

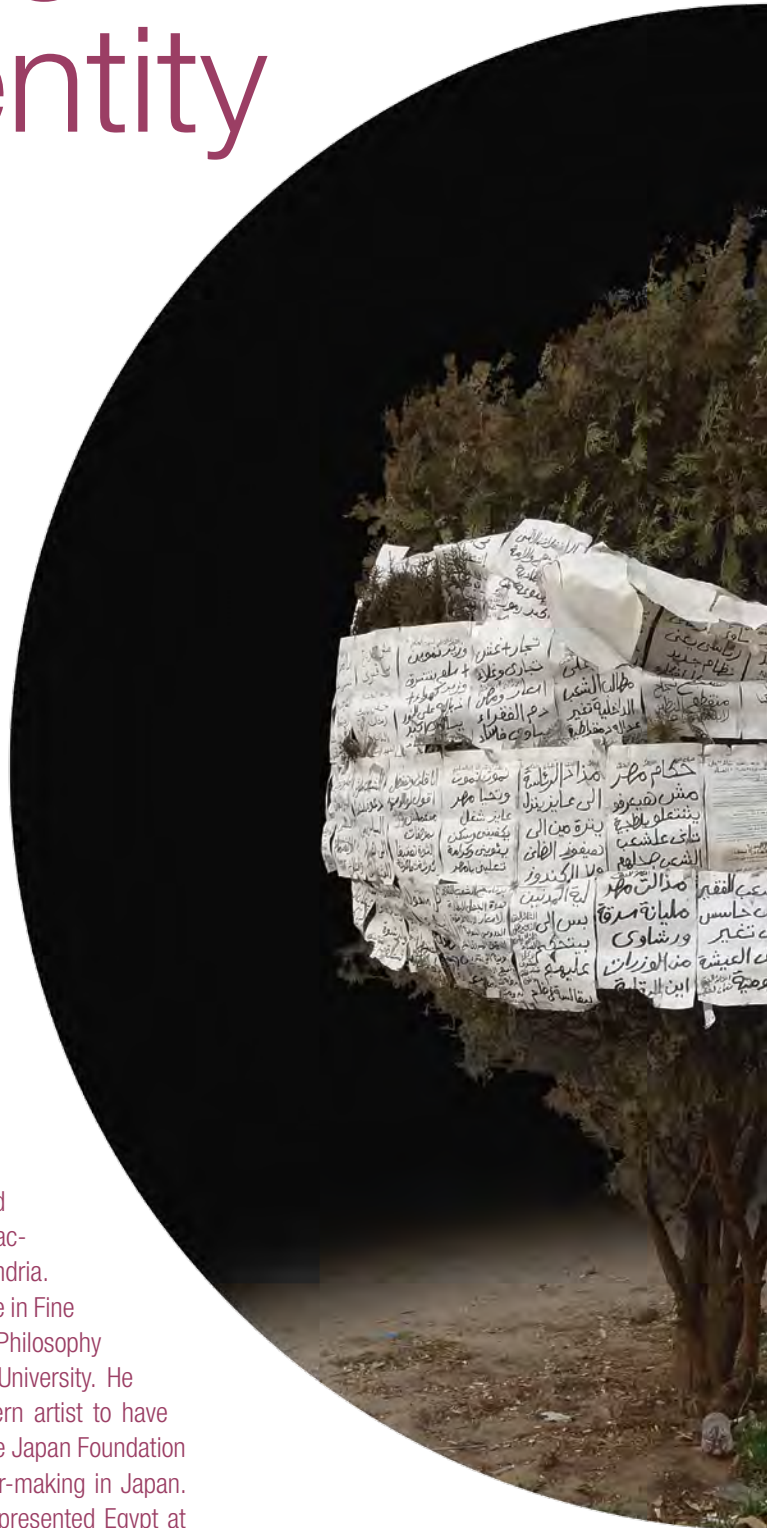
EGYPTIAN ART TODAY

Exploring Egyptian Cultural Identity in Times of Change

Mohamed Abouelnaga

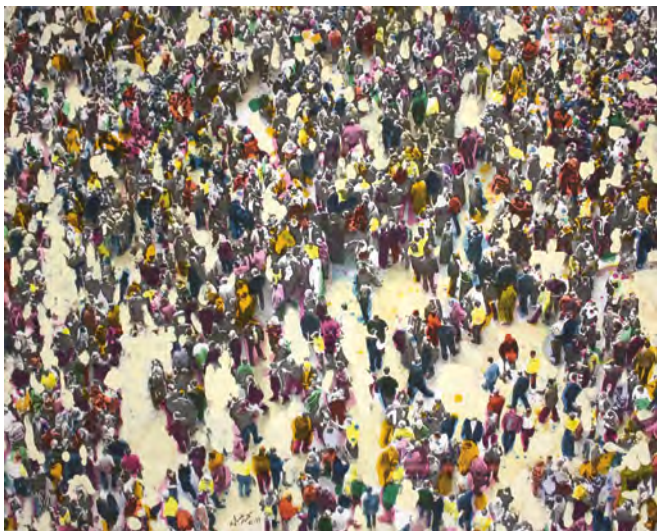
In Egypt, among other Arab countries touched by political transitions in 2011 and 2012, all sorts of ‘engaged artists’ rallied and rioted, fighting the injustices of ‘the system’. Mohamed Abouelnaga was one of them as he explored Egyptian cultural identity along the fight for freedom. His latest work called **Four Trees in Tahrir Square** provides a view of the relationship Egyptians have with their country. In the middle of the revolution in Egypt, people took over the streets, protesting and rallying for freedom. One of the means of more tangible expression was to decorate the trees in Tahrir Square with papers covered with demands, wishes, hopes, dreams and complaints. The trees served therefore as messengers for the people’s catharsis and struggle for liberation. To Abouelnaga, the trees act as the glue of Egypt’s collective consciousness and cultural identity in times of change.

Born in 1960 in the Egyptian town of Tanta, Mohamed Abouelnaga graduated with honors from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Alexandria. He has a Masters Degree in Fine Art and a PhD in the Philosophy of Art from Alexandria University. He is the first Middle Eastern artist to have received a grant from the Japan Foundation to study the art of paper-making in Japan. In 2002, Abouelnaga represented Egypt at the Venice Biennale and in 2001, he won the first prize of the Alexandria Biennale. He is the founder of the Elnafeza Foundation for Contemporary Art & Development.





Tree in Tahrir Square, from CAIRO 11 series, 2012, photographs, 150x150 cm.



Oil on photograph on paper, 100x70 cm, 2011.



Oil on photograph on paper, 100x70 cm, 2011.

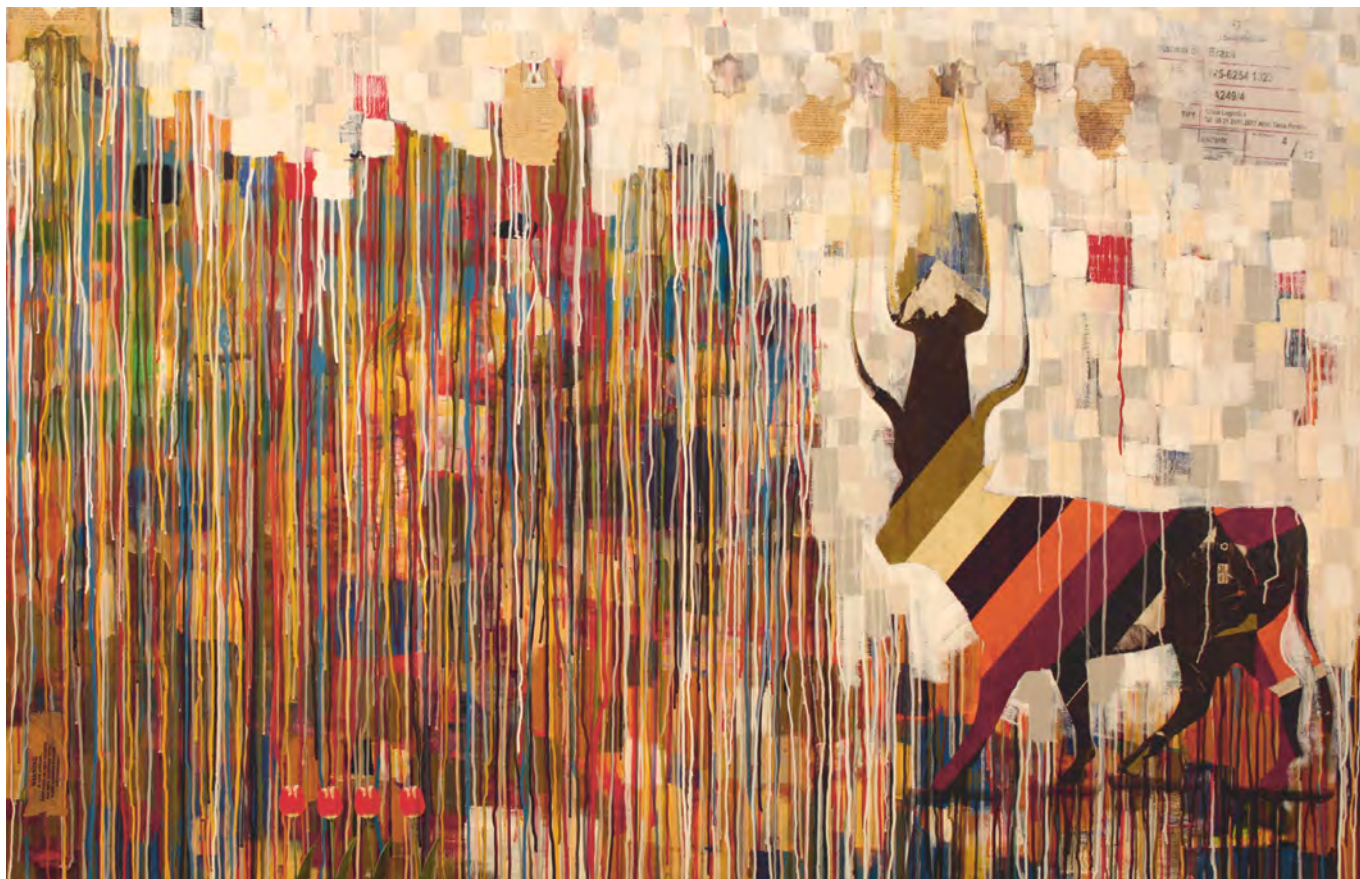


Oil on photograph on paper, 100x70 cm, 2011.

Mohamed Abla

Mohamed Abla's works are characterized by a shimmering dynamic. He shows photography of crowds from above and edits them with oil paint. Through the narrow array of the depicted crowd the single person disappears in a colorful carpet of color dots. Abla does not talk about the individual but about the collective; what seems unthinkable for a single person becomes possible together. Mohamed Abla's works are a homage to the Egyptian people and particularly to Cairo: the bustle, the noise, the colorful hustle on the streets and the humanity that brings such life to the city.

Mohamed Abla was born in 1953 in Mansoura, Egypt. He gained international recognition through numerous exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world, as well as receiving many awards and prizes such as First Prize at the Kuwait Biennale 1994 and at the Alexandria Biennale 1997. In 2007, he founded the "Fayoum Art Center" where artists from around the world work together and exchange ideas. In 2009, Mohamed Abla opened the first "Caricature Museum" in the Middle East.



Stockholm Hathur Rain, mixed media on canvas, 120x200 cm, 2012.

Khaled Hafez

Khaled Hafez's works are characterized by a colorful, nearly expressive style. Duality does not dominate Hafez's work; it is rather the melting of incompatible things. Ancient Egyptian divinities are united with modern western icons. For his works, he chooses comic heroes or fashion magazine beauties. In a playful way, he removes the gap between old and new worlds, between East and West, between high and trivial culture, creating a mirror of society, which according to him is situated in a state of metamorphosis.

Khaled Hafez is a visual artist, born in Cairo in 1963 where he currently lives and works. Hafez's practice spans the mediums of painting, installation, photography and video. His works were shown among others at the Saatchi Gallery, Tate Modern, MuHKA Museum of Art Antwerp, Kunstmuseum Bonn, the State Museum of Modern Art Thessaloniki, and at the George Pompidou Center in Paris.



Stockholm sniper, acrylic on canvas 180x120cm, 2012.

AB GALLERY
across borders

The group exhibition **EGYPTIAN ART TODAY** featured at **AB Gallery** in Lucerne, Switzerland (February 3 - March 16, 2013).

To view more Egyptian artists in this exhibition, visit: www.ab-gallery.com

Artists and galleries interested in profiling their work and shows with **Revolve**, please contact:

Laura Beltrán Villamizar

Photo | Art Editor

laura@revolve-magazine.com