

Hamdi Attia Exhibit at Al Masar Gallery

# Al Masar Gallery: Re-Presentation



**Name:**

Hamdi Attia Exhibit at Al Masar Gallery

**Starts:**

17/10/2010, 11:00:00

**Ends:**

11/11/2010, 21:00:00

**Category:**

Arts & Culture

**Location:**

Al Masar

**City:**

Cairo , Egypt

**Telephone:**

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Head to Al Masar Gallery for their latest exhibit featuring artist Hamdi Attia. Attia's latest work concentrates on the aesthetics of photojournalism and the exploration of mass-mediated culture as it depicts mass destruction. This thought-provoking and unique exhibit shouldn't be missed!



Melissa Howell

The adage 'a picture is worth a thousand words' rings true for Egyptian artist Hamdi Attia, whose current exhibit Re-Presentation is being held at Al Masar Gallery in Zamalek and finds inspiration in photojournalism. After examining a number of photographs from published news sources, the artist began to

find deeper layers of meaning in the photographs' aesthetic components. In Re-Presentation, Attia recreates these images through abstract paintings.

The exhibit's concept is an interesting one. Often, when we view the photographs attached to a piece of news, we don't analyse the images on an artistic level; rather, we see the image solely as a means for transmitting further information about the story itself. This is despite the fact that there is outstanding and visually stunning work that comes from photojournalism. Attia's exhibit asks us to consider these works on a different, purely artistic level.

The exhibit unfortunately suffers from too much portraiture as well as some lesser known references. The colourful, abstract 'head shots' are aesthetically appealing; but they lose much of their meaning as they are taken out of context and unidentified.

A large painted canvas entitled *Could Be Viewed as a Generous Reading of Oldenburg's Split Button* is another piece that may be lost on Attia's audience. The painting is a representation—presumably of a photograph—of a sculpture that sits on the University of Pennsylvania campus, where the artist received his Master's degree in sculpture. Again, the painting was an interesting perspective on the sculpture, but it didn't particularly advance the message of the exhibit.

However, some of the paintings were decidedly appropriate for a collection based on photojournalism. There were eye-catching and thought-provoking scenes of cities almost entirely blurred out with blotches of dark paint, possibly representing blackouts, pollution or destruction. A number of pieces represented oil rigs and oil spills, presumably having been based on coverage of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico earlier this year. Had the whole exhibit been inspired by recognisable events; it would be more effective as a study of photojournalism.

The exhibit could benefit from a larger space. Al Masar Gallery is not a small venue, but hanging several of the larger canvases in narrow hallways is a poor choice for abstract work.

Still, the exhibit's art is provocative and the mixing of pop art influences with the abstract paintings has an appealing effect. Re-Presentation will certainly make us look at the news a little differently in the future.