

## **Hassan Sharif in his 3<sup>rd</sup> Solo Exhibition Blesses Silence and Manipulates Both Viewers and Wires.**

**By Hamda Khamis**

**Venue: Emirates Fine Arts Society**

**Location: Sharjah – U.A.E.**

**Date: October 6, 1986**

**Local Reality:** A growing number of problems and phenomena, some of it was a product of circumstances pertinent to this society or part of the world. It has negative repercussions or effects on the process of change. They have conditioned mental attitudes by surrendering at various levels or vice versa. All this was accompanied by growing national sentiments handling in a variety of ways such problems and phenomena and at the same time investigating and treating them. The differences in approaches might result into psychological and mental isolation that were in turn the outcome of behavioural and attitudinal isolation where the Ego supersedes society, the individual supersedes the social, the liberal freedom on the responsible freedom and the whole lived reality is negated as an expression of such an attitude.

The Arab Reality or Condition: An eternal universe dropping from stars! In such a climate was held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Exhibition by Hassan Sharif. The Exhibition Hall was crowded by artworks and people. Hassan Sharif sits in the corner near the gate. In the other corner there are newspaper pages wrapped by a white string. Each paper's size was 33 x 33 inches; it took two months, May to June to wrap these papers.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> corner we find 17 wooden sticks or poles, length- 48 inches for each one. Each pole was tied up by a white cotton string. Two carton tins were put amid the two corners facing the interior side, size 11x 13 x 14 inches, filled with white paper pieces all wrapped in the form of cubes. Each paper size 2x3 inches. It took whole month of June to prepare it.

Apart from the two tins there had been a heap of thin iron wires, And on the other side of the opposite wall were heaped white pieces of cloth or canvas size 4 x 36 inches, a number of buttons was used in preparing or weaving them. Work whole month of August. Somewhere between the different parts of this artwork sits the persons who talk to you about these works. And among all these works we find the room space, ceiling and walls.

### **Hassan was happy**

Conversation had been going on... Hassan Silent.... Everybody was surprised, attracted...excited...meditative. . Only Hassan was happy with it, he was amusing himself as he is going to declare later on. The dialoge had been focusing around “art”, “artist” and “aesthetics” or beauty.

Only Hassan had been handling the reins of the game. His sitting was on one of the four corners and his work occupied the rest of space and corners to complement one big fact that he maintained himself ‘ I sit on a corner and view ironically reality ’

The irony that I state with much bitterness is that the Exhibition by Hassan was not just an isolation from Reality and ironising it, but it is also an affirmation of the isolated nature of such a style an irony of the art and artist who was Hassan Sharif himself his vision and tools or devices? I liked to liberate myself from the framework of an artwork; This was what Hassan said later on.... Now let us consider the words Exit and Go...where does Hassan want to go? The Hall.... its four walls and ceiling...the sticks ...cloth...wires...buttons...the floor – the spaces, persons, movements of hands, voices. Hassan the spectator or viewer- All that part was narrower than the canvas painting...It was narrower than any content not available at that moment...It was random and miserably absurd to get rid of it...It has been strongly present.

Such randomness could not be subject of dialogue or a discussion where terms like beauty and “aesthetics” are used. It was a resume highlighting a certain type of personal behaviour...so, why were the others invited here?

Hassan answers: “ I have not presented a single artwork but artworks and the public could not act as a viewer...And only the viewers have acted in a way to be as part of these artworks after entering the exhibition hall. I was the viewer...not part of the work...those who kept staying outside the hall were the most intelligent”.

#### **Chinese Wisdom – a weakness in:**

I hope to see the viewer viewing the artwork not opening a mouth or ear. Only he opens his eyes smiles from within and exits The viewers couldn't behave as such they talked... and got excited.

I liked very much the scene of some people touching my works examining their material... A number of them took some wires with him...some have tried to figure out the quantity of wrapped strings on the wooden pieces. Also some examined the distances the latter category were smart people in my eyes, I love them, they remind me of the behaviour by members of certain primitive societies where man takes with him an object of reverence so as to bless him. I entertained the same feeling.

I don't stand for my works...I was viewing... I used to view the viewers all this despite the fact that my works belong to me and carry some of my traits.

I just wanted to say that I succeeded in creating a language or jargon through which I could express unfamiliar things to me. Creating such a language is of vital importance; it is a very special jargon. And if an artist reaches such a stage I consider it to be a highly advanced stage!

My language is very plain and the viewer has to refer to all abundant human literature in order to discover this truth.

My problem is that I'm very faithful and clear. I displayed or presented knowledge... Nobody was looser to come here...I presented a fruitful work...an idea was added to viewer's knowledge... And the more man acquires wide information the more his way of viewing things is likely to change.

I manipulate the viewer in the same manner as wires!

**Al Bayan,  
October 24, 1986**

**Translated by Dr. Hassan El-Rayah**