



['Alienation' by Sami Aboul Azm at Al Masar Gallery](#)  
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Galleries

Cairo, Egypt

## **Al Masar Gallery: 'Alienation' by Sami Aboul Azm**

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Internationally recognised, Egyptian artist, Sami Aboul Azm, has put together a number of oil paintings at Al Masar Gallery in Zamalek. His collection, titled 'Alienation' attempts to portray the feelings of alienation and unease within Egyptian society which have surfaced since the revolution in 2011.

Before the revolution, Sami Aboul Azm believed that people were motivated to revolt by dreams of 'justice, freedom, equality and human dignity'. However, he perceives the results to be altogether different; people keep their distance from others, cautiously living in a broken society.

Famous for his life-like depictions of both people and objects, all of the images are painted on large canvases using strong, earthy tones. Each individual piece is titled using an emotive word to reinforce the feelings in the community they are attempting to project.

The first two pieces hung after entering the gallery are of deep purple aubergines – the first with a single one and the second with three – titled 'The Reflection of Hope'. It's a simple and natural representation of Egypt; one that is tied in all kinds of domestic meanings.

Moving on, we went on to appreciate the other pieces in the first section of the gallery titled 'Seclusion', 'Hanging', 'Solitude' and 'Separation', all of which were characterised through intricate paintings of women. 'Solitude' and 'Separation' both show women standing alone with vacant expressions, whilst 'Seclusion' shows a woman lying on a gritty floor, her face turned away to the side. A painting of a pair of men's trousers, hanging on a wall, may have been metaphorically used to present a feeling of hanging and suspension.

A painting titled 'Unveiled Ship' was difficult to interpret; the ship was a pile of broken pieces, possibly an indication of the broken structure of society when the government's corruption was unveiled.

Wandering through to the next and final space, following the previous theme of separateness, three more paintings of women were hung. A portrait of a pregnant woman contextualised the act of 'Waiting' whilst the painting of three women facing away from one another, wrapped in blankets, embodied feelings of 'Isolation' – even when in the company of others. His piece, 'Shattered', illustrates a woman sitting in a broken down area, appearing to render the shattering of dreams.

We were drawn to two other, separate pieces; paintings of boats, docked and neglected in a boat yard, titled 'Trapped Freedom'. We likened this to the idea that people have the potential to be free, but are restrained by the environment and the situations beyond their control.

A detailed, almost 3D, painting of a holdall bag, named 'Departing' could be interpreted in many different ways. It may imply the departure of the old government, or indeed the departure from the old regime.

We appreciated the depths of the rich, earthy colours, used to create beautiful, realistic representations of how Sami Aboul Azm sees the framework and complexity of Egyptian society today. Not all the paintings are straightforward representations, but instead allow and encourage your imagination to interpret them in your own way, adding an extra interesting element to his collection.

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