



THE KEY



THE KEY مفتاح الحياة
HARMONY . PEACE . HOPE



مفتاح الحياة



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PARAYAN



PARAYAN





Launched at



ABOUT CARAVAN

CARAVAN is an international peacebuilding arts NGO that focuses on building bridges through the arts between the creeds and cultures of the Middle East and West. Originating in Cairo, Egypt, and now based out of Chicago, USA, CARAVAN's experience has shown that the Arts can serve as one of the most effective mediums to enhance understanding, bring about respect, enable sharing and deepen friendship between those of different faiths and cultures. One of the flagship initiatives of CARAVAN is the globally recognized interfaith CARAVAN Exhibition of Art, a unique arts initiative that brings together many of the Middle East's and West's premier and emerging artists. Learn more at www.oncaravan.org

ABOUT THE FOUNDING SPONSOR SODIC

SODIC is one of the region's leading real estate development companies and is currently developing a number of large and diversified projects in Egypt. SODIC's developments range from residential projects of different types to retail, commercial and large scale mixed-use city centers in east and west Cairo. It's a position it has achieved by taking a different stance on what it means to succeed. SODIC believes in creating Human Developments – environments where people can develop their full potential, lead productive and creative lives in accord with their needs, interests and aspirations. This belief drives SODIC to challenge itself to continuously introduce new, exciting projects and deliver on the most stringent of standards in design and execution, property management and customer service. SODIC is listed on the Cairo Stock Exchange (Ticker OCDI). For more information, please visit www.sodic.com

ABOUT THE SODIC ART INITIATIVE SODICART

At SODIC, art is perceived art as the highest expression of freedom, one that reflects an individual articulation free from definitions of ideology, schools of thought and artistic categorizations. SODIC believes that the arts play a large role in Egyptian society, and provide a powerful platform for communication beyond the capacity of words. SODIC also considers it its duty to support local arts and to provide communities that interweave superior design and architecture with authentic Egyptian Art. This enables them to contribute to the arts in Egypt, and provide soulful and enriching communities for their children to thrive in. Today more than ever, the world is more interconnected and the impact of the arts can transcend beyond the borders of any country or culture. With these beliefs, SODIC is proud to sponsor the 2016 CARAVAN exhibition titled 'The Key'. SODIC Art's past projects include the first metal sculpture symposium in Egypt, a functional art marble bench symposium, the 2014 and 2015 CARAVAN travelling visual arts exhibitions titled 'AMEN-A Prayer for the World' and 'The Bridge' respectively, amongst others.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special gratitude for realization of this important peacebuilding exhibition, THE KEY, goes to many individuals and groups, including:

To **SODIC**, the founding sponsor of this strategic East-West exhibition. Their continued generosity and passion for using the arts for peacebuilding purposes is deeply valued.

To all **40 participating Egyptian, Middle Eastern and Western artists** in THE KEY who accepted the challenge of using this ancient symbol of harmony, the Ankh, to communicate through their art a message deeply needed in our world at this time.

To **Dr. Reda Abdel Rahman**, the co-curator, participating artist and sculptor of the Ankh form, for his tremendous assistance in so many ways. This exhibition could not have happened without him.

To **Dr. Ashraf Reda** and his **A.R. Group** for designing and publishing this beautiful catalog.

To **Dr. Rasha El Agroudy** for her generosity in enabling THE KEY to premiere at her beautiful art gallery in Cairo, the Nile Art Gallery; formerly the studio of the renowned Egyptian film director Shady Abdel Salam.

To two of CARAVAN's important partners, **The Episcopal Church/USA and the United Religions Initiative (URI)**, for their generous support and backing.

To **Egypt**, where CARAVAN originated. Seen by many as the “mother of the world” (Masr um' el donya), Egypt continues to provide endless inspiration and lessons for our world, both from its past and through its people today, in the midst of the challenges she faces.

Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler, Founder and President, CARAVAN, and Co-Curator, THE KEY

Note - The dimensions for the ankh form in this exhibition are:

Height-1.15m
Width-70cm
Depth-22cm
Base-22 x 45cm



ENTERING THE FUTURE WITH A KEY FROM THE PAST



“Because art is a universal language, it is an essential part of the globalization of humanity.”

Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi, Founder, Barjeel Art Foundation

“The symbolic power of art . . . opens dimensions and elements of reality which otherwise would remain unapproachable . . . [and] unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul . . .”

Paul Tillich, 20th century Philosopher and Theologian

At a time when stereotypes and media hype are increasing the ever widening divide between the Middle East and West, creating growing misconceptions and apprehensions about each other, CARAVAN is honored to host THE KEY, a strategic East-West art exhibition that seeks to change perceptions and speak directly to the global unconscious.

As the 2016 CARAVAN Exhibition of Art, THE KEY uses the world's most ancient symbol of harmony and pluralism, the Egyptian Ankh (known as the “Key of Life”) as the canvas for a contemporary message of hope for a harmonious, peaceful and tolerant world. THE KEY showcases the work of 40 premier and emerging Egyptian, Middle Eastern and Western contemporary artists using a modern three-dimensional fiberglass portrayal of the Ankh, an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph that read “life”. This ancient symbol has been adopted and modified by many cultures and religions over the millennia and is today a globally recognized symbol invoking the tolerance of diversity as in Ancient Egypt.

The participating artists in THE KEY are voicing their hopes and aspirations, focusing on engendering harmony and peace among peoples of different nationalities, cultural heritages and faith backgrounds, so that we can all coexist and benefit from our diversity, East and West, and live in a peaceful and harmonious world. The Egyptian, Middle Eastern and Western participating artists include women and men, from renowned contemporary artists to emerging younger artists, employing different mediums, and coming from the different monotheistic faith backgrounds.

THE KEY focuses on uniting people of different backgrounds by highlighting how peaceful coexistence was once possible, and despite current misunderstandings, can be once again. Designed to grab the imagination, the exhibition seeks to inspire its viewers to realize what is possible and how we can all play a part in shaping our world into one where understanding and compassion are valued above all.

CARAVAN, which originated out of Cairo, Egypt, is an international peacebuilding arts NGO focused on building bridges through the arts between the creeds and cultures of the Middle East and West. We profoundly believe that the arts can serve as one of the most effective mediums to enhance understanding, bring about respect, enable sharing, and deepen friendship between those of different faiths and cultures.

A traveling exhibition, THE KEY opened in Cairo, Egypt on the banks of the Nile River at the Nile Art Gallery and will be showcased in the United Kingdom and the USA. Co-curated by noted Egyptian artist Dr. Reda Abdel Rahman, who also sculpted the Ankh form for the exhibition, and CARAVAN founder and president, Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler. A percentage of all artwork sales during the exhibition's international tour will go toward supporting an Egyptian charity providing hope and a future to underprivileged children. As in the 2014 and 2015 CARAVAN Exhibitions of Art, we are honored to have SODIC, a major real estate firm in Egypt, as THE KEY's founding sponsor.

The heart of THE KEY is perhaps best summed up in the words of Youssou N'Dour, the celebrated singer from Senegal, where I grew up; “People need to see that, far from being an obstacle, the world's diversity of languages, religions and traditions is a great treasure, affording us precious opportunities to recognize ourselves in others.”

Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler

Founder and President, CARAVAN



THOUGHTS FROM THE CO-CURATOR AND SCULPTOR OF THE ANKH FORM



This year's CARAVAN exhibition is a particular privilege for me as it highlights the Ankh and the ancient history of my beautiful country of Egypt. There is so much we all can learn from Egypt's magnificent past.

My own work as an artist is deeply influenced by the fundamental elements of Egypt, the Nile and Pharaonic symbolism. The simplicity of this Ankh sculpture and its message of harmony, bringing peace to people of every culture, religion and background, are as timeless as the Nile itself.

I would like to thank my friend Paul-Gordon Chandler for his partnership with CARAVAN in making this important project possible and the Egyptian, Arab and Western artists who have come together to offer many voices that blend into one very strong message, for hope and peace, that calls out to everyone to embrace all peoples.

Dr. Reda Abdel Rahman

Artist and Co-Curator, THE KEY

THE KEY OF LIFE – THE LURE OF GEOGRAPHY, BELIEF AND CREATIVITY



When the ancient mythological Egyptian Deshret went down from the highlands, mountains and deserts to the dark land of the Nile Valley, the Kemit, a geographical treasure awaited him: a carpet of cultivated greenery, a spring of beauty and a source of food. Egyptians were innately connected with nature, its plants, the infinity of the universe, and the ease of living amidst security. This consequently led to the search for a Creator who stood behind such a perfectly regulated universe. A magical language of faith began to develop; beasts rage when the Nile floods and the eyes of the skies strive to reach the threshold of the throne, what lies beyond. Next the idea of 'the Creator God' was born and with it symbols of expression, the concepts of resurrection, the middle life and the afterlife. Then followed the discovery of the existence of the soul, 'ba', in the form of a bird with a human head squatting at the foot of the grave of the dead that holds the body 'ka'. 'Ka' is later resurrected upon the return of the soul on the 'Great Day of Resurrection'.

Eventually other beliefs emerged: the dead go to the fields and plow the land, cultivating wheat during the day, their souls living on the branches of trees and among the birds and the stars in the sky. Despite the common use of the phrase 'polytheism', I think that the concept of monotheism was more evident in ancient Egypt. This is affirmed in the book Exit in Daylight, commonly known as The Book of the Dead, translated for the first time by the German Egyptologist, Karl Richard Lepsius in 1842. It consists of 200 chapters of charms, prayers and verses that were written on the walls of the pyramids, sarcophagi and papyrus to guide the dead in his journey to the afterlife.

This spiritual monotheistic vision reached its peak during the time of Akhenaton, the great monotheist who perceived the Divine with the eye of a meditating artist whose brush is soaked in pure milk as he depicts the painting of existence. Addressing the sun, the symbol of the one God and the source of light and life, he says:

"How beautiful is your rising in the horizon, you the beginner of life and the taker of lives. When you rise you bestow your beauty upon earth, you the great, the beautiful and the superior. Your rays surround the earth and all your creatures on it, those whom you bind with your love. No matter how far you get, you fill the earth with your light and no matter how high up you get you send your shimmer with the rise of the dawn."

From these verses we sense how evident the monotheistic spirit was in Ancient Egyptian thought. This is creatively reflected in sculpture, drawing and the creation of symbols that the ancient Egyptians used to approach the one God. I think such symbols were wrongly perceived as signs of polytheism. For instance, there was 'Sekhmet' the goddess of war in the form of a lady with the head of a lioness, 'Khensu' the god of the moon in the

form a young boy with a braid and a crescent holding a moon on his head, 'Ibis' the god of fertility in the form of a calf, 'Anubis' the god of the dead, guard of the tombs in the form of a dog that sits on a pedestal representing the facade of a tomb, 'Bes' the god of fun in the form of a dwarf with bent legs, swollen square face and a fan shaped beard, and 'Petah' the god of crafts and arts in the form of a human being with smudged features. Most importantly to Akhenaton was 'Aten', the one God that was worshiped and symbolized in the form of sunrays ending in human hands.

The "Ankh" symbol, or the 'Key of Life', can serve as a unifying symbol, just as the ancient Egyptians were once unified within the diversity of their worship. Numerous Egyptologists have analyzed this symbolic icon. Some believe that the oval shaped top is a symbol of the unity of male and female laying the foundation for building civilization, or perhaps represents the unity of Isis and Osiris. Others believe that the perpendicular stem represents the great River Nile on its straight path upstream, that the oval shape represents the fertile Delta, and the two arms East and West.

In the visual composition of this sculpture it is possible to imagine the River Nile as it struggled to find its way since ancient times, through changing grounds ranging from granite to lime, diorite to a sedimentary path until it reached Cairo. This is what formed the Delta and sculpted the waist of the Nile at the point where it meets the Delta in what looks like a palm tree.

The Key of Life, the 'Ankh', combines the lure of geography, profound belief and the shimmer of creativity. Egyptian thought has always moved from the earth towards the sky, believing in one God capable of ruling the universe with accuracy and wisdom.

Looking at the sculptural form skillfully created for this exhibition by artist Dr. Reda Abdel Rahman from polyester, we can see that he consciously built a bridge between the sculpted structure and its drawing surface. He eliminated the vacuum held by the oval shape of the Ankh in its original design, and made it solid in order to provide a larger 'canvas' for the artist. Moreover, he created a slight curvature on either side in order to invite a visually figurative rhythm that harmonizes with the cavity within the same form. Abdel Rahman gave thickness to the mass between the front and the back of the sculpture to serve as an extra surface for painting, and to give depth to the form as well.

This CARAVAN exhibition, THE KEY, has brought together premier Egyptian, Arab and Western artists to put their own touches on this ancient inspired symbol. Their artistic expressions are both symbolic and inspirational - tree leaves, rippling water, slimy mud, sunrays, moonlight and the face of Isis. The artists' styles vary widely from Expressionist to Abstract as they attempt to summarize and condense the imaginary bridge between sculpture and painting, and between the local and the foreign. Within a global framework linked to the genuine Key of Life these artists are exploring the lure of geography, belief and creativity.

By **Mohamed Kamal**,
Journalist and Art Critic



Ahmed Abdel Fattah

Born in 1987, Ahmed Abdel Fattah graduated from the College of Fine Arts in Luxor, Egypt, where he subsequently became a Teaching Assistant. Abdel Fattah has participated in many exhibitions in Egypt and abroad and has won numerous awards in Egypt.

Statement

To Be Human

To be human is to be in a constant state of struggle between primal instincts, moral codes and ethics.

This piece is a reminder that no matter what our struggles are; mental, spiritual, racial, ideological or sectarian, there is no difference between us, we are all human.

Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Ahmed Al Bahrani

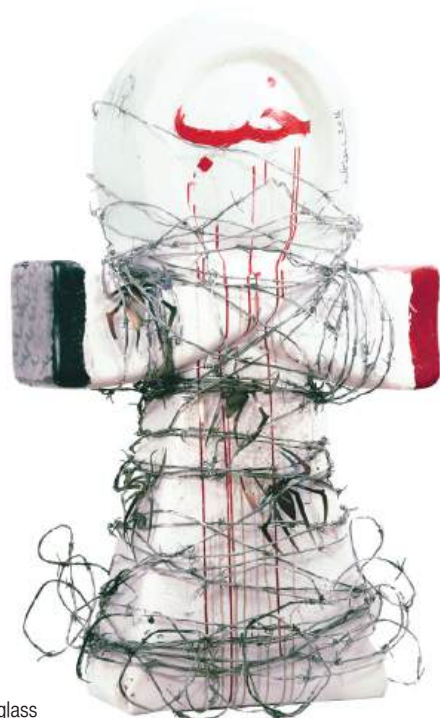
Born in 1965 in Babylon, Iraq, Ahmed Al Bahrani lives and works between Sweden and Qatar. Al Bahrani's work has departed from the traditional scope of structure present in sculpture to attain a minimalistic quality that is characterized by both clarity and simplicity. His individualistic approach has resulted in creating a sense of flexibility and movement to an otherwise heavy and rigid material. Although known as a sculptor, etching has become integral to Al Bahrani's practice. His bold forms dramatically isolated against empty backgrounds achieve a startling new sense of formal abstraction.

Al Bahrani writes: "Babylon, with her legends and holy books, was my support during my exile. My ancient passion was broken when I decided to leave for exile far from the Epic of Gilgamesh to continue my epic in a vast earth, a vast desert, the paths of which none but one exiled from his own land knows. I bore Babylon with me in my belongings and my history but I continued to be delighted by Ashtar's weeping for Tamuz. I bore the music of my injured city and the pain of its inhabitants in my veins while searching for a new location upon which to build my ancient history. For years I travelled from one exile to another and remembered Iraq and its epic chant. There is nowhere more beautiful than its deserts, its forbidden fruits, it's sad and wearying dreams. Now, today, I am concocting a new passion purified of the past; a furious passion full of emotion, love and peace. I continuously feel that there is someone waiting for me, after all these decades, who will understand me through my humanistic output and will understand my Babylonian concerns and the grief of Ashtar at the death of Tamuz. A new definition that describes me and has inspired my work is that I could be called a Neo-Babylonian with a childhood that loved the Euphrates."

Statement

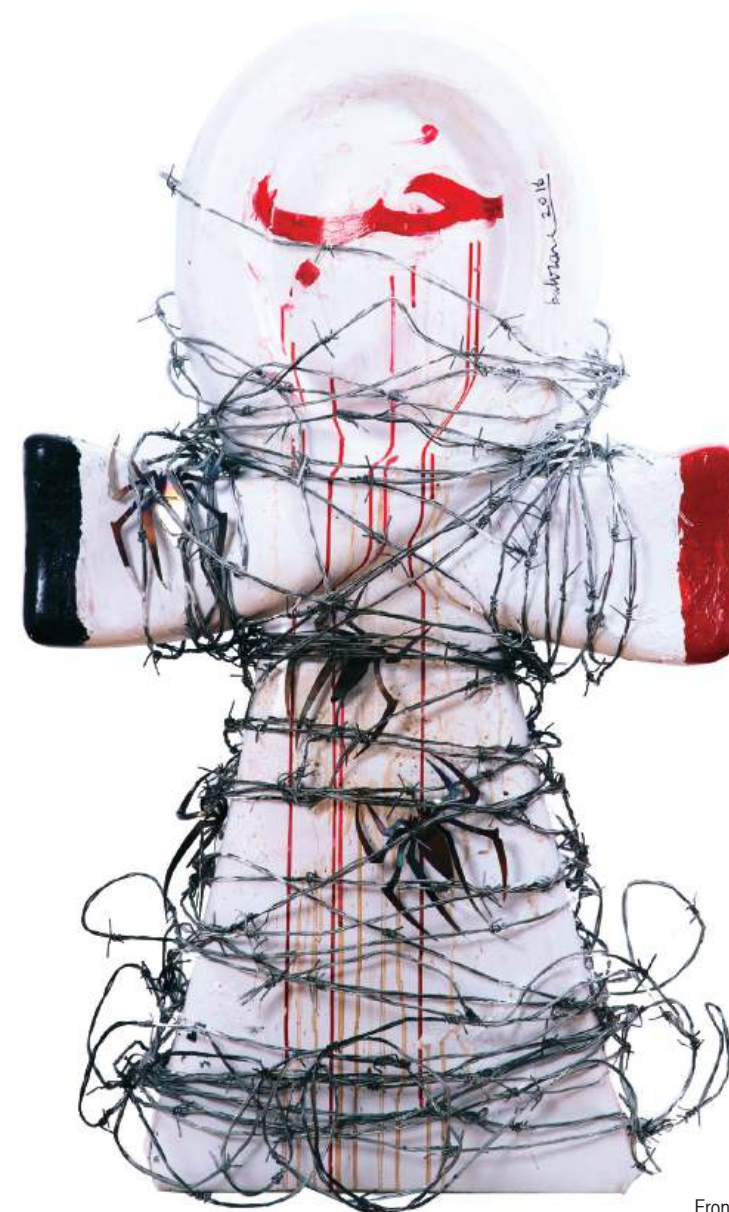
A Wall of Baghdad

Mixed media on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Ahmed El Shaer

Born in 1981, Ahmed El Shaer is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice spans the mediums of installation, photography, sound and video, with a particular interest in digital technologies. His videos combine Machinima, stock footage, 3D animation and experimental soundscapes. His work has been highlighted in numerous exhibitions and festivals, in such countries as Canada, USA, Switzerland, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, The Philippines and Mali. He is the recipient of numerous awards and has participated in several noted residency programs, such as Art Omi Artist-in-Residence in New York, USA, Pro Helvetia Artist-in-Residence in Zurich, Switzerland and the Summer Academy of Fine Arts in Salzburg, Austria.

Exhibitions Include:

2015 - 56th Venice Biennale, "In the Eye of the Thunderstorm" Collateral Event, Curated by: Martina Corgnati, Venice, Italy.

2015 - Ritornello, Sound Art Exhibition, Darb1718, Curated by: Kathrin Oberrauch, Egypt.

2014 - ISEA 2014, 20th International Symposium On Electronic Art, Zayed University Dubai, UAE

Statement

Press the Key

"Press the key" are words that started with our video game culture and continue to be the main step to start your "Game".

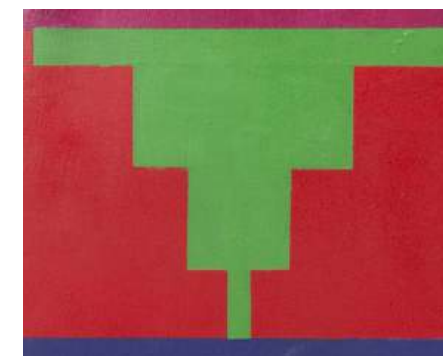


Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Ahmed Saber

Ahmed Saber is an Egyptian artist based in the southern valley of Luxor, where he received his BFA with honors in Graphic Design & Printmaking from the University of Jenoub Al Wadi. His delicate watercolor paintings and woodcuts reveal harsh realities in the worlds he creates, and are heavy with symbolism. There is an edge in his art of political subversion, at times playful and humorous, and other times, dark and somber. His active participation in annual Youth Salons, and exhibiting all around Egypt, has earned him many awards to date. He currently teaches at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Luxor.

Saber writes, "I like to work with dry materials such as hard pastel and pencil charcoal, and also with watercolor and ink. In my work I follow the art style of Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carra; their metaphysical way of art. I use legendary symbols and metaphysical objects in my work; there are many details to discover ... you can see them virtually crowded with objects."

Statement

Hatmehit

My inspiration for this project stems from ancient Egypt and incorporates the highly symbolic figure of 'The Fish'. While the fish is of great significance for Christians it also represents grace and prosperity and evokes the spirit of Egyptian folk art. I have used it in this context as a reminder and connection with the pure natural world, in a time of fast-paced technology. In ancient Egypt fish were given a special status and there was even a fish goddess, Hatmehit shown here as a woman with a fish on her head. She was a goddess of life and protection and was also regarded as the wife of Osiris.

Cats were also revered, with Bastet, the cat goddess of protection being very significant. Festivals were held in her honor and some cats were mummified after death in the same manner as humans.

This is a philosophical piece, exploring and considering fundamental truths, their importance and how vital it is to protect them.



Acrylic and pens on fiberglass



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Detail



Front



Amal Nasr

Amal Nasr is a Professor and Head of the Department of Photography, Faculty of Fine Arts at Alexandria University in Egypt. She is also a photographer and an art critic. Her work has been exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions in Egypt and abroad. Nasr is also a member of several art associations and has served on the juries for many artistic and critical contests.

She has represented Egypt in many international exhibitions and events in Italy, France, China, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Yemen and the UK. Nasr has participated in international conferences and meetings in the Arab world and written numerous books and articles.

Nasr is the winner of several awards including Egypt's Youth Salon Award for painting in 1990 and for photography in 1993, the State Creativity Award in 1998 and the State Incentive Award in Plastic Art criticism in 2011.

Statement

There are many explanations of the idiomatic meaning of the "Key of Life" and its significance. One of these explanations states that the "Key of Life" is a symbol of spiritual harmony between Isis and Osiris, which granted abundance to the waters of the Nile. I decided to crown Isis as the queen of my project where her noble yet proud face glances, while the Nile stretches along her body filled with roses, fish, palm, peace, goodness and life.

Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Anat Ratzabi

Anat Ratzabi, is a sculptor from a Yemenite origin who now lives and works in The Netherlands. Anat has participated in many exhibitions at museums and galleries in the Netherlands and other venues in Europe such as in Belgium and Scotland. She has received numerous important commissions, including projects for the municipality of The Hague; from re-designing a city park to the great holocaust memorial monument at the center of the city. Internationally she has exhibited in places like India, New York and Miami. Her work can be seen in various publications.

Statement

BRIDE

Facing transformations in cultural frameworks and annexation by overwhelming waves of extreme shifts of mind, often leads to the temptation to abandon the challenges of sophistication and seek the warm cradle of traditions - we long for marriage between the creeds.

On both sides of the Ankh: the Tank-man from the "Gate of Heavenly Peace" and a soldier. The crystal ball accommodates these two elements that visualise the vicissitudes of existence over time. Both are adorned with rice - a symbol of abundance and fertility. This composition emphasizes the importance of being whole and the inevitable interdependence.

The crack lines on the Ankh are to illustrate the essential strategy to overcome hardship. I am inspired by the art of Kintsugi (repair what is broken with gold) which is related to the phrase Mono no aware (pathos of things). Another inspiration is the Hebrew quote from Isaiah: ". . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." A sword remains merely an ornament!

Mixed media on fiberglass

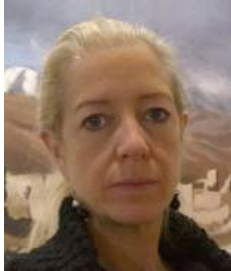


Back

Detail



Front



Arabella Dorman

Born in 1975, Arabella Dorman has gained an international reputation as one of Britain's leading portrait painters and war artists. She enjoys the patronage of many prominent figures and establishments in Britain and her work hangs in public institutions and private collections around the world. Arabella paints portrait commissions from her studio in Chelsea, London, while her military pieces are drawn from first-hand experience of working with British forces in Southern Iraq (2006) and Afghanistan (2009 - 2014). Arabella's recent body of work from Afghanistan is a response to the unfolding narrative that she witnessed during several journeys to the country over a period of five years, both as an embedded war artist and an independent traveller. This critically acclaimed exhibition reached 700 million people through media print & broadcast, raising over £30,000 for charities Afghanaid and Walking with the Wounded.

Arabella lives in London with her husband and two children.

Statement

Children of God and the Inheritors of the Earth

At a time of deepening prejudice and intolerance between East and West, much of my work highlights the urgent need for interfaith, respect and cultural exchange. In this particular case I have sought to express the integration of faith by focusing on the future (children) through the use of the timeless and ancient.

This Ankh depicts children at play, conveying a sense of wonder, curiosity and innocence, against a background of day/light that gives way to night/darkness. The children play with ancient symbols, many of which allude to concepts shared by all faiths. Most notably amongst these are the Alpha and Omega, the Bahai Star (representative of the unity of religion and humankind) and the Ankh symbol upon which this sculpture is based. "I have also depicted the N', or 𐤎 in solidarity with persecuted Christians across the Middle East.

It is my belief that these symbols come from one beginning. Through the ages the division in our understanding of such lies in our choice of interpretation. In this piece, I urge the viewer to consider the beginning, through the universal innocence of a child and the shared applicability of such symbols, and the hope for the unity of humankind and religion that this could imply.



Oil on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Atef Ahmed

Atef Ahmed was born in Cairo, Egypt in 1969 where he currently lives and works. He holds a BFA in Art Education from Helwan University, Egypt which he obtained in 1995. He also obtained a Diploma in Folklore from the Arts Academy in 1999. Atef was then granted a full scholarship to practice art by the Ministry of Culture from 2001-2009.

He has held numerous solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions in countries such as Germany, Kazakhstan, France, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Kuwait, Algeria, Yemen, Uzbekistan and China.

Statement

The Egyptian hieroglyph character, Ankh, or Key of Life is a combination of male and female symbols whose union was seen as a gift from the deities, producing life.

Difference and diversity are essential to the richness of life, from the variety of races and peoples to their cultures which can come together to create an environment of tolerance and peace based on similarity.

The kaleidoscope of human experience is portrayed alongside Creation on this ancient symbol which has monumental meaning and ultimately stands for our inherent ability to respect and love each other.

Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Elisabeth Bolza

Elisabeth Bolza was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1968 and is of Austrian nationality and Italo-Hungarian descent. She was raised in Germany and studied Interior Decoration at the Instituto di Arte e Restauro Palazzo Spinelli, Florence, (Italy). Later on she also read for a diploma in Modern Literary Arabic, (2005-2009), at Seville University's Language Institute.

In 1990 she moved to Spain and since 1995 lives in Seville with her husband and three daughters.

She has been dedicated to the study and research of the Islamic arts and civilization for years, and has participated in cultural projects in various Middle Eastern countries. Her works are part of private collections in Europe, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, India, Australia, Mexico, Canada, the United States, as well as Sidi M'chiche Alami Foundation in Kenitra, Morocco and the Tia Tanna Art Collection in Mumbai, India.

Statement

‘SYNCRETIC ANKH’

Imagery includes the Sinode, the Bismillah, the menorah, the Jerusalem cross, elements of old maps of the Holy Land, ‘Our Father’ in Aramaic, early Jewish frescos, searching hands and two quotes in Arabic by Khalil Gibran.

Acrylics, pigments, gesso, paper, ink pen and pencil on fiberglass base with matt acrylic wax varnish finish



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Detail



Front



Enas Abdel Monaem

Enas Abdel Monaem received her Bachelor of Art Education at Helwan University in Egypt. She was born to a family far from creativity, but grew up in the house of one of the most famous Egyptian artists. Monaem has participated in many art exhibitions in Egypt and will complete more studies in New York next year in the field of fashion and decorative art.

Statement

Our community surrounds us with a whole host of values and traditions that shape our character which may appear colorful and vibrant but is nonetheless constrained. Women in Arab societies do their best to express themselves through fabrics and jewelry but never quite manage to shake off the feeling of being ashamed to be a woman that traditional values engender.



Acrylic on fiberglass



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Detail



Front



Esmat Dawestashy

Born in 1943, Esmat Dawestashy is a painter and sculptor from Alexandria, Egypt. A renowned artist, Dawestashy has held over 85 solo exhibitions both in Egypt and abroad. An active participant in the arts scene since 1962, Dawestashy is a member of numerous art societies and has held several prestigious jobs as a curator and art critic whilst maintaining a successful lively art career as a painter and sculptor. Renowned for his stunning portrayals of Egyptian people, Dawestashy is inspired by the layers of Egypt's rich heritage, which he incorporates using different media and techniques.

He has published many books and studies in art criticism and documentation and has written poetry, short stories, screenplays and his autobiography *Al-Ramla Al-Baydaa*. He directed a number of short films, including *Mahmoud Said* (1997) and *Al-Risha Wal-Qalam* (*The Brush and the Pen*, 2001).

Dawestashy has won many prizes including an award for children's illustrations in Japan, one from French radio for the design of a poster on Africa, Cairo's Picasso-Miro Award, and the Jury Award at the 18th Alexandria Biennale. Dawestashy has held the positions of Director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Alexandria and head of the Alexandria Creativity Centre.

Statement

As an artist, I am passionate about folkloric art as it says so much about a culture. In Egypt we have a custom of creating traditional dolls that differ depending on the region. For example, in Alexandria the traditional doll is the mermaid, yet the dolls for other regions, such as in the Delta or Upper Egypt are different and distinct, reflecting that respective area. The Key of Life, in its doll-like shape, reminded me of the tremendous variety of our traditional dolls and how that symbolizes the beautiful diversity of our world which we need to embrace, just as the children of Egypt embrace their different dolls.

Acrylic and mixed media on fiberglass



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Detail



Front



Farouk Wahba

Farouk Wahba was born in 1942 in Mansoura, Egypt, and now lives and works in Alexandria. He has a BA degree and PhD in Fine Arts from Alexandria University. He is a Lecturer in Painting Design at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Alexandria University, as well as Cultural Counsellor to the Egyptian Embassy in Vienna, Austria.

He is also a Founding Member of the Syndicate of Fine Artists in Egypt. He was a Director of the Egyptian Academy of Arts in Rome (Italy), a member of Omicron International Painting Group, BRD, and a member of the Atelier Group of Artists and Writers in Alexandria.

Statement

The Key of Life, the Ankh, is at the very heart of Egypt's history. In fact, it perhaps represents and embodies the deep-rooted soul of our country more than anything else. It is on the level of what the "pyramid" means to Egypt's identity. In this sense, I think it would be the most appropriate symbol to use to represent our country today, so much so as to even put it on our flag as a national emblem.



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Mixed media on fiberglass



Front



Fatma Abdel Rahman

Fatma Abdel Rahman Ibrahim was born in 1973 in Cairo and now lives and works in Giza. She has a BA and Master's degree in Printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Helwan University, Cairo.

Selected exhibitions:

-2005 - 28th National Art Exhibition, Cairo

-2004 - Festival of Egyptian Woman Creations in Contemporary Arts,

Gezira Art Centre, Cairo

-2002 - 5th Salon of Mini Works of Art, Cairo

-2001 - 5th Port Said National Biennial

-2001 - 27th National Art Exhibition, Cairo

Statement

Surely the fruit cannot say to the root 'Be like me, ripe and full and ever giving of your abundance'. For to the fruit giving is a need, as receiving is a need to the root

"Khalil Gibran" (in The Prophet, "Good and Evil")

Chinese ink and acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Guirguis Bekhit

Guirguis Bekhit was born in Alexandria in 1956. He graduated from the Faculty of Mass Communication and later worked as Manager-in-Chief for Albatra Magazine, Shihan and Huna newspapers in Alexandria.

Bekhit is an art critic with columns in several newspapers. His work has been widely exhibited in Egypt since 1974. He is a member of the Association of Book and Artists (Alexandria Atelier) as well as of the Arts and Sciences and Literature. He created the Mural for the Ismailia Theatre and another in Alexandria, 'The Future of Egypt'.

Statement

The Key of Life elicits all the aspects of visual art, merging the various aspects of organic, geometric and the symbolic.

Pharaonic writing and prayers by Akhenaton add a historical and spiritual value while the Egyptian girl's face, which calls for love, peace and hope ties together and interacts with all the elements in a visual dialogue that increases the expressive strength of the piece.



Oil and acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Hazem El Mestikawy

Hazem El Mestikawy was born in 1965 in Cairo. Today he lives and works between Cairo, Egypt and Vienna, Austria. He received a B.A. of Art Education / Sculpture Dept. at Menya University in Upper Egypt in 1986.

El Mestikawy is an established international artist known for his minimalist sculpture pieces inspired by Islamic architecture, Sufism, and ancient Egyptian art. He uses recycled and seemingly fragile material, such as cardboard, paper and newspaper, to construct robust and puzzle-like sculptural installations that are displayed on walls.

El Mestikawy was shortlisted in 2011 for the prestigious Jameel Art Prize, launched by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, 2011. His work, Patent Pattern earned him the grand prize at the 13th Asia Art Biennale in Bangladesh. The North Carolina Museum of Art and the Jameel Museum in Dubai have also both acquired artworks by El Mestikawy.

Statement

Ankh and More

The construction of the object is based on signs from the ancient Egyptian culture history in the form of the ankh (symbol of eternal life) appears in conjunction with the djed (symbol of stability and strength) and was (symbol of power and dominion) associated with Cross and Crescent symbols from the recent Egyptian culture history all these contexts together melt under one culture tone represented by the modern arabic language newspapers structure, the accumulation of these inscriptions and signs is sometimes more presented in the nature of the daily life and culture than they are linguistically functional.

Cardboard and paper on fiberglass
217 x 72 x 29 cm (open)
159 x 72 x 29 cm (closed)



Back

Detail



Front



Isaac Daniel

Isaac Daniel was born in 1952 in Bani Suef, Egypt and obtained his PhD at the Faculty of Fine Art in Cairo. He is a noted sculptor working in bronze, wood and stone, and is also a painter. He has held ten major solo exhibitions and participated in numerous group exhibitions over the last 40 years. He lives between Paris and Cairo.

Statement

I see the "key of life" as the symbol of Egypt. That is the reason to represent a face and open hands for the world as a welcome sign to all peoples.



Fiberglass



Back

Detail

Front



Lina Alattar

Born in Iraq, Lina Alattar received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Middle Tennessee State University. She continued her art education in Gubio, Italy through an Art Study Program, and later at the George Washington University in Washington, DC. Lina continued working as a Creative Art Director in the graphic industry, earning numerous AAF Addy awards, as well as freelanced for the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Having lived in three continents and multiple cultures, Lina's work often explores identity, rootlessness, belonging and our shared landscape of the human experience.

Lina is constantly fine-tuning this creative tension between her native Iraqi identity and her current life's work. Today Lina is a full time painter, with gallery representation at Touchstone Gallery in Washington, DC. She works out of her studio in Fairfax, VA. Her work can be seen in several regional galleries throughout the Washington, D.C. area.

Statement

My inspiration for the Ankh comes from looking at one's self as a starting point for creating and sustaining peace and understanding between one's self and the world around us.

A mirror is placed at the head of the Ankh. As we look at the sculpture, we are also looking at ourselves, a reminder of our own eminent power. Smaller mirrors are placed throughout, representing our global community.

Art always gives us the space to reflect, reimagine and create a thriving and creative society, a reminder of our own infinite possibilities.



Mixed media (spray paint, ink, mirror) on fiberglass

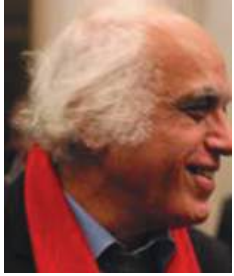


Back

Detail



Front



Maher Guirguis

Maher Guirguis obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts in the Faculty of Fine Arts in Alexandria in 1973. A member of the Syndicate of Plastic Arts of Egypt, he has held roles such as General Manager of Alexandria Culture, Director of “El Tazawok” Cultural Palace at Sidi Gaber Alexandria and Fine Arts Specialist at the Ministry of Culture – Alexandria.

Having exhibited in prominent exhibitions within Egypt and the Middle East, he is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions including:

Certificate of Appreciation from the Russian Centre of Scientific and Cultural Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Shield Abdul Aziz Saud Al -Babtain Foundation Award for Creativity

Award and Certificate of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) on the occasion of Alexandria Capital of Islamic Culture, 2008

Statement

Invocation and Peace

A man and his wife have features that carry a resemblance to the Coptic “Egyptian” faces found in the popular paintings that inspired the special characteristics of the ancient Coptic icons.

The man lifts up his hands in litany welcoming you, wearing around his neck the Key of Life, which in the ancient Egyptian civilization symbolizes the Afterlife, the Nile, the Land of Egypt and many other symbols.

He appears standing here as if chanting this exhibition's slogan, “Harmony, Peace and Tolerance”, while his wife is holding the Dove of Peace. At their feet waddling Peace Doves surround them.

Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Mahfouz Salib Bestowrous

Dr. Bestowrous was born in 1943 in Cairo, Egypt. He attained a PhD in Art Education, Sculpture Specialty and is currently a Professor of Sculpture in the Faculty of Art Education at Helwan University in Cairo. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions. His activity in the art field within Egypt is far and wide. He was a member of the High Committee of Aswan International Symposium for Sculpture and a member of the Arbitration Committee of the National Exhibition in 2015.

Statement

The Unique United

The Lotus flower and the Papyrus - north and south - and the Nile running through ... planting life in the desert ... watering love and peace in the hearts of the offspring to blossom a faith that bonds their earthly lives with heaven ... and creating a great civilization that witnesses how the Egyptians sanctify life.

The Lotus, The Papyrus and the Key of Life: Symbols of the Egyptian Greatness.



Sand with Acrylic Glue and Adicone



Back



Detail



Front



Mahmoud Shubbar

Mahmoud Shubbar was born in Babel, Iraq in 1965. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Baghdad University in 1986 and later went on to receive his PhD in Fine Arts. He had several international exhibitions that received high acclaim including a joint exhibition at Frederico Sconda Cultural Association in Italy in 2013.

He has exhibited in Russia, Sweden, Italy, Romania, Qatar, and UAE. He previously served as a faculty member at Babel University in Iraq. He participated in the Festival of Arts and Culture of World Universities in Egypt for two consecutive years and won First Prize both times. He currently divides his time between Iraq and Beirut where he conducts his artistic practice.

Statement

My Egyptian Key of Life seeks to reflect the “shamble of life”. On my Ankh I used a street sign for a street called Baghdad that is shell marked from gunfire so the viewer experiences what has happened to my country of Iraq as a result of the US invasion in 2003 and how people there now live.



Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Marjorie Guyon

Marjorie Guyon was influenced by the renowned Romare Bearden, master of collage and story. Her work was first shown in New York City at Merton Simpson Gallery, where the owner was a personal friend of Romare Bearden. Over time, she moved through emulation of Bearden and into a vision of her own. Her work is described as Contemporary Ancient.

Guyon's art has been exhibited in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta, Memphis and Los Angeles. Her work and projects appear in public and private collections including those of International Paper, FedEx, Morris Museum of Art, Ashland Oil, Yum Brands, Pfizer, Brown Forman, Keeneland Foundation, Brian and Jane Williams, Bill and Sheila Lambert, the N'Namdi Collection, Greenbaum, Doll and McDonald, PLLC, University of Kentucky Art Museum, UK Healthcare, Lucille Caudill Little Library of Fine Art, Park Hyatt in Los Angeles and Hyatt Regency in Arlington, VA. Her art projects are being utilized in universities and schools across the United States.

Significant awards and grants include The National Congress of Art and Design Award of Excellence, 2 AI Smith Fellowships, The New Forms Regional Initiative Grant, NEA and Rockefeller Foundation through the Arts Exchange.

Statement

Olive Branch

This Ankh, Key of Life, pivoted to create a landscape, an ancient garden.

We travel blind to the valley of Tigris and Euphrates to this place we have forgotten. We have lost the thousand names we have used before. Every mountain pass, every river crossing, these documents are birds riding on the wind. We arrive as children - almost grown. Refugee, immigrant, beggar, king or queen - we begin again.

Tattered envelopes stamped address unknown. We are not alone. We arrive at the gate hungry to lie down at the foot of the tree of life. See the sky over the rainbow. Singer, wanderer, soul of my soul.

With nothing, with everything.... I will call to you. We will find each other and make it better.

We will find our way to the garden of light.



Collage, marble dust and pigment on fiberglass



Detail



Front



Moataz El Safty

Born in 1969, Moataz El Safty lives and work in Alexandria, Egypt. Since 2005 he has been the curator and Arts Director at the Atelier of Alexandria. He also founded the EAN group for international artistic cooperation (www.egyptartists.com). In 2014 he was co-curator with Dr. Oriano Mabellini in the IMAGO MUNDI project for contemporary art in Egypt, which was also held in Nigeria, Liberia, Yemen and Iraq. He has curated numerous other exhibitions such as at the Goethe Institute Alexandria and in countries such as Lebanon and Italy.

Statement

Repeated Life

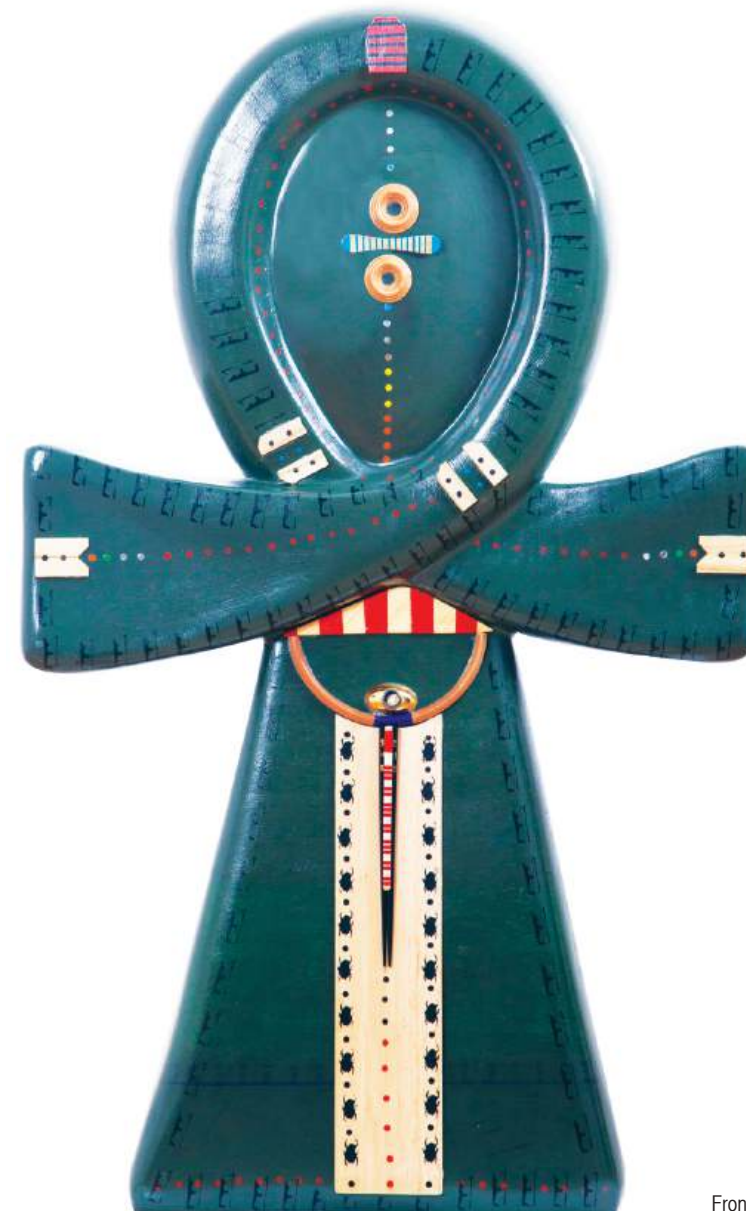
The Key of Life opens the door between this world and the afterlife... for the return of the soul back into the body. In my key I configured the king in two different periods - which are linked by one form and simulate Pharaonic symbols from natural ores. I am trying to represent the artist in that ancient period, who repeatedly attempted to beautify cemeteries and liberate the soul again through this beautiful symbol, to return anew without any blemishes or distortions. In my key I am trying to simulate the ancient in a new modern format.

Acrylic and wood on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Mohamed Banawy

Mohamed Banawy was born in Egypt in 1977. He studied painting and mosaic at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Helwan University. In his senior year he joined the Mural Painting department to study design and mosaics. He showed great interest in Old Egypt through his paintings of people and landscapes. Since 2001, Banawy has been lecturing at the Faculty of Fine Arts, and he is an integral part of Egypt's contemporary art scene through his production of pieces such as The Valley. The exhibition of his work as part of the Egypt Pavilion at the Biennale of Venice in 2013 launched his international exposure, guaranteeing him intercontinental recognition. He has received several awards including the Creativity State Prize (Rome Prize for Creativity) 2006, and in 2015 the Ravenna Mosaico Prize for the 2015 GAEM.

Statement

The Key of Life and the Royal Grave; the art work is connecting the key of life and the pyramid, to the ancient Egyptians, the key of life refers to the eternal life, and it also symbolizes both life elements; the male and the female. The Key of Life was put on the graves with the golden and the copper color as a symbol of the sun in order to symbolize the resurrection of the dead. As for the pyramid, it is a royal grave of the eternal life, and it is one of the mystical secrets that integrates mathematics, science and astronomy.

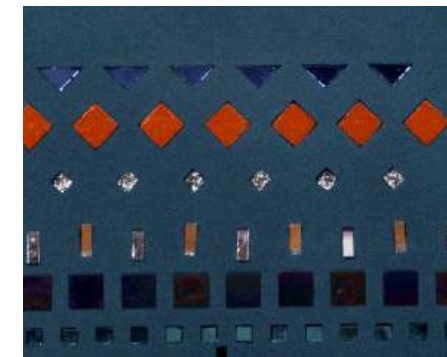


Mosaic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Mohamed Negm

Mohamed Negm's art is inspired by identity, socio-political events, and engaging with new experiences. As a young artist of Arab heritage, many natural inspirations add to the Western influence he draws on, through his lens as a British Egyptian. Through his art he encounters and challenges his identity through the contemplation of issues. In recent years, his art has served to document his feelings throughout the seismic changes in Egypt and the Middle East. BBC World News requested to interview him about his Egypt inspired paintings (with montage of paintings as the studio background), and to attempt to represent the feelings of British Egyptians. Saatchi Gallery Online selected a painting of his, inspired by Egypt, titled "Albena 3ala Masr" ("Our Heart is with Egypt"), for an online collection, chosen by their Head Curator and Gallery Director. Mohamed exhibits his work art in London galleries and around the UK, as well as in Egypt.

Statement

Humans in the Key of Life

"We are all Human II". Humans hoping for hope, for harmonious understanding; still "Learning to Walk". The Ankh is represented as the symbol of life, with (Nile) water as a source of regeneration and new beginnings. Ancient Egyptian influences inform the Key, in the use of Egyptian Blue (Lapis Lazuli / Ultramarine), yellows, greens, purples and patterns inspired by Ancient Egyptian art such as the tomb of Ramses. The Lotus flower reaches outwards, representing renewal, as do the illuminating symbolic sun rays from the Aten period of Akhenaten's and Nefertiti's rule replacing many mythical Egyptian Gods with One. The movement of the brushstrokes are purposely painted to give a sense of energy, the figures moving towards the future. The aim is to project a semblance of hope, the natural togetherness of humans through our shared societal human condition and struggle – the desire for newness and to simply live and appreciate life.

Acrylic on fiberglass



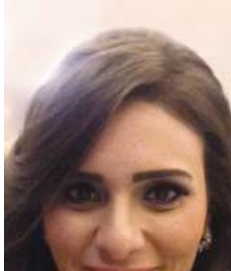
Back



Detail



Front



Noha Deyab

Noha Deyab was born in 1984 in Kuwait where she lived for a number of years before earning her degree in Visual Art and Islamic Art and Architecture from the American University in Cairo. Deyab held her first exhibition in 2004 and has been active since then finding immense pleasure in painting and drawing. As an interior designer she decided to turn her passion for art into a profession. Deyab is a mixed-media artist utilizing different materials and techniques in her work that is mostly abstract with a suggested figurative presence. For her art she gains inspiration from nature and seeks to express the beauty and energy of people and their emotions. Deyab translates her connection to her surroundings by telling a story with color, shape and figures.

Statement

From ancient Egypt to the present day Egypt has aged beautifully. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder; this is never more true than seen over time. My key is a tale of Egypt's beauty, a quality that gives pleasure to the senses. The history of Egypt has been long and rich, from the flow of the river Nile, fertile banks and delta to its inhabitants and outside influences all leaving a fingerprint. All these leave their imprints on Egypt's soul. The key is filled with those prints and sensations; mixed and overlapping, marks that are clear and luminous, others diminishing and some are veiled by the influence of a new stronger present.



Acrylic on fibergl



Back



Detail



Front



Noura Slim

Noura Slim is an Egyptian contemporary visual artist. Born in 1992, she graduated with honors in 2013 from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Helwan University - Painting Department. She is a member of the Syndicate of Artists and she received a grant to work full-time as an artist from the Ministry of Culture for 2014 and 2015. Noura has participated in many local and international exhibitions workshops and cultural and artistic activities and her work has been acquired by collectors both in Egypt and abroad. She describes herself as a strong feminist artist. Her art expresses her special interest in painting portraits of women to depict the social stress that troubles women especially and humanity in general in contemporary life.

Statement

It's a key to everything in my life. It is history, present and future. It's the beauty in my eyes; my vision of life. It's the image and symbol of freedom and humanity.



Acrylic on fiberglass



Back



Detail



Front



Omar Toussoun

Born in Alexandria in 1972, Toussoun graduated from the Faculty of Specific Education -Art Department- Alexandria University. He then obtained the High Diploma of Sculpture from Kafr El-Sheikh Faculty of Specific Education in 1996. He was granted a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture during three different years. Toussoun has participated in many exhibitions such as the Young Artist of Alexandria in Rome and in Zurich, the Alexandria International Biennale for Mediterranean Art, the Egyptian Modern Artists in Beirut), Imagining the Book International Biennale at the Alexandria Library and the Aswan International Sculpture Symposium for Stone.

Toussoun has been the recipient of several awards: the 1998 Third Award of Installation in the Salon of Youth - Cairo, First Award in Sculpture in the Youth Salon of Alexandria (2001), the Grand Award for Port Said Biennale (2003) and finally the Installation award for the Salon of Youth of Cairo (2005).

Besides personal collections in Egypt and abroad, his work has been are acquired by the Museum of Modern Arts - Cairo, The Alexandria Library and the Ministry of Culture - Egypt.

Statement

Human experience is the starting point for artists. My constant experimentation and quest for expression through the use of all sorts of materials creates an evolving, contemporary body of work. The combination of the contemporary and aspects of Egyptian heritage form a compelling union.



Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Osama Mamdouh

Osama Mamdouh was born in Cairo, Egypt and attended the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Minya where he received a Diploma in Graphic Arts.

Mamdouh is well known for his mural art within Egypt which can be seen at El-Obour Corner, the Cairo Armory, the National Air Defense building, the Association of Engineers, the Giza Security Directorate, Toshiba-El Araby centers, Greenland real estate compound in the North Coast and Dreamland Theme Park.

He is also well known for his mosaic works, having completed numerous commissions. His work has been widely exhibited and he has participated in numerous group exhibitions and Youth Salons.

Statement

The Key of Life symbol is about the essence of life. This Key of Life has two faces. One of them expresses Egypt in the present by the flag and inside its Pharaonic history. The other face expresses the maze and brightness represented in a Sunflower.



Mosaic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Peter W. Gray

Rev. Peter William Gray, PSS, Ph.D. is a member of the USA Province of the Society of Saint Sulpice and is the artist for that community. He has recently finished all the artwork for the newly restored PACA Street Historical Chapel and Spiritual Center in Baltimore, Maryland where St. Elizabeth Ann Seton made her first vows.

His works are world-wide and communicate the passion and importance of the visual arts in the role of evangelization in and through the Catholic Church's many ministries. The profits from Fr. Gray's works assist his small mission in Nepal, which he began as an NGO 20 years ago, as well as locally with the street people and homeless in Baltimore. He does all of this from his artworks, and calls his ministry, "ART with HEART". His small studio is under the patronage of Saints Joseph and Luke. He received a papal commission to do a portrait of Pope Francis which currently hangs in the Apostolic Nunciature on Massachusetts Ave. in Washington DC. Fr. Gray holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy and the Arts from the G.T.U. in Berkeley and has won acclaim from Sister Wendy Becket, Mother Dolores Hart, OSB and the late George Tooker.

Statement

Opening the Future with a Key from the Past

The modern, abstract side with my squares and patterns, evokes for me the whole world of instant communications by pushing buttons and screens. It also recalls and compliments the ancient Egyptian calligraphy both vertically and horizontally thus communicating LIFE. Indeed "the key" to so much of what we do in LIFE today is encoded in tiny squares. Perhaps ROTHKO was prescient. I do not know anybody in the art world who has ever written or spoken of his squares as giant push buttons. .and yet. . .!

The ancient side depicts the balance of LIFE between the Mother and her child; i.e. NATURE ordaining our prodigy, as well as keeping the balance and equality of the world in motion, with golden hands signaling both UP and DOWN, LEFT and RIGHT, YES and NO, IN and OUT. It is this balance which is "the key" to our living together, not alone.

Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail





Raham Mahmoud

Raham Mahmoud graduated from the Faculty of Art Education in 2002. Since then she has participated in numerous noted exhibitions such as at the Atelier Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Picasso Art Gallery in Cairo, Egypt and at the Safi Colors of Fine Arts Festival in Safi, Morocco. In Cairo, Raham Mahmoud has painted a mural on one of the walls of old city and held solo exhibitions at the Sawy Culture Wheel, the Cairo Atelier and at the Music Library in the Opera grounds. Her work is in the collections of Egypt's Art Nouveau Museum and the Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel, as well as with many individuals inside and outside Egypt. She is also a recipient of a "full-time art grant" from the Ministry of Culture in Egypt.

Statement

The Ankh chosen for this exhibition represents a beautiful homeland and is a symbol of one of the oldest civilizations on earth. The subtle influence of the Pharaonic culture is evident in the world today.

The palette for my Key was inspired by the colors of rural Egypt. When I first travelled to the Siwa oasis in 2009 I was overcome by the playful interaction of colors in the environment which offered up the character of the place and the culture. This led me to Fayoum, the mountains of Sinai and the Pyramids, all the while exploring this exciting interplay and revelation through my work. This is the approach that I decided to use for my key; relying on my technical experience to evoke the many facets of my homeland through color.



Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Reda Abdel Rahman

Born in Ismalia, Egypt and having studied at the University of Minya at the College of Fine Arts, and having been surrounded by outstanding Pharonic monuments and Coptic monasteries left a lasting impression on Reda Abdel Rahman, one of Egypt's leading contemporary artists. It has resulted in his artistic expression focusing on the relationship between what he regards as his ancient Egyptian heritage and the demands of contemporary life.

Not only has Reda enjoyed a prolific and international career in the arts but he has also encouraged others by participating in a number of varied initiatives designed to promote artists and the Egyptian art scene. In this regard, he has been integral to the formation of internationally recognized events such as the Luxor Painting Symposium and the formation of the annual Aswan Sculpture Symposium. He has led the Fustat workshops in Old Cairo that brings together a range of artists from around the Middle East. Reda also established an art magazine and curated a gallery in downtown Cairo, both titled Portrait. His artistic career has taken him around the world, from Latin America to Europe. He was an important founding artist in the CARAVAN arts initiative in Egypt, that seeks to use the Arts as a means to build bridges between the East and West, and between their creeds and cultures

Statement

No Vision, No Voice!

In a violent world dominated by forces that work against human nature, it is difficult to find your voice and see the truth when surrounded by sensationalist media.

Children follow their parent's lead and will repeat what they hear without question. However, they must not be lulled into a state of acceptance and be putty in the soft hands of the dominant force.

We have to ensure that the next generation is taught to think for themselves, to see things clearly for what they are and to find their voices.

Freedom
Freedom
Freedom

Fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Saleh El Meligy

Born in Suez in 1957, Dr. Salah El Meligy obtained his doctorate through the Graphic Art Department at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo. He has participated in more than 100 international and Egyptian exhibitions, including 11 private shows. To date he has won 12 awards, 2 of which are international. His art can be found in many private & public collections throughout Egypt and abroad. He is the former Head of Fine Arts for the Ministry of Culture in Egypt.

Statement

The Ankh, as one of the symbols of the Egyptian Art, has been widely used as a time-honored amulet. This immemorial figure is illustrated by different artists of the world in a partnership of love and peace.

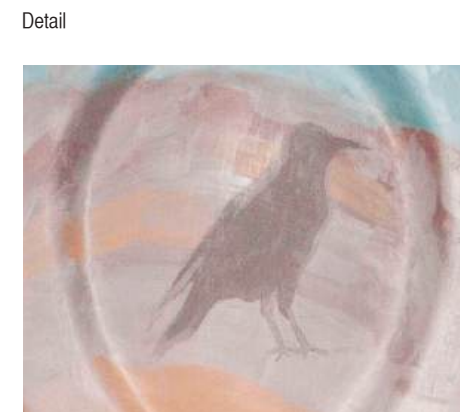
And those artworks represent my vision of birds featuring the world of deep inner-self in the eternal horizon of life.



Acrylic on fiberglass



Back



Detail



Front



Salah El Mur

Salah El Mur was born in Khartoum, Sudan in 1966. He obtained a degree in Graphic Design from the College of Fine and Applied Art, Sudan University in 1989.

Besides organizing and participating in numerous individual and collective exhibitions and workshops in Sudan and abroad, El Mur composes and illustrates children's books that have been published in Arabic, French, Italian and Spanish.

As a filmmaker El Mur directed and produced six short films, in a genre between documentary and fantasy that were screened in international film festivals. He won the Jury Prize for his film "Heaven's Bird" at the International Short Film festival "Images that Matter" in Ethiopia in 2010.

Statement

First and Last Eve

Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Salah Hammad

Born in 1961, Salah Hammad obtained his Bachelor Degree of Arts in 1986. Following his post graduate studies in Art, he was awarded a government sponsored scholarship to study in Italy.

Hammad is a member of the Association of Egyptian Artists and a teacher at the Faculty of Art Education, devoting himself to his art, travelling between Italy and Egypt.

He has participated in major art biennales such as the Japan International Sculpture Biennale, the Venice Biennale and the Indian International Triennial. He has also taken part in more than 15 international symposia, in places like Sweden, Italy, Turkey, UAE, and the Czech Republic.

Hammad was commissioned to restore Mahmoud Mokhtar's sculpture, "The Renaissance or Awakening of Egypt", to sculpt stone relief works for Nasr City Center, and stone sculptures for the historical Zeinab Khatoun House and Herawy House.

Hammad is the recipient of several awards including the prestigious State Prize for Arts in Rome and the Egyptian State Encouragement Prize.

Statement

The Faces

I see many faces around me all throughout the world.

I feel like they are like me.

I know they are very kind

I send for them my key of love

We have to be friends and brothers.



Acrylic on fiberglass



Back



Detail



Front



Sally El Zeiny

Born in Cairo in 1973, Sally El Zeiny is a contemporary artist and a lecturer at Helwan University's Faculty of Fine Arts in the Graphics Department. She holds a BA in Graphic Art (1997) as well as an MA and PhD in graphic design.

Her artwork has been exhibited in over 61 group exhibitions in Egypt and abroad, including shows at the Alexandria Atelier, Arts Mart and Al Hanager in Cairo, Imago Mundi and Pesaro in Italy, New York City, Romania and Armenia. She was a jury member of El Sawy Culture Wheel's Salon for Small Art Pieces in 2014, and is the recipient of over eight national art awards and certificates of merit, including the Grand Prize at the Fourth Siwa Painting Symposium.

Her artwork has been acquired by the Egyptian High Council of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Culture, the Bahrain Ministry of Culture, and the Faculty of Fine Arts Museum in Cairo, in addition to private collections in Tunisia, France and Spain. She currently lives in Mokattam, Cairo.

Statement

Ankh...The Magic Box

Dreamer Women waiting in Magic Box.

A River of Grandmothers Folkloric Tales.

A legendary world of Warm Homes, Lovers, Doves on the Trees, Ships in the Azure

Sea. Golden and Silver fish

Cavalier on his horse. . . looking for his princess.

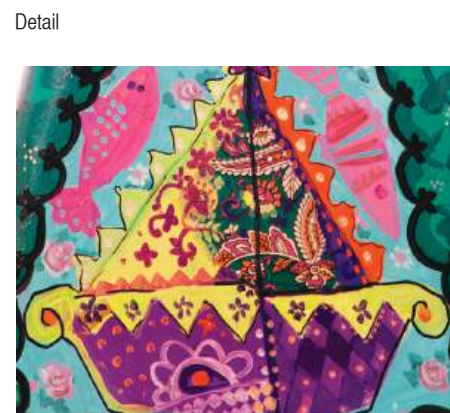
Nymphs dwelling on clouds. Spinning a robe to the moon.

A purple evening star. Watching the Earth from afar.

Acrylic, collage, waterproof pens on fiberglass



Back



Detail



Front



Sergio Gomez

Sergio Gomez is a Chicago based visual artist and creative entrepreneur. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Northern Illinois University. Gomez's work has been subject of solo exhibitions in the United States, Italy, Mexico and Vienna. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions in Spain, Sweden, London, Korea, Mexico and the US. His work can be found in private and public collections of the National Museum of Mexican Art, Brauer Art Museum, and the MIIT Museo Internazionale Italia Arte among other public and private collections.

Currently, Sergio Gomez is the owner & director of 33 Contemporary Gallery, Curator/Director of Exhibitions at the Zhou B. Art Center, a contributor for Italia Arte Magazine, on the Art/Design faculty at South Suburban College, a Creative Consultant for Idea Seat Marketing and Advertising and co-funder of the Art NXT Level Program. His weekly Artist Next Level podcast inspires and educates contemporary artists. He has curated special projects for the Chicago Park District, ArtSpot Miami International Art Fair during Art Basel Week (2013, 2014), National Museum of Mexican Art, and Expo Chicago (2014) among others.

Statement

The Spirit's Light

The Spirit's Light represents the presence of God's Spirit as a guiding and illuminating experience within the Christian faith. Appearing on top of a human figure and over the valley of life's journey, the radiant light takes the form of a dove.



Acrylic and charcoal on fiberglass



Back



Detail



Front



Serwan Baran

Serwan Baran was born in Baghdad in 1968. He graduated from Babel University with a degree in Fine Arts. Baran is a member of AIAP, the Iraqi Fine Art Association and the National Art Association.

He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Golden Prize, Iraqi Contemporary Art Exhibition (1995) and the Honorary Medal at the Cairo 7th Biennial (2002). Baran lives and works in Amman.

His works have been exhibited widely throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Japan.

Statement

My inspiration for this work came from the half man-half dog figure, Anubis of ancient pharaonic times. Often seen holding the Ankh, Anubis had a pivotal role as guardian of the cemetery and also decided which souls could enter the underworld. He embodied the link between life and death.

The anticipatory perspective on what is happening at that era, is represented by consolidating the right hand in a futuristic repetitive fashion to indicate the brutality of the cynical part imposed by the belief in the punishment of the human body. He is only the witness.



Acrylic on fiberglass



Back

Detail



Front



Sherine Osseiran

Sherine Osseiran is a Lebanese Dutch visual artist who lives and works in London, UK. She attended the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague (The Netherlands), holds a BA in painting from Chelsea college of Art and Design and an MA in Fine Art with PGcert in Teaching and Learning from Kingston University. Since 2006 she has been producing work primarily in her London studio taking exhibitions as a medium to re-contextualize her work. Osseiran's art production includes paintings, videos and photographs. Her work has been exhibited in London (UK), Dallas (USA), Beirut (Lebanon), The Hague (The Netherlands), Dublin (Ireland) and Doha (Qatar) as part of 'Hurouf ', an exhibition held by Sotheby's in December 2010. Osseiran's work is in many private collections and her Art is manifested through public commissions and educational projects.

About her art, Osseiran says: "Colour and movement are vital elements in my work. I am forever transformed in the presence of each or the other. I am interested in the flow of positive energy which colour, words and music can transfer to us and the mysterious transformation we experience by re-discovering our inner beauty, peace and happiness".

Statement

The Ankh is an ancient symbol of life, tolerance and harmony. In this symbol, two Arabic letters were revealed to me: Meem from mahabba and Ra from rahma. In Arabic, mahabba means love and charity while rahma encompasses mercy, grace and compassion. Rahmah is also related to the Arabic word rahm, which means "uterus," "womb," and symbolizes "family bonds".

Both mahabba and rahma are the essence of God and the soul of our Universe. They are also the humblest and astonishing tools which we humans- who originate from the same womb- are called upon to observe in dealing with each other. Mahabba and rahma do not only reflect our reverence for human life and existence. They also are our ultimate path towards happiness and inner peace. I did not have to design the Ankh; its essence was within it. I simply read and coloured it.

For letter Ra from rahma (compassion) I chose the Turquoise green-blue for its association with peace and the ability to enhance empathy and calm. Meem from Mahhaba (Love) complements the green with its heart-warming red.

Acrylic on fiberglass



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Detail



Front



Suzan Shoukry

Suzan Shoukry is an artist, writer/journalist and art critic who was born in Cairo. She obtained her degree in Art Education in 1983 and also studied Intellectual Property Rights at Cairo University's Faculty of Information. She has authored numerous articles about art in Egyptian newspapers and obtained scholarships from the Ministry of Culture five years in a row. Shoukry was honored for her visual creativity at the 3rd Festival of Ismailia and received Certificates of Appreciation from the General Authority for Cultural Palaces and Future University's Zayed City International Festival of Creativity. She additionally received the Certificate of Honor and Shields of the Radio and Television Union, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Antiquities.

Statement

The "key of life" is the symbol of eternal life for the ancient Egyptians, and was used by Egyptian pharaohs as a symbol of life after death. However, I found in it another meaning. Life and happiness will not come about without peace; peace with oneself and with others. I chose to draw a woman who grants to others the key to life, not causing war, but giving love.

Oil and acrylic on fiberglass



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Detail



Front



Yasmine El Khateib

Yasmine El-Khateib is an Egyptian pop and portrait artist, a writer and a TV presenter. She has a BA in Graphic and Book Design from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo, continuing a long family tradition of book making and publishing. Since her graduation, she has worked as an interior designer, a graphic designer and a TV presenter.

Meanwhile, her work as a pop artist and a portrait artist has been shown in national and international exhibitions. These have included, most notably, 'Immortals', her critically acclaimed pop art exhibition in 2013, as well as her participation in the prestigious 'Autumn Salon' in Paris in 2013 and 2014. El-Khateib is one of the most sought after portrait artists of her generation. She is also the author of three books and a prolific political commentator, contributing weekly columns to several Egyptian newspapers.

Statement

A close association exists in ancient Egyptian mythology between the Ankh and the Goddess Isis. The two contrasting points at the key head symbolize, it is argued, the ancient gods Isis and Osiris, the feminine and the masculine origins of life. Similarly, the almond-shaped key head symbolizes the womb – house of the divine spirit, and the source of all human life.

Isis is not only the matriarch/goddess, the origin of all elements that exist, and the source of time that governs the heights of heavens, the benevolent sea breeze, and the desolate hell alike. She is also the strong female, the infatuated lover, and the loyal wife whose tragic and magnificent love story inspired the unique blend of strength and tenderness in generations of Egyptian women.

I have, however, chosen for this work another icon of love and defiance – the great Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, whose uniquely beautiful brush strokes defeated disability and illness, and whose life was interwoven with the tragedy of her love for her husband Diego Rivera. I have deliberately opted to blend features of Frida and Isis, to indicate that every female who possesses their qualities, is the manifestation of a goddess. She is simultaneously the origin of life, and the key thereof.

Acrylic on fiberglass



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Detail



Front



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