



of an old Garden City building. American abstract expressionists like *De Kooning*, *Gorky*, and *Franz Kline* influenced his work and technique. After graduation, he discovered acrylic as a medium, and coincidentally ventured into Advertising. He relocated to Dubai in 1997, and was always traveling, offering the exposure an artist would relish in, returning to a completely different Cairo in 2004. Montasser used painting to overcome the emotional and sensory overload, and used his talents as a way of dealing with the nostalgia of parting with a city that is no longer there.

Al Masar Gallery is dedicated to artists who contribute to the contemporary art scene of Egypt, conveniently located in the most artistically-charged district in Cairo. Make sure to visit next time you are in Zamalek; art has gone forgotten for long, and it is time for a great comeback. The artists are doing their part, now it is the audience's turn to assimilate art back into popular culture.



Al Masar Gallery has also recently inaugurated a new venue, *The Art Lounge*, which opened **Tarek Montasser's** first solo exhibition. *"Table of Life"* portrays snapshots of inanimate objects that are the subject of his paintings. Everyday objects are drawn in perfect composition, with sharp contours and colors arranged in an almost haphazard design. Montasser's use of acrylic brings these still life paintings to life, where one can almost hear the din of the crowds in *"Musketeers"* and *"Napoleon Gambit,"* which seem to have the same setting. According to him, "a painter should be mute," which is a prevailing quality to his exhibition.

Tarek Montasser has been painting for as long as he could remember, inspired by his uncle's work where they would "[collect] little scraps of cloth, calque paper, thread, pencil stubs, and little splinters of blue chalk and [arrange] them in imaginary landscapes." Montasser was French-schooled, where he was recognized for his natural talent by his art teacher, *Monsieur Philip*, who would make him draw portraits of his classmates to waive off his accumulating punishments. Despite his natural inclination towards art, Montasser studied mechanical engineering at the American University in Cairo who managed to audit all available art classes, and would frequently skip classes to paint at a rented room on a rooftop

