



['Dialogue of Mind & Soul' by Georges Bahgory at Al Masar Gallery](#)  
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Galleries

Cairo, Egypt

## **Al Masar Gallery: 'Dialogue of Mind & Soul' by Georges Bahgory**

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Georges Bahgory, often referred to as the 'granddaddy of Egyptian caricature' is known - not only for his political cartoons - but also for his vivid, colourful representations through his paintings. The large exhibition of his work, 'Dialogue of Mind & Soul' at Al Masar Gallery in Zamalek presents no exception.

This collection, as its title suggests, represents the dialogue between the artist's mind and his soul. As a way of rationalising his thoughts, it seems Bahgory has thrown his feelings, onto the canvases all at once, which has resulted in busy, intense and energising paintings; most giving off a cheerful, happy aura.

Full of warm Mediterranean colours, the paintings are made up of an array of mixed media and several incorporate the khayameya pattern; a print strongly associated with Egypt. Many of the

paintings were easy to relate to; they show familiar scenes of traditional daily life and culture within Egypt.

Bahgory takes his inspiration from everyday occurrences; in two related pieces he captures a sight typical to Egypt, one which we are particularly fond of; the making, carrying and selling of balady bread. The first of the energized, colourful paintings, titled 'The Bread Seller 1', shows a figure on a bicycle painfully manoeuvring a crate of handmade bread through a crowd on their head. The second, it's sequel, 'The Bread Seller 2', portrays the bread being sold at a market to a swarm of anonymous hands and blank faces.

Another characterful painting was a jazzy, stimulating depiction of one of Cairo's most cultural market places and old-school chill out spots; Khan El Khalili. The lively piece incorporates smoking shisha pipes, cigarettes, an ongoing backgammon game and of course, lots of cups of tea. The warm, background colours and khayameya patterns reflect the welcoming atmosphere associated with the marketplace.

Continuing around the exhibition, we came across another painting strongly affiliated with daily life in Egypt; the spectacle of Friday prayer. With its subjects all dressed in traditional white galabeya, the scene is somewhat chaotic. Several groups are shown to be at different stages of prayer; be it removing footwear on entry to the mosque, kneeling or standing. What stabilises the image as a scene, however, is the fact that all the figures share resolute, firm facial expressions.

Although most of Bahgory's paintings are light-hearted and aesthetically interesting, some reveal a more seedy side to some traditions. For example, his portrait of a plump belly dancer performing in close proximity to an Egyptian musician straddles the line of humour and the sleazy contradictions of a broken society.

The majority of the paintings in 'Dialogue of Mind and Soul' do not require a great deal of thought, particularly for Cairenes, as they directly construe scenes that are commonplace in Egypt. George Bahgory's exhibition highlights some wonderful and unique characteristics of the country we live in, which, amongst the chaos and hubbub of our busy schedules, can often be left ignored and unappreciated.

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