at all. It has no rider, no spokes or chains, and although it is a very real bicycle, it is actually not real at all. It may have a feeling of balance, but this is a game as it cannot realistically have that balance.

To me, the colour white has a sense of deep space, of air, though it can also be as solid as a wall. I work on canvas with oils, starting with a very dark preparatory layer of deep brown oil colour and only then painting on the light. I cover the canvas again by using a palette knife, leaving lines of this dark layer to come through, as if I were drawing them. To obtain different degrees of white, I use different types of opaque and transparent white oils and use a dry brush to paint in my object to give it a rougher appearance.

“For me, Art is Life. So a painting is a part of Life, and not only of my life, but of anyone else’s who sees it. This is why I always approach my painting with simplicity and try to balance real life with the magic box that is the painting. The painting is to me as simple as it really is, but to viewers, it will mean whatever it will mean to them. I paint to know myself, and when I do come to know myself, I will stop painting. But I cannot truthfully see that happening.”



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 9 Promising Artists, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; Ideas do Have Wings, Gogan Gallery, Zamalek, Cairo 2008 100 years of Fine Arts, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Egyptian painters, Egyptian Cultural Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan; Egyptian Women Painters, Taaz Palace, Cairo; 3rd Beijing Biennial, Beijing; The International Day of the Environment, Artistic View, Saad Zaghloul Cultural Centre, Cairo 2007 Titol II, Galleria Pergamon Quatrem, Prtritxol, Barcelona; Collective and workshop (with Spanish artist Soledad Seville), Spanish Cultural Centre, Cairo; Collective and water color workshop (with Spanish artist Perico Pastor), Spanish Cultural Centre, Cairo; 7 Promising Artists, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; Youth Salon, Palace of the Arts, Cairo (Also in 2005, 2004, 2003, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1997, 1996); National Exhibition of Fine Arts, Cairo (Also in 2005, 2003, 2000, 1999, 1997) 2006 For Lebanon, Heliopolis Club Art Gallery, Cairo; 1st exhibition, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Solo, Hanan El Sheikh, French Cultural Centre, Cairo; Collective, Ebdaa Art Gallery, Cairo 2005 3 Pittori Egiziani, Egyptian Art Academy,

Rome; Collective of Egyptian painters, Egyptian Cultural Centre, Korea; Collective of gold and silver accessories, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Still Life, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo 2004 The Miniature Gallery of Arts, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo (Also in 2003, 2000); Black and White, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Egyptian Women Artists, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo 2002 Collective of Egyptian artists, Italian Cultural Centre, Cairo; Noon wa Fonoon, Picasso Art Gallery, Cairo; Art for Everyone, Salama Art Gallery, Cairo 2001 10th Biennial of Young Artists from Europe at the Mediterranean, Sarajevo; Collective of Egyptian artists, Italian Cultural Centre, Cairo; Girls and Art, Khan El Maghraby gallery, Cairo 1999 Girls and Art, Khan El Maghraby gallery, Cairo 1998 Collective, Hassan Ragab Gallery of Art, Cairo; Cairo Landscapes, Cairo Art Gallery, Cairo 1997 Summer Exhibition, Picasso Art Gallery, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 The International Day of the Environment, Artistic View, Saad Zaghloul Cultural Centre, Cairo



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- 1 Untitled 2, 2008, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm
- 2 Untitled 3, 2008, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm
- 3 Untitled 1, 2008, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



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Handwritten signature or mark.



HAYTHAM NAWAR

Born in 1978, Gharbia, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo and Zurich.

Haytham Nawar graduated with a B.A. in Fine Arts, with a major in Print Making, from the Department of Graphic Design at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo in 2000. In 2007, he presented his M.F.A. thesis on The Effect of Digital Treatments on Contemporary Visual Arts at the same faculty. He is currently preparing a second M.A. of Advanced Studies in Art and Design in Scenography at the Institute of Design and Technology, at the University of the Arts in Zurich.

Nawar has worked as an illustrator and graphic designer in an advertising agency, as a university lecturer in Advertising and as a creative designer for the Bibliotheca Alexandrina; he also continues to write as an art critic for Egyptian fine art magazines.

Nawar's work, for which he has won many awards, is represented in several private collections in Egypt, Syria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland and in numerous public collections. These include the National Centre of Fine Arts, the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art, the Cultural Development Fund and the Cultural Palaces in Cairo as well as in the Mairie de Sarcelles in France.

Nawar reflects the present reality of Egyptian youth, in the midst of the circumstances that surround it, through his choice of feelings, through his artworks that take the human body as an element of expression, and which examine the movement of the body in a search for meaning. His artworks reflect pure individuality, even egomania, and individuality is a part of society's conditions. Working with different techniques, from drawing to video, light and sound, and using situations of antagonism to reinforce the features of his work.

"The human body is a language in itself."
"It is not in life, but in art that self-fulfillment is to be found."

Haytham Nawar

THE OTHER

The Others...
The Others are portraits, Egyptians' portraits... your family, your friends
They are Us...
The other side of each portrait is the other side of us...
Each portrait is two parts...
Different mood, different atmosphere...
This is the moment we become two...
The One becomes Two...
Same time, Same portrait...
But, it is the other side...

1 The Other 1, 2007, drawing, 200 x 100 cm
2 The Other 2, 2007, drawing, 200 x 100 cm



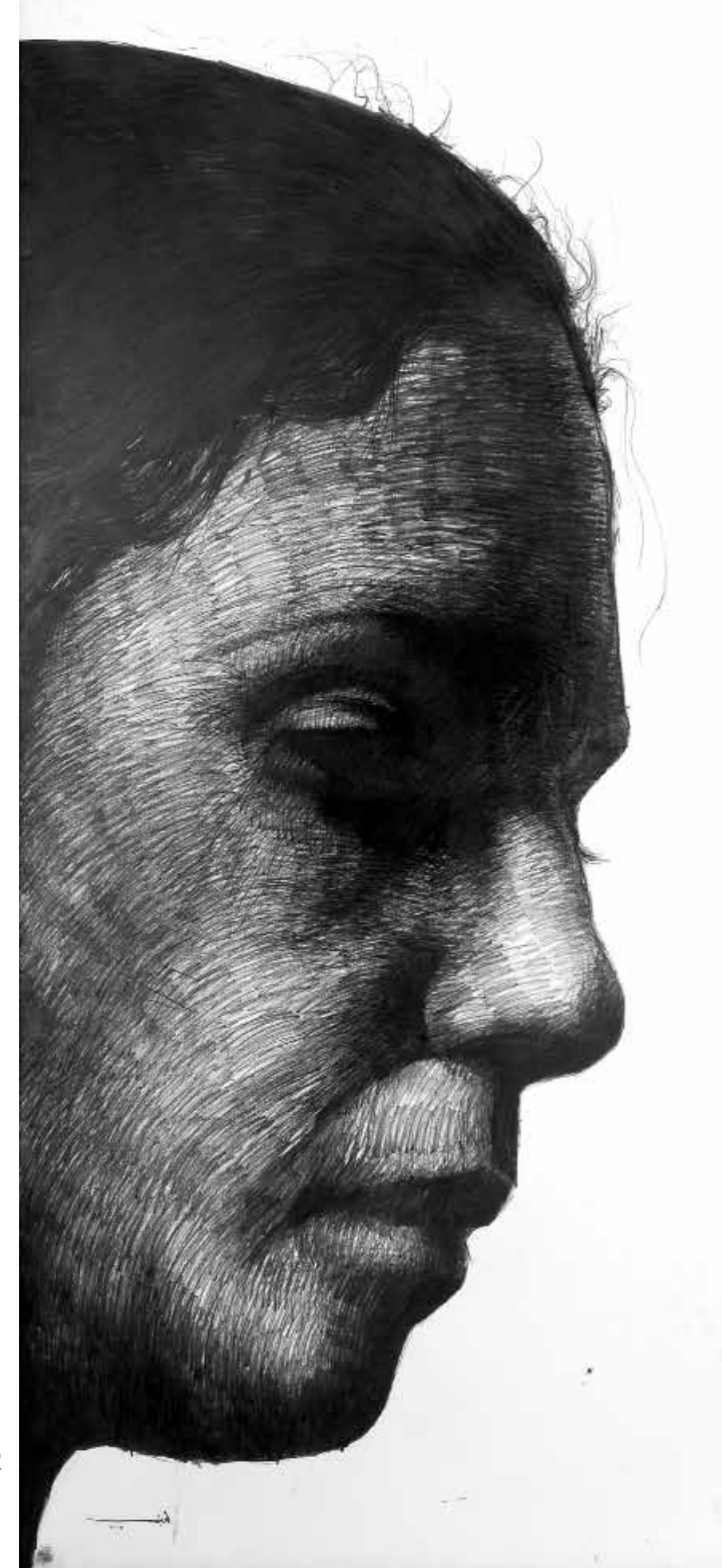
SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 100 Years of Fine Arts, Video, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Art in Unusual Place, Light Performance, Vilnius, Lithuania; 11th International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Biennale, Everyville, Venice; Wunderland, Drawing, Château de Rue, Fribourg, Switzerland; 3rd International Biennial for the Artist's book, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria; Egyptian Artists Coincidence, Video, Bern; Out of the Circle, Drawing, Anbar Bureau, Damascus; Meeting the Other, Rotanda Gallery, Nebraska University, Lincoln, USA 2007 Mediterranean Dialogues, Video, Jardins et Donjon de la Citadelle, Saint Tropez, France; Los Mejores Artistas Egipcios Contemporáneos, Gráfico, El MUBAG, Alicante, Spain 2006 Egyptian Contemporary Art, Lithography, Bosnia and Herzegovina; 5th Egyptian International Print Triennial, Lithography, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Stars of the Day,

Drawing, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo 2005 12th Biennale Internationale de la Gravure et de Nouvelles Images De Sarcelle, Val De France, France 2004 Egyptian Graphic Art in the Twentieth Century, Lithography, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria 2003 4th Egyptian International Print Triennial, Lithography, Palace of the Arts, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007 Cairo/Paris Creativity of Graphic Art, Egyptian Arts Magazine Fonoun Masreya (January), Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 2006 Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo 2004 Panorama of 20th Century Egyptian Graphic Art, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria 2003 Encyclopedia of Youth Artists 2, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo



1 2

HAZEM EL MESTIKAWY

Born in 1965, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo and Vienna.

Hazem El Mestikawy graduated with a B.A. in Art Education from the Sculpture Department of Menia University. Since showing at the 1st Youth Salon in Cairo in 1989, Hazem El Mestikawy has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions, sculpture symposia, events and biennials. His work is widely collected throughout Egypt, Europe and the United States, with his sculptures in the collections of National and International Museums, and several Austrian, Czech, Egyptian, German, and Swiss cities and sculpture parks.

The practice of Hazem El Mestikawy swarms around the realms of physics, architecture, urban design, sculpture, and visual tricking. Trained initially in the traditional mediums of sculpture, he plays with light and shade, with volume and its surrounding space, negative and positive, while tackling the sculptural form; he skilfully probes the opposing forces of his geometric forms.

In his sculptural masses, El Mestikawy does not stop with elements that satisfy regular sculptors, as he pushes the boundaries of the discipline to create site specific installations, to make it difficult even for the specialist to identify the works: they are sculptures, installations, and definitely inspired and influenced by architecture. What adds to the visual mystery is his attention to the details of his surfaces; he juxtaposes several visually opposing surface effects: textural versus smooth, warm versus cool, legible textual versus flat monochromatic.

On the conceptual level, one can confidently describe El Mestikawy's practice as having ingeniously assimilated both ancient Egyptian and Islamic art and architecture, as well as the contemporary minimalist art philosophies; this cumulative assimilation leads El Mestikawy to deconstruct, or rather dismantle centuries-old motifs that are embedded in Egyptian and Middle Eastern cultures, be it arabesque mashrabeyyas and/or geometric patterns based on the recognizable forms of the square, triangle, circle and rectangle to create works that are both sophisticated and accessible.

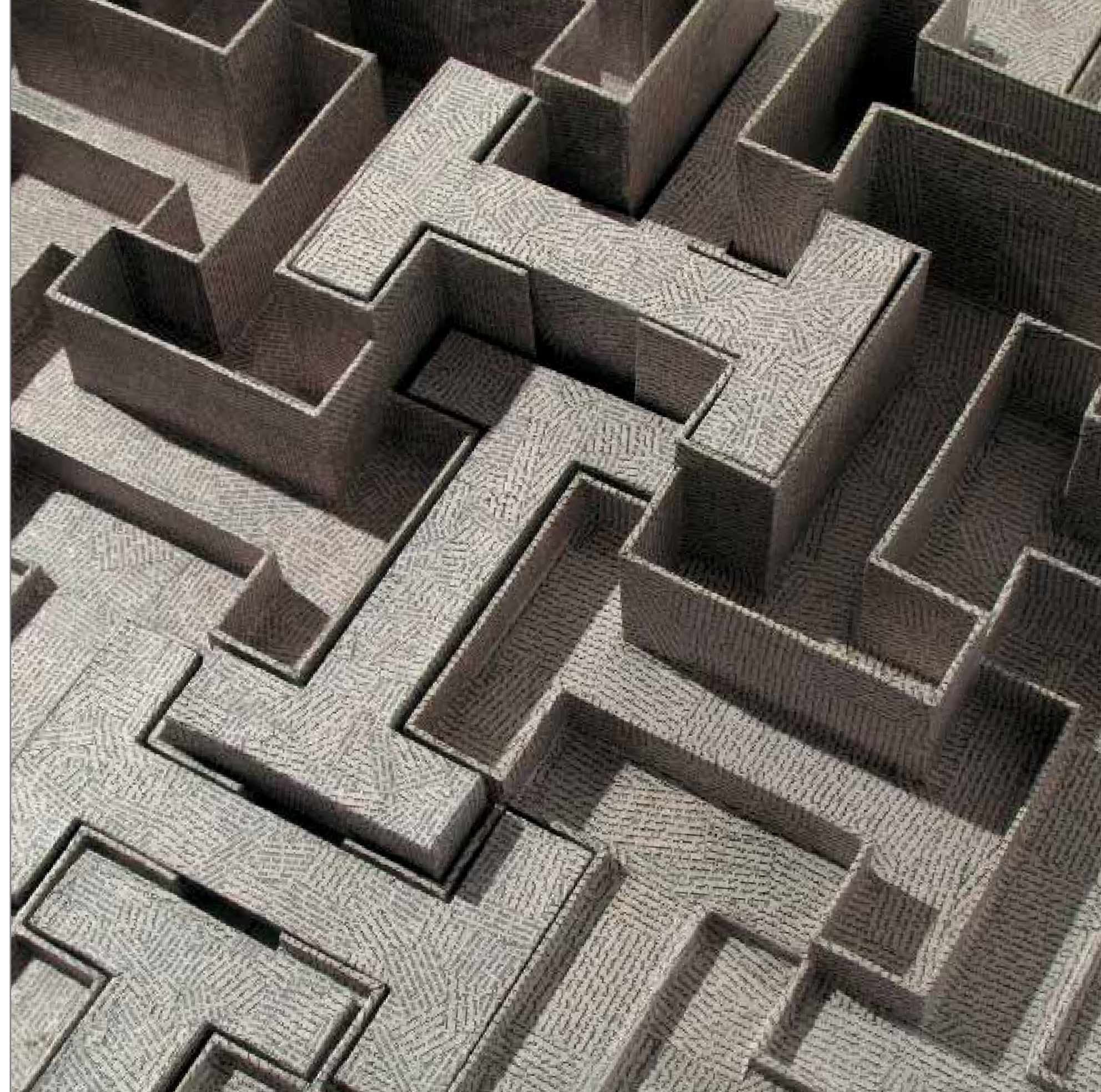
The intriguing aspect of El Mestikawy's practice is his insistence on working with cardboard and cartonage paper-based materials; this use of ephemeral material that requires particular care in handling, exhibiting, maintaining and conserving is unique, since nearly the entirety of his inspirational references, be it ancient Egyptian, Islamic or minimal art, are all conceived and constructed in eternal materials: concrete, stone, treated wood or metal.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 From Athens to Marseille to Cairo, Palais Des Arts, Marseille; Aesthetics and Science, Austrian Academy of Science, Vienna; Collection of North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC-USA; Pool of Possibilities – mapping currents, 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, Artists Archive, Guangzhou, China; 13th Asia Art Biennial (Grand Prize), Dhaka; The Last Book, National Library of Argentina, Buenos Aires 2007 Baggage, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria; Occidentalism, contemporary artists from Egypt, Cairo; 40th Krastal Stone Sculpture Symposium, Carinthia, Austria; Black Sheep kunst treppe gallery, Winterthur, Switzerland; What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2006 Type Faces raumimpuls, Waidhofen/Ybbs Museum, Austria; Artists for Lebanon, Ebdaa Gallery, Cairo; UND +, Gallery Atrium ed Arte Vienna 2005 5 study-rooms, Oxyd, Working-Hall, Wülflingen/

Winterthur, Switzerland; Solo, Equal spaces, Gallery Atrium ed Arte Vienna; 1st Salon of Sculpture, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Trap-Labyrinth, NÖ-Dokumentation Center of Modern Art, St. Pölten, Austria; Image and Letters, Gallery Atrium ed Arte Vienna; National Exhibition for Fine Arts, Cairo (also 2004, 2001, 1999) 2004 HAUSRUCK International Sculpture Symposium, Austria; Art out of the suitcase, Art Museum Olten, Switzerland; Kunstkasten, Art-Box winter-exhibition No. 5, Winterthur, Switzerland 2003 Solo, 9 Three dimensional works, Espace Karim Francis, Cairo; Cairo Atelier Salon, Cairo 2002 3rd International Stone Sculptors Symposium, Schalchen/Mattighofen-Austria, Collection of the Town; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Beijing-China; 25 Years Ekhnaton Galleries, Centre of Arts, Cairo; Solo, 9 Three Dimensional Works, Gallery ge, Winterthur, Switzerland 2001 6th Aswan International Sculpture Symposium/granite, Collection of Aswan International



Mestikawy's research in form entails a continuous construction-deconstruction process, eliminating along the way many details, a process reminiscent of ancient Egyptian sculpture, where details were abstracted ingeniously without any loss of visual narrative, a trait that gave ancient Egyptian sculpture its distinct specificity from other Mediterranean (Greek or Roman) sculpture, though rich in detail but no more informative than the Egyptian. The Egyptian colossal sculpture has always been identified and characterized by the simple yet powerful lines that transform the ton-heavy stone mass into perfect portraiture with minimal detail.

The ancient aspect of El Mestikawy is linked and related to minimal art in its near-industrial perfection, though the uniqueness in his work lies in an integral difference: both ancient and minimal arts, though simple in form, are heavy in weight and mass, they both need teams of artists and artisans to produce, and they need a factory or a factory-like studio to produce. All Mestikawy pieces of sculptural installations are created in and by a one-man-factory: the works, created from their initial sketches to the box they are carried away in, are made by Hazem el Mestikawy himself; the process and the stages of this operation are undertaken with utmost love and pleasure.

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"Harmoniously ordered geometrical proportion and rhythmically repeated elements are the basic structure of pattern design. This introduces the theme of symmetry, which exists in the correct correlation of measurements of the various elements of the plan, be it a simple or complex plan, and between each of these elements and the whole.

When every element of the construction or installation is set in proportion through the right correlation of height, width and depth, and when all these elements find their balance in the design, rhythm is obtained. Further, when this is properly applied to the installation, we obtain eurhythmy. Thus, rhythm is the Art work process in the fourth dimension of time, and eurhythmy is the notion of a three dimensional installation, in proportion with the Art of space."

Hazem El Mestikawy

- 1 Detail, Bridge, 2008-2009, cardboard and newspaper, 145 x 100 x 14 cm
- 2 9 Cubes, 2007-2008, cardboard and recycled paper, 95 x 36 x 29 cm

Photos Barbara Graf & Hazem El Mestikawy © 2009

Open Air Museum, Aswan; 8th Cairo International Biennial, Cairo; Modern Egyptian Art; Sarajevo International Festival; Cairo Atelier Salon, Cairo; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Egyptian Art Academy, Rome 2000 5th Aswan International Sculpture Symposium/granite, Aswan; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Nicosia; 10th International Symposium for wood sculptors, Plasy, Czech Republic, Collection of the Town 1999 Salon 99 Boswil documentary Salon Kunsthau Aarau, Switzerland; Sculpture Today, Gallery Marie-Louise Wirth, Zürich; Tin Sculpture, Espace Karim Francis, Cairo; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Haus 3 GTZ, Eschborn; 11th Youth Salon (Installation Grand Prize), Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Sculpture Compositions, Ekhnaton Galleries, Cairo; and numerous other exhibitions, participations and public collections since 1989.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 From Athens to Marseille to Cairo, catalogue, Palais Des Arts, Marseille 2007 Baggage, El Nafeza, Cairo; Occidentalism, Karim Francis Gallery, Cairo; 40th Krastal Stone Sculpture symposium, world pool, catalogue, Carinthia, Austria; What's Happening Now? Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 2006 Type Faces, Praesens Verlag and Raum im Puls, Waidhofen/Ybbs Museum, Austria; UND, Riter Verlag and Gallery Atrium ed Arte, Vienna 2005 Trap-Labyrinth, NÖ-Documentation Center of Modern Art, St. Pölten, Austria; National Exhibition for Fine Arts, catalogue, Cairo 2004 HAUSRUCK International Sculpture Symposium, catalogue, Austria; Art Out of the Suitcase, catalogue, Art Museum Olten, Switzerland 1999 Sculpture Compositions, catalogue, Ekhnaton Galleries, Cairo; and numerous articles in Egyptian and international newspapers and periodicals.



HEND ADNAN

Born in 1970, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Hend Adnan received a B.A. from the Painting Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo. She has shown her work in many national and international exhibitions, festivals and meetings and her work is represented in both Egyptian and international collections.

Adnan treasures the ability to work freely in oil colors and with live models, respecting shadows in all their forms, working psychological moods and feelings into realistic representations and colours that bring together all the characteristics of oil colours with an emphasis on texture.

IN HER WORDS

Like floating colours melting deep within a silvery light, shadows have more depth than colour itself. The colour of hair is Egyptian pure black, and is as fundamental a colour as reds, ochre transforms into gold when it blends with sunlight. The shadows refer to their original colors, even deep inside closed regions, just like the Nile water's shadows under rays of sun.

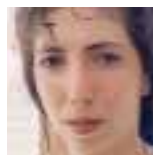
In the preparatory phase graphite or charcoal, and sometimes pastels on coloured paper, are used to make several sketches in order to achieve the right form and construction for the painting.

Oil colors are used in thick textured colors or in lighter shades, with a large brush, and distributed for an effect that ranges from the transparent to the opaque, adding or removing in an attempt to obtain various textures.

The model is the source and the base of an artwork. Every work is an interpretation of one of the emotions and moods that is hidden by the model's features. The success of an artwork depends on its ability to transfer this invisible impression to the viewer so that he becomes a positive participant in the painting. The viewer interacts with this impression, which controls his feelings and affects his mood through the physical features of the model; both the stable composition and the carefully chosen colour help in condensing the psychological impression.

"Art gives us an experience that is free from the disturbing conditions of actual life. An experience that is entirely removed from bodily physiological accompaniment, and our experience has the purity, the intensity, and the abstraction of a dream."

- 1 Harmony C, 2009, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm
- 2 Harmony A, 2009, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm
- 3 Harmony B, 2009, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 Arab Artists exhibition, El Arabi magazine, Kuwait 2008 100 Years of Fine Arts, Palace of Arts, Cairo; Bonjour l'Egypte, Autumn Salon, Espace Auteuil, Paris 2007 Egipto Artes Plásticas, Alicante, Spain 2006 Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art, Baya Palace of Arts, Algeria; Festival of Jarash, Jordan 2005 Colour Poems for the Muses, Picasso Gallery, Cairo; A Creative Look at Animals, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo 2004 Seventh Salon of Small Art Works, Cairo 2003 Creation of Arab Women, Palace of Arts, Cairo; Ninetieth exhibition, El Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Noun wa Founon, Picasso Gallery, Cairo 2002 Festival of Jarash, Jordan; Triad of Sun and Moon, Khan El

Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; Fifth Salon of Small Art Works 2001 In the frame Exhibition, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo 2000 Four Aspects for the Pyramid, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; Exhibition at El Gezira Art Centre, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Salon d'Automne Catalogue (cover, poster and invitations), Paris 2006 Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo 2005 The Femininity Aesthetics, Fargaly, Ibrahim, Elbaet, Cairo 2002 Real Life, Egypt Today, October, Cairo; Triad of Sun and Moon, El Dessouki, Fahmi, Cairo; Hend Adnan the Muses, El Dessouki, Fahmi, Cairo





Shirley
and Adrian



Shirley
and Adrian

HOWAIDA EL SEBAEE

Born in 1971, Alexandria, Egypt. Lives and works in Alexandria.

Howaida El Sebaee graduated from the Painting Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Alexandria University with honours in 1994, joining the faculty there in 1995. She wrote her M.A. thesis in 2001 on Dadaism in Modern Painting and Its Effect on Contemporary Egyptian Painting, and her Ph.D. thesis in 2004 on The Industrial Transformation and Its Effect on Painting Art from The Renaissance Until the 20th Century at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Alexandria University.

El Sebaee has been deeply involved in nurturing the development of the arts in Alexandria, especially through her work with the Alexandria Atelier. Joining the Art School there in 1989, she became a member of its Writers and Artists group. She is also a member of the Fine Arts Syndicate of Egypt, has been invited to speak at the Youth Salon in Cairo on many occasions and has participated in several editions of the Conference on Plastic Arts in Egypt.

Her varied interests have seen her participate in several workshops with prominent international artists, publish and translate the book Marcel Duchamp from English into Arabic, as part of the National Translation project, an initiative of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture. She has also published Post-modernism Arts in Egypt and the World.

El Sebaee has shown her work nationally and internationally and her works are represented in private and public collections, including the Palaces of Culture and the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art in Cairo, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria and the Conference Hall in Sharm El Sheikh.

IN HER WORDS

A machine is the basic indication of an industrial society. Its assembled parts mingle in our life. The brain's achievements advance, and the feelings hide, so the material dominates while nature disappears. The machine mixes with nature until it becomes a part of it. The machine imposes itself on creation, and as a result has become an element of contemporary aesthetics, forming a work of art. We pursue the shapes of factories and parts of machines, especially those rusted machines, as they reflect humans or inner organs resembling the human body. Thus we see that the result of the shape and mechanism of machines, as well as the movement of smog that devours everything it passes, have become a general climate, both physically and psychologically, in the same way that the sound resulting from mechanical movement engenders nervous tension in contemporary man. It is the language that is directly spoken in an age which happens to be ours. The machine is the genotype that interferes in our innermost reality: it is a visual formula for the scientific bourgeoisie of our contemporary life and it is the first comprehensive attempt at expressing modernism with all its definitions.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2004 Form through Light, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Creation of Contemporary Egyptian Women, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Painting in the Image Age, Opera House, Cairo 2003 Exhibition salon, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria; Small Works of Art, Centre of Arts Zamalek, Cairo 2002 University of Arab States – El dar El Bidaae, Morocco; 10 Artists from Alexandria, Side Gabber, Alexandria Gallery, Alexandria; El Moltaka, M.Rasheed Factory Gallery, Alexandria; Egyptian Cultural Centre, Rome; Khaeal El Kitab, opening of Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria;

Centre for Creation, Alexandria; Solo, Egyptian Academy of Arts, Rome 2001 El – Gezwet Festival (with France, Switzerland and the Ford Foundation), Alexandria; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Lisbon; 21st Alexandria Biennial, Museum of Fine Arts, Alexandria; 27th National Exhibition, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2000 Creations of Contemporary Women, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Nicosia 1999 Youth of Art, Khan El Maghraby Gallery, Cairo; 4th National Biennial of Port Said, Port Said; 11th Youth Salon, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Contemporary Egyptian Art, Granada 1998 The Palms, guest of honour, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria; 10th Youth Salon, Cairo 1997 Young Egyptian



The machine is a profound element that evokes the past and the present as it justifies the continuous revolt against authentic social thinking, transformed into personal power. The decisive transformation to a feudal civilisation by way of the machine has been a reality in the era of plutocratic industrialisation. This transformation has become an element for the collapse of human thinking in general and this has defeated social stability. All that is material has determined all that is spiritual. Hence the society of the machine has become a huge tomb for human aspiration because it has created an atmosphere of tension and has caused the ugliness of social industrial society, and this more so than had been caused by industrial development itself.

“Freedom is not in itself a matter of choice, it is a necessity, is unavoidable and is the essence of human existence.”

Howaida El Sebaee

- 1 Spotlight 1, 2007, mixed media (oil and acrylic on canvas), 180 x 200 cm
- 2 Spotlight 2, 2007, mixed media (oil and acrylic on canvas), 180 x 200 cm

Painters, Italian Centre, Alexandria; Modern Egyptian Art, Vienna; 9th Youth Salon, Cairo; 1996 8th Youth Salon, Cairo 1995 Graduating exhibition, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria 1994 Youth Salon, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria (also 1993, 1992) 1993 Youth Salon, Goethe Institute, Alexandria

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

2001 Mohammed Rashid Award, 21st Alexandria Biennial; Award for Painting, Fine Arts Syndicate, Alexandria 1999 First Award for Painting, 11th Youth Salon, Cairo; Painting Award, 4th National Biennial of Port Said, Port Said 1998 Third Critics' Award, National Centre for Arts, Cairo; AICA

Award, 10th Youth Salon, Cairo; Luxor Studios Scholarship, Luxor 1996 Second Award for Painting, 8th Youth Salon, Cairo 1994 Awards for Painting & Object, Atelier Salon, Alexandria

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo



IBRAHIM EL DESSOUKI

Born in 1969, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

After studying painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Zamalek (Helwan University), Ibrahim El Dessouki received his doctorate in 2003 on the dynamics in painting. He is currently an Associate Professor. He has participated in many national and international exhibitions and has shown his works throughout Europe, the Arab world and Asia.

Ibrahim el Dessouki is a painter of highly condensed style in portraiture as well as in still life painting and landscape.

His is a unique, elaborate and highly meticulous treatment of shades, and his refined textures echo and give repercussion to his feelings through a very special and distinctive use of paint, carefully kneaded to create simultaneously dreamy and epic tones of colour. His shapes of women, who pose, at times, to inspire awe and bewilderment, show details and mutations of varying degrees of dimness, shades and light, to evoke a sense of tenderness and delicacy. All these elements find their voice in the many thick layers of rich and varied tints of paint and result in a painting that is extraordinarily vital and poetic.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Ibrahim El Dessouki is concerned with direct observation, employing a methodic approach to his work where the interior settings are carefully staged before the models.

His work expresses the sanctity of the body for Egyptian women, blended with the appeal of feminine tenderness, and consciously omitting his model's face and character so as to condense this dreamily alluring aspect without suggestion of the erotic. Further, his figures are occasionally idealised and monumentalised by their foreshortened forms.

The application of subtle shades, fine tones, and smooth and highly finished surfaces form the basis of his visual language, expressed through layers of rich colour superimposed with transparency.

- 1 Living Cairo 3, 2009, oil on canvas, 185 x 110 cm
- 2 Living Cairo 1, 2009, oil on canvas, 185 x 110 cm
- 3 Living Cairo 2, 2009, oil on canvas, 185 x 110 cm

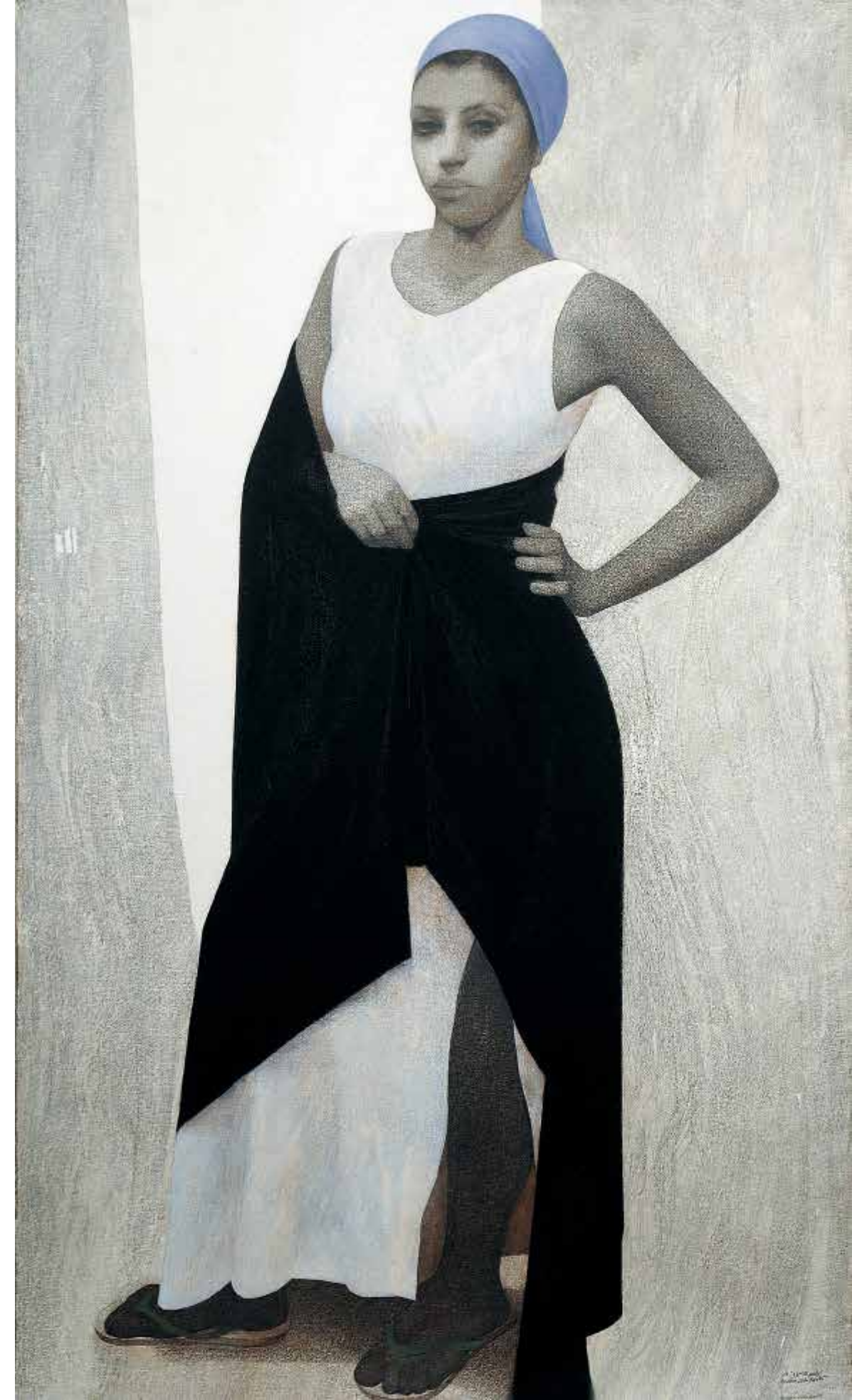


SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 17.12.08 - Creative Expressions, Art Sawa, Dubai; Art Sawa, Art Paris Abu Dhabi art fair, Abu Dhabi; 22.10.08 – Opening, Art Sawa, Dubai; Oum Kalsoum, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Trilogie of the Mediterranean: Greece, France, Egypt, Palais des Arts, Marseille; Salon Gallery 2, Arts Palace, Cairo 2007 Egipto Artes Plásticas, Alicante, Spain 2006 10th Cairo International Art Biennial, Cairo; Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo 2005 Stars in the Youth Salon, The Egyptian Academy of Arts, Rome; Art and Spirit, Arts Palace, Cairo; Still Life, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo 2003 Egyptian Exhibition, Sarajevo Winter Festival, Sarajevo; Panorama of 20th Century Egyptian Art: 100 Years, 100 Artists, 100 Artworks, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Oum Kalsoum, The Fourth Pyramid, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Salon Gallery 2, exhibition catalogue, Cairo; L'Esprit de la Méditerranée, L'Hebdo, February, Marseille 2007 Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 2006 Stars of the Day, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo; Three Stars from the Youth Salon, Egyptian Arts Magazine, October, Cairo 2002 Real Life, Egypt Today, October, Cairo





"Art, be it poetry, visual art, drama or dance, is the transformation of what is real into magic; it is also the conversion of what is magical into a tangible reality, for we are able to perceive that, beyond those infantile voices, there are primordial voices. And we guess at the being of those most archaic voices, deep and sagacious, that spoke the language of legend, and we feel them as more than mere legend, as simultaneous dreams and symbols."

"Art is essentially that dream and that puzzlement which confronts each of us, squeezing and drenching out our very own soul, while imposing on us, so as to accomplish that feat, that primordial image, the image of the sphinx. The riddle and the puzzle drown us in the realm of dreams. They continuously undermine our being with the most terrible enigmas, beguiling us by revealing the most terrible questions to our eyes and souls, our free souls, as they strive to free themselves from the claws of the Animal, which lies crouched inside our body, itself a vicious jail."

Ibrahim El Dessouki



KHALED SOROUR

Born in 1965, Damanhour, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Khaled Sorour is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Art Education and the General Supervisor of Graphic Design at the public authority for the Cultural Palaces. He was an Assistant Commissioner for the Egyptian pavillion at the 52nd Venice International Biennial in 2007 and holds a Ph.D. from Helwan University.

IN HIS WORDS

My work is inspired by scenes of the functional that are different from the reality of contemporary Egyptian life; the Egyptian people's blended elements of their heritage are re-established and are formulated by my own vision.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 Solo, Ahwal (Humanitarian situations), The Egyptian Center For International Cultural Cooperation, Cairo 2008 Solo, El-Laila El-Kabira (The big night), Cairo Atelier, Cairo; El-Madina (The City), Ebdaa Art Gallery, Cairo; Korean & Egyptian Plastic Arts, Opera House, Cairo. 2007 Solo, El-Amaken, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; the Egyptian People's Life Exhibition, Egyptian Cultural Council, Vienna; 1st International Painting Symposium, Old Cairo International Art Centre 2006 Biennial of Imagining The Book, A.U.C, Egypt; Small Pieces, Portrait Atelier, Down Town, Cairo 2005 National Exhibition for Fine Arts, Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo; Solo, El Sawy Culture Wheel, Cairo 2004 Stars of Salon, Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo 2003 Solo, Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo; 2002 Heliopolis Rotary Exhibition, Heliopolis Club, Cairo 2001 Solo, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Ya Nakhla Ya Okhty, Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo 1999 National Society of Fine Arts, Gezira Art Centre 1998 Solo, Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo 1996 Solo, Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo 1995 Exhibition for Egyptian Serial Artists Paralleled to Salvador Dali, Zamalek Arts Centre, Cairo and the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 9th, 10th editions of the Youth Salon, Cairo.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 El Bet magazine, Cairo; Sabah el Kheir magazine, Cairo 2007 Egyptian Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo; The Salon Gallery, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 2002 Youth Salon Encyclopaedia, 2nd Edition, Cairo 1998 Egypt Today magazine

MEMBERSHIPS

Syndicate of Plastic Arts, Egyptian National Arts Society, Cairo Atelier for Artists and Writers, Association of Art Education Graduates, National Society of Fine Arts, Ghory Artists Society, Committee of the Plastic Arts, Supreme Council for Culture

AWARDS AND PRIZES

2007 Prize of the Egyptian Commissioner, Vienna, Austria; 2000 National Prize, Luxor Workshop 1998 Jury Prize, 10th Youth Salon 1997 Art Award, United States of America 1995 First Prize (Drawing), 7th Youth Salon 1985 First Prize (Drawing), Egyptian Hostel Competition.





1 Take Five, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 146 x 146 cm

2 Bicycles & Jacket, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 146 x 201 cm

MAHA MAAMOUN

Born in 1972, USA. Lives and works in Cairo.

Maha Maamoun is a visual artist based in Cairo. She was educated at the American University in Cairo, obtaining a B.A. in Economics in 1993 and an M.A. in Middle Eastern History from the Arab Studies Department in 2001.

Maamoun was co-curator of PhotoCairo3 in 2005, an International Photography and Video event based in Cairo, and assistant curator for Meeting Points 5 in 2007, an International Multidisciplinary Contemporary Arts Festival. Maamoun is one of the board members of the Contemporary Image Collective (CIC), a Cairo-based art institution.

Maamoun has shown nationally and internationally, in solo and group exhibitions, biennials, public art and photography meetings. She has received several awards and residencies that include the Sharjah Biennial's Jury Award in 2009, the Pro Helvetia Art Residency in Zurich in 2006, the Prize of the Sarev Cultural Centre at the Dakar Biennial, and the Visiting Arts/Brighton International Fellowship, both in 2004.

CAIROSCAPE SERIES

Nature's promise of serenity, and the banishment of that promise, mostly to the outskirts of Cairo, was one of the points of departure of this series. The floral prints abundant in people's clothes seemed like a street-wise answer for me, at least photographically, one that provided "nature" here rather than elsewhere. Acting as a surrogate for the scarcity of nature in the city, a placebo, these floral prints sandwiched in the midst of the metal asphalt, and concrete proposed a balancing act of sorts.

My point of view of the city is that of the pedestrian. Eye-level and up-close rather than the distant and encompassing bird's eye view common in cityscapes. Hence, the format of the series that seeks to convey a texture of the quotidian city through microcosmic fragments or glimpses rather than to summarise with the grandiose overall.

"In this series, Cairoscapes (2003), I wanted to create more personal cityscapes of Cairo – ones that respond to the complex and often intimidating nature of contemporary Cairene urbanity, by creating spaces where tensions inherent in the city are balanced somehow."

Maha Maamoun

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 Past of the Coming Days, Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah 2008 PhotoCairo4 – The Long Short Cut, Contemporary Image Collective, Cairo 2007 Global Cities, Tate Modern, London; All Clear?, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; Juicios Instantaneos: Nuevas Posturas en la Fotografía Africana Contemporánea, El Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City 2006 Con on Cities, Venice Biennial of Architecture, Venice; Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography, International Center for Photography (ICP), New York 2005 Regards des Photographes Arabes Contemporains, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Actual Position: An Egyptian-Swiss Art Project on Topography and Identity, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Meeting Points 4, Amman, Damascus, Tunisia 2004 Nazar, Noorderlicht Photo Festival, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, Netherlands; Dak'Art 6, Biennial of Contemporary African Art, Dakar; Bamako 03: Contemporary African Photography, Centro de Cultura Contemporánea de

Barcelona, Barcelona; Solo, Retake, Fabrica Gallery, Brighton 2003 PhotoCairo 2, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Les 5emes Rencontres de la Photographie Africaine de Bamako, Bamako; Going Places, Commission for public transport buses, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007 Domestic Tourism, Fokus Ägypten: Past/Present, ElBaroni, Bassam, Kerber Christof Verlag, Hildshiem 2006 Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography, Enwezor, Okwui, New York 2003 Remote Connection: Wasla Contemporary Art Workshop, Ramadan, Dina, Journal of Contemporary African Art no. 18 (Spring/Summer), Ithaca, NY; Art in the Midst of War, Ramadan, Dina, Cairo Times, Volume 7, Issue 6 (April), Cairo; Nostalgias Old and New, Ryan, Nigel, Al-Ahram Weekly (December), Cairo



1



2



3

1 Cairoscapes # 1, 2004, C-print, 50 x 300 cm

2 Cairoscapes # 4, 2004, C-print, 50 x 300 cm

3 Cairoscapes # 7, 2004, C-print, 50 x 300 cm

MARWA ADEL

Born in 1984, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Marwa Adel graduated from the Advertising Department of the Faculty of Applied Art at Helwan University in 2005. She is currently an assistant lecturer at the same department and faculty as well as a member of the Syndicate of Plastic Arts and the Syndicate of Applied Arts Designers. She was invited to participate, for two years running in 2007 and 2008, in the AAW Youth Salon at the Alexandria Atelier and the Youth Salon in Cairo. In those same two years, she was invited to participate in the annual exhibitions of the Lovers' Society of Fine Arts, winning the Photography Award on both occasions. In 2008, she also participated in the 1st International Media Art Forum for Youth (IMAFY) exhibition and won the First Prize at the Oriental Weavers Design Contest; in 2007, her work was shown in an exhibition at the German Cultural Centre.

IN HER WORDS

My artwork is an attempt at showing the evolution and the infinite conflict between some fundamental forms of existence that live in a state of permanent contradiction and antagonism. It is the discovery and revelation of the relationship between form and essence, spirit and materiality, image and ideas. It is the metamorphosis of primitive to supreme, passing through humanity.

"I believe above all that I wanted to build the palace of my memory, because my memory is something else, my only homeland."

Marwa Adel

1



SILENCE

Sometimes I feel I am a prisoner to customs and traditions. I see and do things I do not like, but cannot say anything, and want to do other things, but cannot, because of these traditions. I have used a root and darkness to reflect and express the sense of imprisonment I feel I live in. I feel I am living in silence.

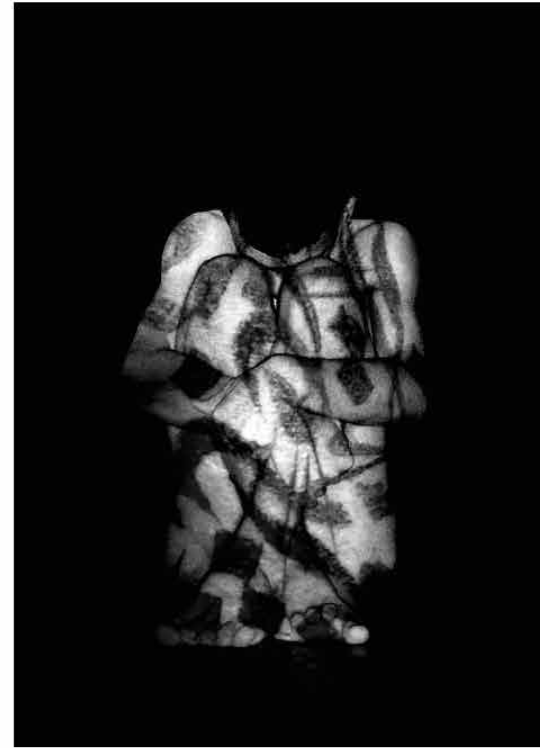
- 1 Silence, 2008, photography and computer graphic, 70 x 170 cm
- 2 Movement, 2008, photography and computer graphic, 70 x 102 cm (3x)
- 3 Peace on Earth to Men, 2008, photography and computer graphic, 55 x 130 cm
- 4 Remaining despite your attempts, 2008, photography and computer graphic, 50 x 185 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 Youth Salon, Cairo; AAW Youth Salon, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria; 1st International Media Art Forum for Youth, Cairo; Lovers' Society of Fine Arts, 48th exhibition, Cairo 2007 Youth Salon, Cairo; AAW Youth Salon, Alexandria Atelier, Alexandria; Lovers' Society of Fine Arts, 47th exhibition, Cairo.

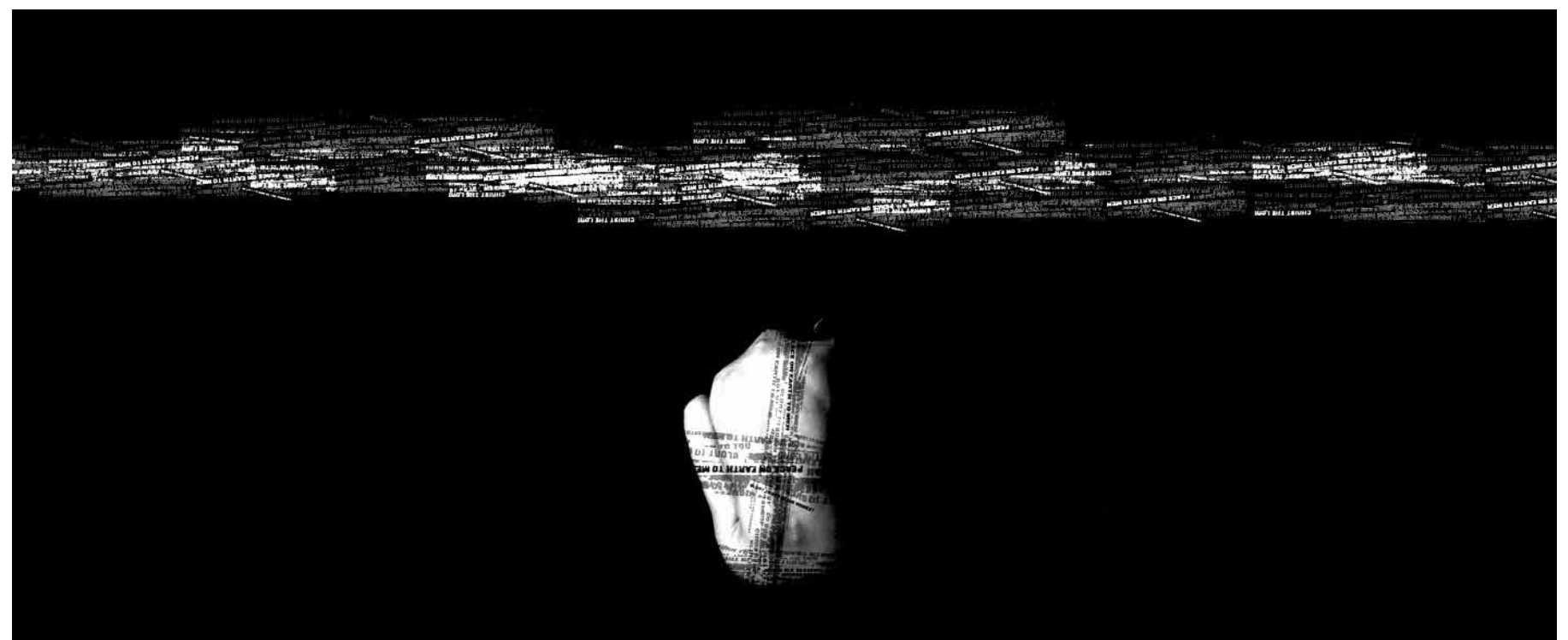
2



MOVEMENT

What makes us move forward in our lives? Is it our dreams or our bodies? I have used the human body in different positions to give the effect of movement, and used text to refer to dreams. Placing the text on the body shows that our dreams and our bodies make us move forward, and that we need both to do this.

3



PEACE ON EARTH TO MEN

We are always trying to run away from our memories in life, be they good or bad, but when we face these memories or facts, we find them unclear and hazy. However, there is one fact of life we cannot ignore or run away from, and that is all that peace on earth is to men. I have used this concept in my work, where the memories facing us are hazy but the real fact in our life is the one wrapping the girl. This is what we face in our society and what we hope will change someday, and we should look to all our memories as facts



4

REMAINING DESPITE YOUR ATTEMPTS

I have tried to express the feeling of pain and loneliness and the stress I felt for a long time because of people wanting me to do what they wanted, without caring, and pushing me to achieve dreams they could not achieve. I have used facial expression and hand movement to express the feeling of pain, convulsion and resistance to the dreams of others, and have used the words to express my own dreams, those I am trying to fight for.

MOHAMED ABLA

Born in 1953, Belqas, Mansoura, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Mohamed Abla is a painter, engraver, sculptor, installation artist and photographer. He is an innovator who mixes techniques and has developed a reputation for his experimental and deeply socially committed work. His work is represented in many private and public collections, of which the permanent collection of the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art. In 2006, he founded the Fayoum Art Centre, the objective of which is to provide an oasis of creativity and a meeting point for dialogue for artists throughout the world. He is also the founder of the Caricature Museum in 2009, an initiative to honour the art of Egyptian satirists and their role in relaying the emotional, social and political condition of Egypt.

Abla is concerned with the wider social issues that affect modern-day Egypt. His canvasses are filled with a multitude of people from all walks of life, animals and modes of transport, that are often juxtaposed against loosely depicted scenes of Cairo and headings borrowed from local newspapers. Some of these headings read: Egypt at the Auction House, New Corruption Scandal, and Thank your God. Against this backdrop, spontaneous brushstrokes and roughly applied lines express people's movements and gestures, actively capturing the effect of radiant and optimistic faces despite the sea of suffering and pressure. As a result, Abla succeeds in conveying the sense of hope and optimism that is so central to the belief of many ordinary Egyptians.

In the process, Abla presents a comprehensive range of modern-day Egypt; people blend with buildings, animals and trucks producing a complex picture that illustrates all the contradictions and fascinations of today's Egypt.

- 1 The Street 3, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 140 x 120 cm
- 2 On The Road (1-6), 2008, oil on paper, 50 x 40 cm
- 3 On The Road (7-12), 2008, oil on paper, 40 x 50 cm



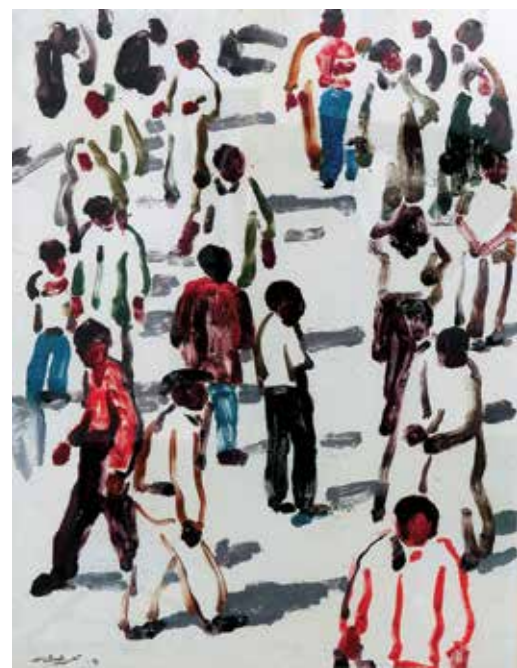
SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 17.12.08 - Creative Expressions, Art Sawa, Dubai; Art Sawa, Art Paris Abu Dhabi art fair, Abu Dhabi; 22.10.08 - Opening, Art Sawa, Dubai; Masterpieces VI, Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo; Salon Gallery 2, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2006 Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East, The British Museum, London; Mohamed Abla: Life as an Artwork, Kunsthau Hohmann, Walsrode, Germany; The Family, Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo 2005 Mohamed Abla: Nostalgia, Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo; International Art Exhibition, Muscat 2004 Cairo: Portraits of a City, Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo 2003 8th Havana Biennial, Havana 2002 Conviviality: The Nile and the Trees, Zamalek Art Gallery, Cairo 2001 The Wedding, live performance, Goethe Institute, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Salon Gallery 2, exhibition catalogue, Cairo 2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo 2006 Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East, exhibition catalogue, The British Museum, London; Mohamed Abla: Life as an Artwork, exhibition catalogue, Kunsthau Hohmann, Walsrode; Mémoires Limpides, Al Ahram Hebdo (November), Cairo; A Family Affair, Egypt Today (November), Cairo; Love and Marriage: New Show Laments the State of the Egyptian Family, International Herald Tribune- The Daily Star (November), international edition 2005 Colourful Political Brochures, Akhbar al Adab (December), Cairo 2002 Un Monde Réduit et si Vaste, Al Ahram Hebdo (November), Cairo





2



3



"In my use of colour, line and simplicity of composition, I have tried to declare my affiliation to Beauty. I have lived an experience with powerful ties to the concept of time and entertained the idea of the hidden beauty of the old... nostalgia.

I know how hard it is to draw new meanings from familiar images; to take ancient symbols and display them in the present. Yet, at the same time, I have faith that art has its own special laws and magic, permitting us to draw together a multitude of conflicting images."

Mohamed Abla



MOHAMED AL FAYOUMI

Born in 1963, Al Fayoum, Egypt. Lives and works in Egypt.

Mohamed Al Fayoumi obtained his first diploma from the Secondary Industrial School and his B. A. from the Faculty of Agriculture at the Open University. He later pursued his studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts and has also obtained a Diploma in Arabic Calligraphy. His work is represented in the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art.

A sculptor who portrays Egypt's poorer urban and rural people, he delved deeply into the observation of rural and underprivileged urban women, bringing out their character in solid stable masses with a few exaggerated details that give his work its Expressionist nature, and makes him well-loved by a broad audience.

When Al Fayoumi depicts Egyptian folk characters, he breathes considerable energy into his subjects. As a sculptor, Al Fayoumi is obsessed with the details and fullness of the human figure, and does not shy from illustrating the scars of overworked people and the country in which they live. He summons humanity in dimensions of huge generosity and truthfulness of touch, and does so in the fast rhythm of modern dialect and the absolute rigour of technique. For Al Fayoumi, sculpting is the essence of art, a heritage passed on from the depth of history, and one to which he is personally committed. When he sculpts animals, birds, and fish, he pares down their wildness, turning it into a peculiar stillness, one with an energy that signals to the limitless reservoir of human experience he draws upon. His grip on detail sets him apart from his contemporaries.

- 1 Fellah, 2003, bronze, edition 3/8, 40 x 44 x 53 cm
- 2 Om el Saad, 2000, bronze, edition 6/7, 43 x 44 x 60 cm
- 3 Detail, Om el Saad, 2000, bronze, edition 6/7, 43 x 44 x 60 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2007 1st Festival of Fine Art Creation, Cairo 2005 1st Sculpture Salon, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; 1st Stone Symposium, Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum, Cairo 2003 National Exhibition of Fine Arts, Cairo (also 2001, 1999, 1993); Salon of Mini Works of Art, Cairo (also 2000, 1999, 1998) 2000 5th Cairo International Ceramics Biennial (Award); Solo, American Centre, Cairo (also 1999, 1998, 1997); Egyptian Cultural Week exhibition, United Arab Emirates 1999 Solo, Zamalek Art Centre, Cairo; 1998 10th Youth Salon, Cairo 1996 3rd Cairo International Ceramics Biennial 1995 Solo, Shomoua Gallery, Cairo 1993 Solo, Cairo Atelier, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 The International Day of the Environment, Artistic View, Sa'ad Zaghloul Cultural Centre, Cairo 2007 Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of

Culture, Cairo 2002 Youth Salon Encyclopaedia, Fine Arts Sector, Egyptian Ministry of Culture

MEMBERSHIPS

Syndicate of Fine Artists, Cairo Atelier, Theatre Club, Association of Mukhtar Friends, Talents Association of the Culture Palace

AWARDS

1999 Certificate of Merit and Medal, 26th National Exhibition for Fine Arts (also 1993) 1998 Certificate of Merit, General Authority of Cultural Palaces, Certificate of Merit, Fayum Literary Conference 1995 3rd Prize, 7th Youth Salon (also in 1993) 1989 Prize of Youth Administration 1986 Prize of Fayoum Culture Palace





2

3



MOHSEN SHAALAN

Born in 1951, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Mohsen Shaalan has served art well, not only as a successful artist, but also as a driving force behind the Egyptian Ministry of Culture's ambitious plans to nurture, support and develop Egypt's thriving art scene. As the Head of the Ministry's Fine Arts Sector, his responsibilities are many and varied. Besides teaching, organising and curating many exhibitions since the mid 1970s, he has participated in his official capacity in exhibitions held in international museums and represented Egypt as a Commissaire in Egyptian exhibitions abroad. He has taken part in conferences, symposia, cultural and academic seminars and round tables in national and international cultural events.

Shaalan is responsible for reviving interest and know-how among skilled Egyptian craftspeople, and has encouraged them to pass on their skills and experience to younger generations. He was commissioned to develop plans to upgrade art museums and to draw up the calendar and themes of national and international events, including art biennials. As director of the Cairo International Biennial, he has been ideally positioned to foster greater exchange and contact between cultures of the East and West and has encouraged the Egyptian government to play a more prominent role in the international arts world.

In addition to his artistic achievements and to his leading role in the Egyptian art scene, Shaalan is popular for his contribution to literary and intellectual circles in Egyptian society and in Arab countries. He is a poet of repute and his critical articles are frequently published in Egyptian and Arabic newspapers.

Shaalan is the recipient of numerous awards and his work is represented in the art collections of museums such as the Modern Egyptian Art Museum in Cairo, of major banks and institutions such as the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., of Egyptian embassies overseas and foreign embassies in Cairo. His work features in the private collections of individuals in Egypt, and in Arab and European countries.

- 1 Neither love him Nor can leave him, 2008, oil on canvas, 190 x 160 cm
- 2 Handcuffed, 2009, oil on canvas, 100 x 70 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 Oum Kalsoum, The Fourth Pyramid, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Salon Gallery 2, Cairo 2007 Egyptian and Indian Painters, Museum of Egyptian Modern Art, Cairo; Considering the Time Difference, Diga Gallery, Alexandria 2004 Selections from the Past, Ebdaa Gallery, Alexandria 2003 Personal Status, Ebdaa Gallery, Cairo; Until Further Notice, Picasso Gallery, Cairo 1998 Bird Tongue, Spiro Art Gallery, Al Maadi 1997 The Meaning is in the Heart of the Street, Cairo Atelier, Cairo; Bits and Pieces, Al Ahram Newspaper gallery 1995 Black Solitude, Cairo Atelier, Cairo 1991 Solo, Egyptian Worries, Zamalek Art Centre, Cairo 1987 Solo, El Khamassin 1976 Painting on Fog, French Cultural Centre, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Oum Kalsoum, The Fourth Pyramid, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Salon Gallery 2, exhibition catalogue, Cairo 2007 Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo

MEMBERSHIPS

Member and a Counselor of the Fine Artists Syndicate, Member of the Fine Arts Committee of the Supreme Council of Culture, Founding Member of the International ANNAPRONNA Institution of the Dominican Republic



Shalan is a painter and draughtsman, an enthusiast for representational art. Since he set out on his artistic journey in the 1970s, humanity has been Shalan's prime concern. He came up with admirably powerful signs of expression provoked by a philosophical and intimate dialogue between his human figures, swathed in gloomy and restive atmospheres. Shalan's works are also an intellectual exploration of the relationship between man and woman, who are the driving force behind human communities anywhere in the world.

His roots in Boulak, a prominent and popular district in Egypt, have found great resonance in his work, with his depictions of the problems of ordinary Egyptians; indeed, the human figure is an essential part of his artworks. To Shalan, the appeal of portraiture is that it enables him to explore a range of emotions and the complex dimensions of human experience, sometimes showing facial expressions in a very definite manner, and sometimes showing expressionless features.

Shalan's drawings and paintings highlight his brilliant use and judgement of inks, graphite and colours. Most of his artworks, beginning in the 1970s, contain symbols of literary, social, political and humanitarian ideals, revealing a commitment to Expressionism with dramatic impact.

"Music of the generation of Mohamed Abdel Wahhab is a passion of mine, and this great musician has been instrumental in drawing me deeply into the creative process and into the arts. I also love Omm Kalthoum and the lyrics of El Sonbaty and El Kathabguy."

Mohsen Shaalan



NAGLA SAMIR

Born in 1969, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Nagla Samir graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts in 1992 and joined the Egyptian art movement as a photographer and media artist in 2003, after years of practicing commercial design as Creative Director for Integrated Media International agency. She obtained her Ph.D. in Applied Arts in 2002 and has worked as a Lecturer of Visual Communication & Advertising Design since then, publishing studies and articles on Design and Contemporary Art. She continues in her activities as a free lance designer in the fields of Advertising, Interior Design and Theatre Scenography, and has been the Director of Passage 35 Hall since 2006.

Samir has participated in several national and international group exhibitions such as the Youth Salon, National Exhibition for Fine Arts, Nile Salon for Photography, Contemporary Arts Festival for Egyptian Women and the Salon of Small Art Works. She has held two solo exhibitions at the Gezira Art Centre in Cairo in 2005 and 2007 and her work has been shown as far afield as Algeria, Italy and Nepal. She has been awarded several prizes, of which the Award of the 24th Alexandria Biennial for Mediterranean Countries in 2007. Samir has served as a Jury member for the Youth Salon and for the Nile Salon for Photography and has curated several exhibitions and cultural events, amongst which the 1st International Media Art Forum for Youth in 2008.

Inspired by the pop culture, her art work is based on photography, graphically manipulated, installed and lit to enhance the concept of her project.

“An artist, curator, art teacher and commercial designer...

Leading multiple lives, in a diverse city of contradictions, that offers an infinite range of possibilities.. a life of extremes.

Stimulating discussions through unconventional art projects, that tackle the transgression of social taboos, raising questions concerning censorship...”

“My work may seem personal, spiritual, or even remote from direct themes related to nationalism, yet I am driven by the essence of the city as a source of inspiration.”

Nagla Samir

- 1 City Scape, 2009, C-print, edition 1/2, 124 x 110 cm
- 2 City Scape 2, 2009, C-print, edition 1/2, 124 x 110 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 Curation, Creative Female Artists from Egypt, Vienna (also Berlin); Curation Roto project, El-Ekhtiyar, Cairo; Fugitive Projects Film Collectives, Swane, USA 2008 Oum Kalsoum, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Curation, 1st International Media Art Forum for Youth, Cairo; Images from Egypt (also curation), Kathmandu 2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Mediterranean Biennial (Award), Alexandria; Lo Spirito di Assisi, Assisi, Italy; Solo, Tribute to Their Spirits, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo 2005 Solo, Body & Soul, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Fonoun Masreya, Issue No.15, January, Ministry of Culture, Cairo, Oum Kalsoum, The Fourth Pyramid, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris 2007 What's Happening Now?, exhibition catalogue, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Ain, No. 190 (March), Cairo; El Quahera, No. 396 (November), Cairo; El Quahera, No. 399 (December), Cairo; Al Ahram International, No. 44179 (November), Cairo



CITY SCAPE

The concept for City Scape emerged from an early work of mine concerned with the conflict between body and spirit. I was putting myself under pressure to cover most of the nude figure in wings, while maintaining the original form that I consider to be beautiful and attractive. It was then that I realised that this process was exactly what was happening on the streets of Cairo – a manoeuvre to veil by assumption, yet reveal beyond exposure! It must be the unspoken and hidden statement under social and cultural pressure.

Inspired by advertising billboards that invade the city scape, I started playing with the concept as social teasers, to enhance the statement of the effect of the media on shaping perception and triggering desire when least expected.

Perfect beings are manifested, and wings cover most of the figure while maintaining the original form that is gracefully beautiful yet seductive. The wings are those of a locust, an insect known to invade in massive numbers, consuming all and leaving damage and infertility in its wake.

City Scape is the master piece; City Scape 2 refers in its structure to the pharaonic concept of repetition in displaying perfection.



RANDA SHAATH

Born in 1963, Philadelphia, USA. Lives and works in Cairo.

Randa Shaath was born to a Palestinian father and an Egyptian mother and lived in Beirut, Lebanon between 1969 and 1977; she is now based in Cairo.

She received her BA in Middle Eastern Studies from the American University in Cairo and her MA in Visual Mass Communication from the University of Minnesota, USA.

Shaath worked as a photographer for Agence France Press in Egypt and Gaza in 1994, and for the Al-Ahram Weekly newspaper from 1993 until 2004. She taught photography at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Algiers in 2005 and graduating seniors at the Modern English School of Cairo between 2005 - 2007. She is a contributing photographer and editorial board member of Zawaya magazine in Beirut and is currently the Photo Editor for Al Shorouk newspaper in Cairo. In addition to her photo-journalism work and teaching, Shaath has worked as a designer and photographer for children's books and as a still photographer for documentary and feature films.

She has worked on various projects documenting daily life in Palestine, Nubian villages, and Cairo. For the Cairo project, she captured daily life in the city, on the streets and the rooftops, and on its forgotten islands.

CAIRO SIDEWALKS

(Unfinished project)

I spent over 2 years studying and documenting life on Cairo's rooftops. I discovered a unique daily life among communities that are often an overlooked extra detail in a complex city of 17 million souls. I decided to get back down to the street level. Cairo sidewalks provide no demarcation between public and private space. Many Cairenes live much of their daily life in the streets, and for some it is home. The dynamics of the street create behavioral and dress codes not seen elsewhere and often a level of psychological if not physical violence. After photographing for a few months, I stopped working on my project to reflect. My goal is not only to document and archive what I see, but also to challenge. I felt I could no longer continue photographing the will of a strong determined people coping with a tough life, in moments of beauty and personal dignity, as I did on the rooftops. The scene I confronted on the streets was disturbing, often coarse in its ugliness. The question was how to document those surviving this affront, resisting rage, and coping with despair? I took the challenge to witness the daily interactions on sidewalks and the multi-layered dynamics that exists in public spaces. I was not always successful in capturing the hard times we live in. The problems are not only economic; there is a continuous low-grade level of violence, a lack of privacy. So this work I started, I will try to continue as a testament of how we cope and thrive among the urban patchwork of Cairo with its noise, vehicles, animals, vendors, crowds, men, women, friends, lovers, commuters and strangers.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 Tales Around the Pavement, The Contemporary Image Collective (CiC), Cairo 2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; Urban Reviews Cairo Building and Planning for Tomorrow, Ifa-Galerie, Stuttgart and Berlin; Under The Same Sky, The National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen 2006 27a. Bienal de São Paulo. Como viver junto — How to live together, Sao Paulo; Solo, Algeria Bizzef, Medina Theater, Beirut; Snap Judgments, curated by Okwui Enwezor, International Center of Photography, New York; Regards des Photographes Arabes Contemporains, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris 2005 Labyrinth /Trap, DOK, St. Polten, Austria 2004 Staying or Leaving. Umjetnicki Pavilion, Zagreb, Croatia; Camera Austria, Kunsthau Graz, Austria; Nazar, Noorderlicht Photo Festival, Holland. (Then Photofest, Houston, USA and Aperture, New York, USA) 2003 Contemporary Arab Representations, Cairo (also at Witte de With Art Center, Rotterdam,

Holland; Fondation Tapies, Barcelona, Spain; Bild Museet, Umea, Sweden) 2002 The Spice Route, Ifa Gallery, Stuttgart; Being There (Retrospective), Forum Cultural Practices in the Region, Beirut 2001 Borders and Beyond. Photoforum PasquArt, Biel, Switzerland (The exhibition has already taken place in Mexico, Russia, Poland, Egypt, South Africa, South Korea, Mozambique. Mexico, Egypt, Poland, South Africa and Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi in India. After visiting Bangladesh, the display is also set for Spain and Slovakia.) 2000 Nubian Life, The Nubian Museum, Aswan 1999 In the Heart of the Nile. (Islands of Cairo), Cairo Atelier, Cairo 1998 The state of Palestine, Sony Gallery, American University Cairo 1996 Egyptian Portraits, Sony Gallery, American University Cairo 1995 Egyptian Portraits, Boswil Arts Center, Boswil, Switzerland 1993 Women Photographers, French Cultural Centre, Jerusalem Warm Reflections, Atelier Le Caire, Cairo 1986 Arab Family in Minnesota Continuity and Change, University of Minnesota, Minnesota, USA

“My passion is to roam around to meet people and discover places ; it is a blessing to be a photographer, able to freeze these moments and later contemplate.”

Randa Shaath





2



3

Sidewalks (1-3), edition 1/12, 2004-2008, B&W photographs, 100 x 66 and 66 x 100 cm

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007 What's Happening Now?, exhibition catalogue, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2004 Cairo, City of Sand. Golia, Maria, Reaktion Books, London 2003 Under the Same Sky; Cairo, (monograph) Witte de With and Fondation Tapies, Barcelona 2001 Borders and Beyond, Palestinian/Israeli borders, Arts Council of Switzerland, Zurich and Egypt 1990 Misr Umm el Dunia, (monograph), History of Islamic Cairo, Text by Dr. Nelly Hanna. Dar al Fata al Arabi, Cairo 1988 Watani ala Marma Haggar, (monograph), Life in a refugee camp, Dar al Fata al Arabi, Cairo

Numerous images published in newspapers and magazines including: Photographers International, Time, Independent, NZZ, DU, Camera Austria, Tamas 2, Zawaya and Amkena.

SOBHI GUERGUES

Born in 1929, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Sobhi Guergues graduated from the faculty of Fine Art and continued his postgraduate study with a scholarship to study at the Florence Academy of Art, from which he graduated in 1964. He was subsequently appointed professor of sculpture and embarked on a long and productive career as a sculptor and painter. In addition to his artistic achievements, Guergues is a fine musician, having been instructed by his father, himself a musician, in rhythm, music and composition. He plays the zither, the flute and the lute – choices of instruments that are reflected in the vibrant, mischievous and optimistic nature of his works.

It is near impossible to overstate the importance of Guergues' experiment and the influence it has had on Modern Egyptian art. No anthology of Egyptian or Middle Eastern 20th Century art would be complete without reference to his groundbreaking practice. Guergues has placed a unique hallmark on modern Egyptian Sculpture, and he has received countless awards and prizes in recognition of his work. His works are part of the collection of the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art in Cairo and are in major art museums and institutions in the US, France, the UK, Italy, Austria, Kuwait and other countries.

Sobhi Guergues is known to be a liberated sculptor who rebelled against rigid moulds, his strong sense of irony placing him in the forefront of Egyptian avant-garde sculptors. His extraordinary experiment took root in Egyptian Coptic art, which teems with signs of innocence and intimacy. Guergues first made linear and thin sculptures, which displayed powerful expressions. He later began to incorporate rough, linear relationships with strips soaked in liquid wax, this technique producing lava-like projections when the sculpture is cast.

Guergues is widely known as a prolific and pioneering sculptor. His innovative style and technique are manifested in the linear statues, the bulging strips and the cylindrical heads with delicate features. In some later works, Guergues also developed a blend of cast elements, made from thin iron rods, impressively displaying a new technique for coloured and oxidized patina.

In Guergues' work, there is a sense of collectivity that identifies the artist, though each sculpture is the individual expression of an ebullient and observant mind. He brilliantly transfers his intimacy, subtlety and whimsy to his sculptures, ensuring an immediate yet also lingering impact.

- 1 Deliberation, brass, 36 x 34 x 28 cm
- 2 Attempt to Rise, brass, 33 x 33 x 34 cm
- 3 Meditating, brass, 44 x 45 x 94 cm



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2007 Sobhi Guergues, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo; Salon Gallery 2, Cairo 2006 Cairo International Biennial, Cairo; National Art Biennial (Sun Path), Ecuador 2005 Salon of Mini Works of Art, Cairo; 1st Salon of Sculpture of Noble Materials, Palace of the Arts, Cairo 2004 Solo, Cairo Atelier, Cairo; General Art Exhibition (also several editions upto 2004) 2002 Solo, Cairo Atelier, Cairo 1996 Solo, Droub Gallery, Cairo 1994 Alexandria Biennial for Mediterranean Countries (First Prize for sculpture), Alexandria; Cairo International Biennial (Prize), Cairo; Solo, Akhenaton Gallery, Zamalek Art Centre, Cairo 1981 Solo, Akhenaton Gallery, Zamalek Art Centre, Cairo 1976 Venice Biennale, Venice 1971 Solo, Akhenaton Gallery, Kasr al-Nil... and other numerous exhibitions and participations.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007 Sobhi Guergues, Horizon One Gallery, Cairo; Salon Gallery 2, exhibition catalogue, Cairo; Egyptian Contemporary Art in the 20th Century, Al Razaz, Dr Mustafa, Egyptian Ministry of Culture, Cairo; The Giant Within, Al Ahram (July), Cairo



"I deeply love sculptures. Although my experiment seems to be difficult and hard, it has its special flavour. My experiment gives me a feeling of individuality. Achievements made by my great masters and pioneering predecessors have always been on my mind. However, after examining thousands of sculptures made by these great artists, I was determined to enjoy my own experiment. I have always wondered: why should I not add something new?"

Sobhi Guergues



WAEEL DARWESH

Born in 1975, Cairo, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

Wael Darwesh graduated with excellence from the Faculty of Art Education of Helwan University in Cairo. He obtained an MFA and PhD in the philosophy of drawing and painting. Since 1998, he has been a teaching member of staff of art faculties. Darwesh is the winner of a number of local and international prizes and certificates of merit. His works are represented in numerous private collections and public collections such as the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art, the 15th May Museum and the Alexandria Library.

The paintings of Wael Darwesh place emphasis upon painterly qualities over representational values; bold brush work, strident and contrasting colours cover the picture plane whilst the subject matter acquires a high degree of simplification and abstraction. This, in turn, is set in sharp contrast to the descriptive titles resulting in new possibilities of interpretation.

For Darwesh, the surface becomes a patchwork of distinctive colours with figures set in prominent brushstrokes and clear outlines with hardly any modelling. He succeeds in conveying emotional exuberance, dynamism, energy and surface animation.

Darwesh has experimented widely with different genres of art, such as drawing, painting, photography, installation, video art and contemporary media. In his artistic vision, a work of art displays a message, and technique is the artist's platform through which the idea evolves into a visual entity.

IN HIS WORDS

In my mixed media projects, I try to probe several phenomena that constitute permanent obsessions for me, such as time, its relevance to the subject matter employed, elements of migration, gender, identity, a few amongst many themes that attract several Egyptian artists of my generation.

Technically, I apply assemblages to create installation / sculptural states that transcend simple two-dimensional art forms; through the studied and experimental use of collage, I combine colour, calligraphy, textile, and various textural media to explore issues of space and the passage of time.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2009 Agenda Exhibition, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria; Al Markayah Art Gallery, Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi 2008 11th Cairo International Biennial, Cairo; 17.12.08 - Creative Expressions, Art Sawa, Dubai; Art Sawa, Art Paris Abu Dhabi art fair, Abu Dhabi; 22.10.08 - Opening, Art Sawa, Dubai; Örebro International Videoart Festival, Örebro; Solo, Must Gallery, Egypt University, Cairo; Solo, Gezira Art Centre, Cairo; Secrets project, DaratalFunun, Amman; Responses Sherif Awad, Contemporary Practices Magazine, Dubai Art Fair, Dubai; From Athens to Marseille to Cairo, Marseille 2007 What's Happening Now?, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; The Days of Egyptian Culture in India, New Delhi; The Present out of the Past Millennia, Kunstmuseum, Bonn; Solo, Cairo Atelier, Cairo, (also 2006, 2003); Imagining the Book II, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria 2006 The 1st International Web Exhibition. www.ecartists.com 2005 Egyptian Academy in Rome; Imagining the Book I, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria; Art and Soul, Cairo Opera House, Cairo 2004 Annual Salon of Young Artists, Akhenaton Galleries, Cairo (selected every year since 1998) 2003 Annual Salon of Miniatures, Akhenaton Galleries, Cairo (selected every

year since 1998) 2002 Solo, Centre of Arts, Zamalek, Cairo; 6th International Ceramics Biennial, Cairo Opera House & Palace of Arts, Cairo; Arab Visual Artists' Exhibition, Taha Hussein Museum, Cairo 2000 5th International Ceramics Biennial, Cairo Opera House & Akhenaton Galleries, Cairo

SELECTED AWARDS

2003 Grand Prize, 13th Salon of Young Artists, Cairo 2002 6th International Ceramics Biennial, Cairo 2000 Jury Prize, the All-Egyptian Artists Exhibition, Cairo 1999 Jury Prize, 11th Salon of Young Artists, Cairo 1998 1st Prize, 10th Salon of Young Artists, Cairo

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2008 Other, 11th Cairo Biennale, Cairo 2007 What's Happening Now?, exhibition catalogue, Palace of the Arts, Cairo; The Present out of the Past Millennia, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn

1



- 1 Detail, Two in the blue bedroom 1, 2009, mixed media, 180 x 140 cm
- 2 Two in the blue bedroom 1, 2009, mixed media, 180 x 140 cm
- 3 Two in the blue bedroom 2, 2009, mixed media, 180 x 140 cm
- 4 Two in the blue bedroom 3, 2009, mixed media, 180 x 140 cm

"In the past few years I have been much concerned with the changing perceptions and the state of continuous social metamorphosis that Egypt has witnessed in the past three decades."

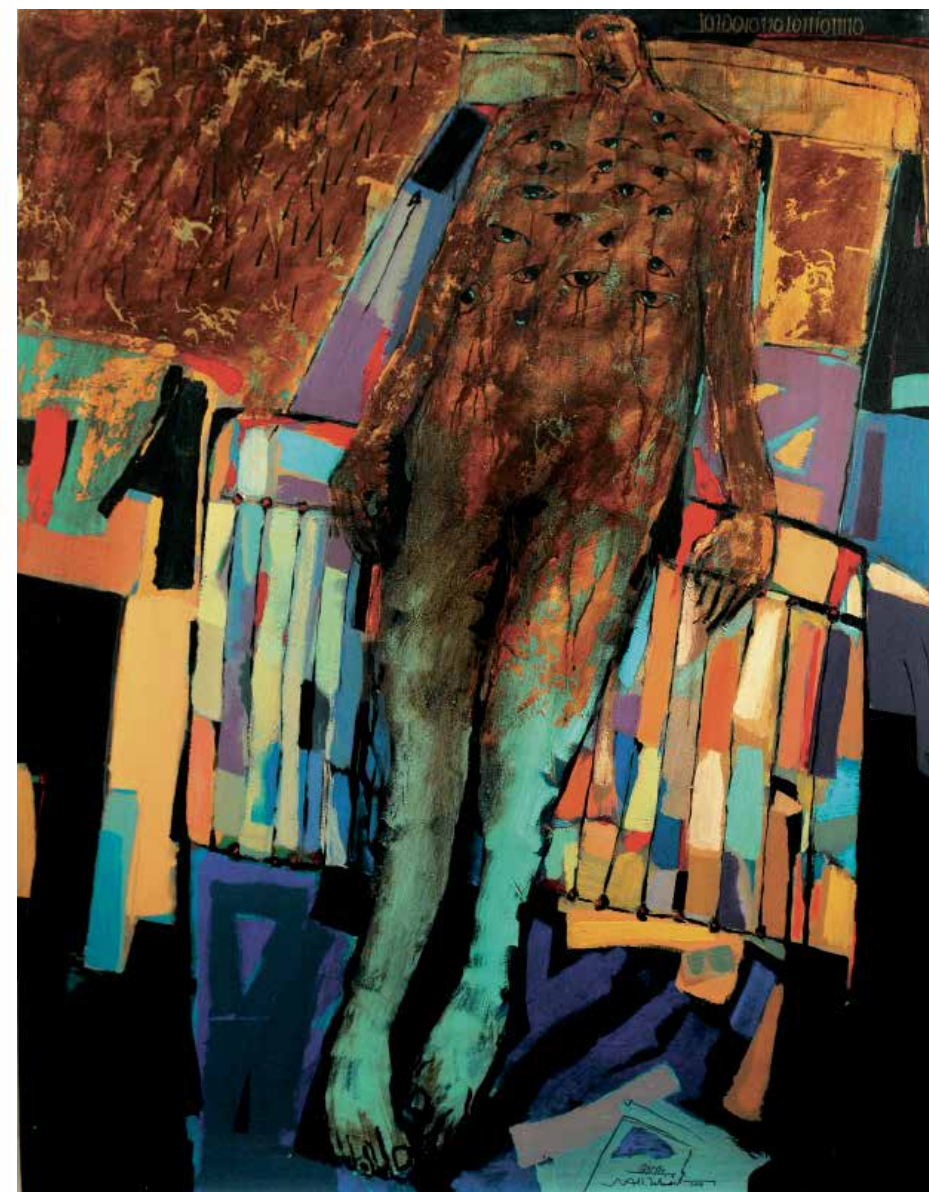
Wael Darwesh



2



3



4

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Mariam Hamdy, "Designers and the Advertising World," *Contemporary Practices*, Vol. 4, March 2009, pp. 144-151

"Reforming Public Cultural Institutions in Egypt" Ed. Aida Eltorie, *Contemporary Practices*, Vol. 4, March 2009, pp. 172-179

Kaelen Wilson-Goldie, "The Art of Pursuit (and other forms)," *The Daily Star*, Thursday September 1, 2005, page 12.

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Randa Shaath: *Under The Same Sky*, Cairo, Ed. Catherine David. Witte de With/Fundacio Antoni Tapies (April 2, 2004)

Marilu Knode, "When Are We Fully Who We Are? Contemporary Art in Egypt," *Cairo Modern Art in Holland*, Fortis Circustheater Scheveningen, ISBN 90-5349-378-6, 2001, PP 17-22

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