

AND NOW... SHALL WE DANCE ?
AHMED ASKALANY



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ART SAWA DIFC

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“And now ...Shall we dance?” by AHMED ASKALANY

Critics and art connoisseurs alike have already described Ahmed Askalany as one of the most unique and inimitable sculptors of his generation. Askalany's sculptures are characterized and remarkable by traditional aesthetic forms that place an emphasis on both structure and volume, but the volumes are distorted with a minimal head on a giant body.

Askalany's subjects are usually simple human figures inspired and representative of his society, in Cairo and his works possesses a profound nature and a sense of innocence alongside a state of isolation reflecting humor, frankness and candor. There is no specific formula that Askalany uses when creating his works of art, the final work often represents his emotions by becoming humorous or naïve but always with a tremendous poetic sensitivity, reflecting his observations and thoughts about his daily life.

In “And now ...Shall we dance ?” is an invitation, an interrogation :There is some truth, if a very limited truth, to the cries of the simple human nature ?Time and again, Askalany set down images of a pre-civilized world, his Eden before the Fall, a world inhabited by his musicians and dancers celebrating Life . This connection allows his sculptures to become unique and unmistakable, yet, at the same time, does not stop him being thoroughly up to date.



SINGER, 2014
1/3
Bronze
122 x 108 x 61 cm



FLUTIST, 2014
1/3
Bronze
115 x 73 x 61 cm



SAXOPHONIST, 2014
1/3
Bronze
130 x 95 x 72 cm



HARP PLAYER, 2014
1/3
Bronze
82 x 77 x 72 cm



BELLYDANCER, 2014
1/3
Bronze
140 x 70 x 50 cm



PANFLUTIST, 2014
1/3
Bronze
120 x 58 x 55 cm



VIOLINIST, 2014
1/3
Bronze
120 x 96 x 88 cm



TABL BALABI PLAYER, 2014
1/3
Bronze
120 x 80 x 56 cm



DARABUKKA PLAYER, 2014
1/3
Bronze
120 x 92 x 55 cm



APPLAUSE !, 2014
1/3
Bronze
115 x 75 x 65 cm



Questions & Answers

How were you first exposed to art? (Through Family, school, etc)

It was a kind of odd at first :I have been brought up in a extreme poor environment, where education is a utmost luxury and many of my peers prefer to help their parents in farming. For some reason I was fascinated by the idea of physical anatomy, but I was not knowledgeable. I was just fascinated by the human and animal bodies so I wanted to re create these anatomies through the mud.

Culturally and socially, this was causing a major problem for me with my family and neighbors.However I brought silt and begin the formation of my statues.Some of my entourage made fun of me but others ones encouraged to pursue through the path of the strange and the beautiful. Despite the religious belief that God would be surely unhappy with me as per my works I conveys the idea of imitating him in the creation of lives, I decided to strength all my efforts to become an artist and the distant idea become slowly a This was a difficult challenge for me as per the extreme poverty suffered in the villages, the environment completely not interested in art and more focused in battling against epidemics and plagues

How can I be an artist in light of this?

At the end I have has succeeded by following my dream, practicing my art and learning every day.

Tell us about your educational background, as well as your personal background (Where were you Born, grew up, lived etc)

I was born in the village of Nag Hamada Gnawi center in the far Upper Egypt where I joined the primary school, and later on the Agricultural Institute. I was used to work to afford my studies and art , I did not earn much , but this was still cheaper than my earnings.Either Between getting an education in any subject or art , I have and will always choose Art.

What was your first exhibition and where?

My first show was in 1999at the British council in Cairo

What the inspiration behind your works?

The truth is that is I like the transfer of realistic scenes of my life, perhaps for me to experience weakness issue of the creation.

Art has surely its own roots in this fact, but I don't reproduce the creation. I use it and I always add to it my own vision, with a lot of exaggerations. The exaggeration I preferred is the world of obese people as their big form works

as a symbol of the set of mind of my characters. What I want to express is that the memory stores sights, moments, experiences and lives, and my inspiration is like a little lamp light that jumps to my mind when I find the idea.

What are the messages you would like to convey through your art?

I am simply against the propagation of ugliness in the world.

My Art aims to create beauty, poetry like a protection against ugliness, even though the viewer can still imagine the ugly.

Tell us about this (current exhibition):

The exhibition “And now ...shall we dance?” will be shown starting from March 17 for a month.

I do not like to talk much about what I do, but here I am compelled to answer.

The exhibition is composed of a group statues, a group musicians , all and each of them apparently in a valley , a total stand-alone , all of them playing their solo , and no in relation with the other :

No harmony is organizing or orchestrating them , no conductor to lead as a proper orchestra ,no relations with the audience ,the rest of the world .

Is it a crisis of modern man, who is suffering from a fatal unit?

Is it a search for its uniqueness or the fall into the trap of compulsory isolation as was the hero, Meursault of Albert Camus, in “The Stranger”?

Do you suffer from these diaspora as happens now with the Egyptians?

Can each of you to choose one or ignore all of this and to reach his or her own vision completely

How do you envision your future of art on? If so how will it be accomplished?

How I imagine the future of art? I think that question needs to be an entire book to answer.

By now I am mostly concerned not only for the decline of art in Egyptian society , recognizing , of course , our shares in obsolescent art , graffiti and the after revolution art and the decline of patronage as well .

Due to the actual Egyptian situation we assist to a crisis

Amongst the art connoisseurs, the foreigners have left already Egypt, and the Egyptians will not invest in Art for now as they have priorities.

The big question is how the artistic production will stay alive without

I think that this require an extensive discussion to recreate a safe climax to reassure our audience



AHMED ASKALANY

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

Speaking about his next exhibition Askalany commented, “My philosophy is simplicity, to convey the idea directly to the viewer without overcomplicating the message with too much detail.

I’m extremely excited to be able to show again my latest works to the UAE.”

Askalany’s short career has thus far been blessed with success and his latest body of works is sure to be a favorite amongst the region’s art enthusiasts.

Ahmed Askalany’s latest exhibition is available to view at the Art Sawa Gallery in DIFC from the 17th March.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 Solo Show, Self Stories-Birds & I, Art Sawa, Dubai, UAE.
 - 2011 Show, Tache art gallery, Cairo, Egypt.
 - 2011 Christies Auction, Dubai, Dubai UAE.
 - 2010 Solo Show, Magenta 52 Batalia Milano, Italy
 - 2010 Special Exhibition, Khan Al-Maghraby, Cairo, Egypt.
 - 2010 Collective Exhibition, Art House Cairo, Egypt.
 - 2010 Group show, “ the human figure “ El Mashrabia, Cairo Egypt.
 - 2010 Pottery Symposium, Ministry of Culture, Fayoum Egypt.
 - 2009 Venice Biennial Egyptian pavilion, Italy.
 - 2009 17|02|09 Ahmed Askalany, Solo, Art Sawa, Dubai, UAE.
 - 2009 14|05|09 UNDERCURRENT Contemporary Egyptian Art, Art Sawa, Dubai, UAE.
 - 2008 11th Cairo International Biennial, Cairo, Egypt
 - 2008 17|12|08 Creative Expressions, Art Sawa, Dubai, UAE
 - 2008 Art Paris Abu Dhabi art fair, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
 - 2008 22|10|08 Opening, Art Sawa, Dubai, UAE
 - 2006 “Giardini Urbani”, Galleria Magenta 52, Milan, Italy.
 - 2004 “Delusion”, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt.
 - 2004 “Musulmanes, Musulmans dans la Ville”, Le Parc de la Villette, Paris, France.
 - 2003 “Cairo Here”, Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo, Egypt.
- Upper-Egypt”, Heliopolis Magazine, vol. 5, issue. 1, p55: (September 1999).

- 2002 “Heaven and Earth’s Evil”, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt.
- 2002 “Egyptian Faces”, Doroub Gallery, Cairo, Egypt.
- 2002 “5th Miniature Exhibition”, Opera House, Cairo, Egypt.
- 2001 “Cairo Modern Art”, Circus Theatre, The Hague, Netherlands.
- 2001 “Rat’s Room and Other Tales”, Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo, Egypt.
- 2000 “12th Youth Salon”, Opera House, Cairo, Egypt.

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- Ramadan, Dina, “Carving out a Future”, Cairo Times, vol. 7, issue. 2, p16-18: (13 March 2003)
- Sullivan, Francesca, “Ahmed Askalany”, Egypt’s Insight Magazine, vol. 7, issue.1, p39: (January 2003)
- Evanoff, Caroline, “Personal Perceptions”, Egyptian Reporter Magazine, vol. 7, issue. 1, p42-43: (April 2002).
- Farrag, Sharif, “In the Rat’s Room”, Cairo Times, vol. 5, issue. P38, 27: (29 November -5 December 2001).
- Kassem, Mervat, “Ahmed Askalany, a Spontaneous Artist from



ART SAWA

In 2008, Art Sawa found its roots in Dubai's multi-cultural dynamism. Amidst the skyline of this incredible city it was still difficult to find Middle Eastern Art, and yet there was a longing for art and culture that remained unmet. Create an Art platform that would provide artists from the region with a space where they could present their work, a space of sufficient size and quality to create its own dynamic. Art Sawa started its activities in its anchor 10,000 sqft space in Dubai's industrial zone of Al Quoz. It has expanded its presence to what has become the must see Art destination in Dubai, namely the Dubai International Financial Center (DIFC) to be closer to its collector base.

Art Sawa embodies all of Amel's aspirations for art in this part of the world; it is the largest addition to Dubai's bustling art scene. It is a distinctive art platform dedicated to the awareness and promotion of contemporary art from the Middle East, North Africa and neighboring countries.

Art Sawa is dedicated to promoting world-class contemporary art to a global and regional audience.

PO Box 212592
Dubai, UAE
T +971 4 3408660
F +971 4 3408661
E info@artsawa.com
W www.artsawa.com

artsawa

