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'The Journey' Exhibition at Al Masar Gallery

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Best Bit

Al Masar Gallery: 'The Journey' by Mohammed Sabry

Published On: 21/12/2013

With the arts and culture in Cairo continuing to diversify, there is an unfortunate truth to the idea that, quite frankly, the scope of the exhibitions in Cairo varies in quality as much as they do in method and

manner.

Zamalek's Al Masar Gallery, however, have a knack at picking out interesting work from some of the more established Egyptian artists. 'The Journey' is Mohammed Sabry's colourful collection from 1940 to 1970.

As the only living artist from the second generation of the Egyptian art movement, the exhibition marks his 95th birthday of the award-winning artist.

The majority of canvases on display are large and striking, using different techniques to capture an array of familiar cultural and historical scenes. Seemingly, paints and pastels are the main materials used in his pieces, creating different effects with each piece. Spread out over different rooms in the gallery, his different styles and collections are easily distinguishable.

One of the most eye-catching, nostalgia-inducing sets were two pieces capturing former Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser; the first giving his 'Peace Speech' at UNO, and the second titled 'The Cairo Treaty' which shows the ex-president signing the peace agreement. The detail in both is incredible, from Nasser's expressions to the plaques of other UN members. In 'The Cairo Treaty', even the paintings hanging on the wall are masterpieces in themselves.

Several other pieces show scenes of rural Egypt; 'Under the Shade' presents a farming family sheltering from the sun underneath a leafy canopy. The very simply titled, 'Woman Baking', uses a warm colour palette and shows a group of women sitting on the floor, baking. 'Al Kotaab' shows a typical scene from a village school; children are sitting in a circle around the teachers, whilst one child is seemingly being punished in the background facing the wall.

Possibly our favourite piece in the exhibition was an oil painting named 'Sunrise in Luxor'. In this piece, Sabry has managed to capture a perfect sense of tranquillity in the still waters of the Nile, with boats sailing in the distance against a picturesque, countryside background.

Being well travelled, several pastel pieces encapsulated scenes of Morocco and Spain, portraying the unique, colourful architecture along the quiet streets. The decision to use pastel results in a soft, calming finish.

'The Journey' is an interesting, vibrant exhibition of works from Mohammed Sabry; a well-respected and incredibly talented artist who's life's work has left an impressive legacy.

The stunning 'Sunrise in Luxor'.

Worst Bit

It's a shame that, with the new wave of Egyptian art following more modern approaches, work like this could come to be seen as dated.

360 Tip

The exhibition run's until January 9th.

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