

Overview The Road Ahead

April 26-May 5, 2012

Curator: Roland Prime



In the year following Egypt's "January 25th revolution," as the country sought to find its way into the future, the 4th annual CARAVAN Festival of the Arts with the theme "The Road Ahead" was held in Maadi/Cairo at St. John's Church.

45 premier Middle Eastern and Western visual artists came together for a selling exhibition held inside St. John's Church, with each submitting one piece of work that reflected the theme, "The Road Ahead". The visual art exhibition was curated by participating British artist Roland Prime, and included a diverse range of noted Arab contemporary artists such as Reda Abdel Rahman and Mohamed Abla, to expatriate artists such as the well-known Norwegian artist Britt Boutros Ghali and renowned American sculptor Erik Blome.

Many attended and there was considerable Arab and Western media coverage. "It could not be timelier," said Rev. Canon Paul-Gordon Chandler, author and the American Rector/Minister of St. John's Church and Founder of the Caravan Festival of the Arts, "to be involved in this interfaith aspect of peace-building in this country, toward promoting a sectarian-free Egypt".

Roland Prime, curator of the 2012 CARAVAN Festival's visual arts exhibition, said "Our desire through this fourth exhibition was to address the importance of religious harmony and unity for Egypt's future."

OPENING NIGHT



The Festival was officially opened by Yousra, the celebrated Egyptian actress, Dr. Mahmoud Azab (Consultant for the Grand Imam of Al Azhar for the Interfaith Dialogues), Sheikh Mohammed Gemeah (Member of the Al Azhar-Anglican Communion Dialogue) and the Most Rev Dr Mouneer H Anis. The opening program closed with a special performance by well-known singer, Rula Zaki.

Around the visual art exhibition various artistic programs were held focusing on film, literature and music.

LITERARY PRESENTATION



Ahdaf Soueif gave a talk based on her book, *Cairo: My City, Our Revolution*. This was followed by a book signing. The Anglo-Egyptian author has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize for her internationally acclaimed novels *Map of Love* and *In the Eye of the Sun*.

FILM NIGHT



Yusra, the celebrated Egyptian actress and former UNDP Goodwill Ambassador gave a talk about the importance of freedom of artistic expression.

MUSIC



On the opening night, the popular Egyptian singer Rula Zaki performed her song, *Ahl El Ketaab*. A closing concert was held with the Ana Masry Band (meaning "I am Egyptian" in Arabic): a musical group that has become very trendy since the revolution known for their fusion of Arabic, Muslim, Sufi and Christian music.

ARTIST'S RECEPTION

Prior to the exhibition Roland Prime, the curator of the visual art exhibition, and Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler, visited many of the artists in their studios. They also arranged a reception dinner on January 26 for the participating artists which was an opportunity to come together, interact and build friendships with each other.

