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## 'Table of Life' by Tarek Montasser at the Art Lounge - Al Masar Gallery

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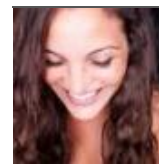
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### Art Lounge - Al Masar Gallery: 'Table of Life' by Tarek Montasser

Published On: 14/05/2013

'Table of Life' is Egyptian artist Tarek Montasser's first solo exhibition and is currently showing at the Art Lounge of Al Masar Gallery in Zamalek. The collection is relatively small, with still life being the

Best Bit

general premise. The artist returned to Cairo in 2004 after years of travelling with mixed feelings towards his hometown; changes over the years left him feeling displaced and confused – emotions that are reflected in all the pieces.

The first painting that meets you by the entrance, 'Chaos', is simply a canvas full of curved paint tubes. Their shape and resulting pattern look almost like dancing dervishes, though they supposedly represent fallen soldiers in what the artist describes as "a useless battle". His brush strokes are thick and full; there's a fervent hastiness to them and it gives life to the inanimate objects.

Many of his images look as though he captures his view of sitting at a table to work. Tables with paintbrushes, pencils, cups of coffee and lamps are depicted, only these have juggling clowns standing in the middle, further expressing his inner madness. 'Noor Loves Apples' and 'They Passed By' are also in the same vein, only these have what look like figurines standing around, casting shadows on the surface below them, looking rather suspicious.

There's also a cartoonish quality to some of his work; images of lollipops and cakes look almost edible, and while his brushstroke technique is fairly inconspicuous, the work feels accessible and there's undeniable skill involved in creating such an effect and instilling the exhibition with such a quality.

Montasser doesn't use a lot of colour in his work; most of the pieces are more of a muddy shade, but there is still something very vibrant about them. Perhaps it's the combination of the lively brush strokes along with the actual subject, or maybe it's the contrast of the dusty palette against sparse blotches of colour; either way, there is something active in his still life.

Although the artist employs one of the oldest forms of painting, there is definitely a quirky element that runs through the conventional approach. It's as though Montasser gives us a peek into his mind, and although the insight reveals a lot of personal frustration, it's also whimsical and entertaining.

### More Photos



Montasser infuses a twist into a very traditional artistic approach.

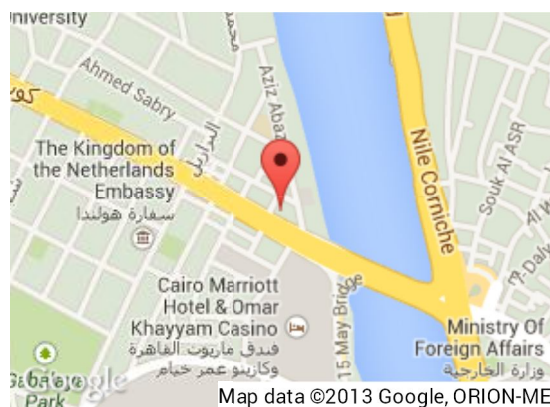
### Worst Bit

The exhibition is quite small.

### 360 Tip

Al Masar Gallery is closed on Fridays.

### Map



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6 Brazil Street, Zamalek

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