



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Egyptian Surrealists in Global Perspective

A conference organised by Sharjah Art Foundation, the Institute for Comparative Modernities at Cornell University and the Visual Cultures Program at the American University in Cairo will take place from 26-28 November 2015.



Georges Henein. Photography by Boula Henein

November 4, 2015 (Cairo, Egypt / Sharjah, UAE)—In collaboration with the Institute for Comparative Modernities at Cornell University and the Visual Cultures Program at the American University in Cairo (AUC), [Sharjah Art Foundation](#) (SAF) will be organising an international conference entitled ***The Egyptian Surrealists in Global Perspective***, from

November 26 – 28, 2015.

Focusing on the history and the evolution of the Egyptian Surrealist group and their relationship with their western and international counterparts, this project will document one of the most interesting chapters of modernism in the late 1930s up to the early 1960s, highlighting the multifaceted aspects of modernity and its global interconnectedness in the 20th century.

The conference will be followed by a travelling exhibition entitled *When Arts Become Liberty: The Egyptian Surrealists (1938-1965)* to be inaugurated at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2017 in Sharjah, UAE, followed by an exhibition in Cairo, Egypt.

The proceedings of the conference will serve as a base for the first of a two-volume publication to accompany the exhibition, with the second to serve as the catalogue of the proposed exhibition.

The conference and curatorial team includes: Hoor Al Qasimi (Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE), Salah M. Hassan (Cornell University, USA) Bahia Shehab (American University in Cairo, Egypt), Ehab Ellabban (Ufuq Gallery, Cairo, Egypt), Nagla Samir (American University in Cairo, Egypt), Lydie Diakhate (Paris, France)

All sessions will take place at: The American University in Cairo (AUC), The Oriental Hall, Downtown, Old Campus, Tahrir Square, 113 Kasr El Aini Street, Cairo 11511, Egypt

Conference Programme:

Thursday, November 26

4:00pm

Opening Session

Professor Sherif Sedky (Provost, AUC), Bahia Shehab (AUC), Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi (SAF), Salah M. Hassan (Cornell University)

4:30pm

Key Presentation I

Moderator: Ehab Ellabban (Ufuq Gallery, Cairo, Egypt)

Emad Abu Ghazi (Cairo University, Egypt): "The Time of the Surrealists in Egypt: An Historical Background"

5:15pm

Key Presentation II

Samir Gharib (Cairo, Egypt): “The Tragedies of Surrealism in Egypt: Part of a Personal Testimony”

Discussant: Salah M. Hassan

Friday, November 27

9:00am

Mining the Archives: Egyptian Surrealism in Historical Context

Moderator: Nagla Samir (AUC)

Patrick Kane (Sharjah Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE): “Egyptian Surrealism and Modern Egyptian History”

Hisham Geshta (Cairo, Egypt): “Reading *Al Tatawur* Retrospectively: The Surrealist Publications and their Relevance for Our Times”

Discussant: Amina Diab (University of York, UK)

11:00am

Key Presentation III

Moderator: Adel Elsiwi (Cairo, Egypt)

Bachir El Sibaei (Cairo, Egypt): “Georges Henein: A Model of an Egyptian Surrealist”

Discussant: Hala Halim (New York University, USA)

12:00pm

Thinking Comparatively: Other Surrealisms/Global Expressions (Part I)

Moderator: Malek Khouri (AUC)

Clare Davies (The Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA): “‘Orient, lovely bird of prey and innocence’: Egyptian Surrealism in the Orient/Occident Debate”

Didier Monciaud, (University Diderot Paris VI, Paris, France): “The Political Agenda of the Egyptian Surrealists: Issues on Radical Outlook and Anti-Stalinist Marxism of a Cosmopolitan Network in a Colonial Context (Late 1930s – Mid 1940s)”

Monique Bellan (The Orient-Institut Beirut, Lebanon): “Defying Reality: Surrealism in Cairo and Beirut”

Discussant: Alexandra Seggerman (Smith College and Hampshire Colleges, USA)

3:30pm

Thinking Comparatively: Other Surrealisms/Global Expressions (Part II)

Moderator: Monique Bellan

Terri Geis (International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia): “‘This is the House of the Sphinx’: Leonora Carrington and Edward James in Mexico”

Gerard Aching (Arab Center for Research and Policy, Doha, Qatar): “In Legitimate Defense: Surrealism, Communism, and Their Discontents in France”

Manthia Diawara (New York University, USA): “Between Surrealism and the Marvelous Realism: Caribbean Dialogues”

Discussant: Didier Monciaud

5:45pm

Egyptian Surrealism: Philosophy, Aesthetics and the Modernist Experience in Egyptian Art

Moderator: Jean Colombain (Paris, France)

Alexandra Seggerman: “The ‘Beautiful Black Cloud’ of Egyptian Modern Art”

May Telmissany (University of Ottawa, Canada): “Destabilizing Modernity, Kamel Telmisany’s Surrealist Unrest”

Amina Diab: “‘Free Art’ and Surrealist Aesthetics: Re-situating *Jama'at Al-Fann Wal-Hurriya* in Egyptian Art History”

Discussant: Patrick Kane

Saturday, November 28

9:30am

Egyptian Surrealism: Photography and the Cinematic Expression

Moderator: Amina Diab

Malek Khouri: “Surrealist Nuance and Postcolonial Subjectivity: Youssef Chahine's *Alexandria, Again and Again*”

Mohsen Wify (Cairo, Egypt): “The Cinema of Kamel Telmisany and the Petite Bourgeoisie”

Maria Golia (Cairo, Egypt): “Notes on Photography: Egypt and the Surreal”

Discussant: May Telmissany

11:45am

Egyptian Surrealism: Critical and Literary Perspectives

Moderator: Bahia Shehab

Mona Khazindar (Institute of the Arab World, Paris, France): “Georges Henein, the Herald of Surrealism in Egypt”

Hala Halim: “Afterlife of Egyptian Surrealism: Edwar al-Kharrat’s Texts and the so-called Alexandrian School”

Michael Richardson (Goldsmith College, London, UK): “Surrealist engagements with ancient Egypt: ‘Osiris is a Black’”

Discussant: Clare Davies

3:30pm

Individual Artistic Perspectives: On Egyptian Surrealism

Jean Colombain: “Ramsès Younan and Surrealism: From a Password to a Rubber Ball”

Adel Elsiwi: “The Egyptian Surrealists: A Contemporary Egyptian Artist’s Perspective”

Salah M. Hassan: “Egyptian Surrealism’s Time Capsule: Kamal Youssef as Witness”

Discussant: Bahia Shehab

6:30pm

Closing Remarks

Hoor Al Qasimi and Salah M. Hassan

For more information on the conference programme and participants, visit www.sharjahart.org

Connect with Sharjah Art Foundation: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)

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