

## A sum that doesn't add much to its parts



The irregularity of the canvas figure does not aid the subjects depicted in Fahmi's pieces.

By **Mariam Hamdy** April 10, 2008, 2:00 am

Villa Grey has been the host of three exhibitions prior to the current one, Tamima Fahmi's "Sum of all Parts. But unlike Fahmi's the first three were quite successful.

The relatively new venue was greeted with open arms by Cairo's art connoisseurs when it first opened last October. Essentially founded by Philip Skaff, artist and director, it is currently run by Managing Director Gerard Avedissian.

Despite the venue's distracting wall colors, previous exhibited works were always holistic and complete.

Unfortunately, this cannot be said of Fahmi's exhibition. Her works are tremendously uneven. There is no harmony in style, medium, size or palette. The style is fragmented rather than varied, with heavy influences from Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Shereen Neshat, Picasso and the school of abstraction. Not one element is repeated or used as a thread to keep the works linked stylistically.

Perhaps this notion is the inspiration for the title of the show, but it's certainly a weak and vague one.

The choice of palette is generally morbid, relying on dull colors and unwashed brushes. The colors are reminiscent of German expressionist paintings, but sadly without their strength or shock factor.

On a similar note, composition is not at all considered, yet not purposefully so. It feels as though these works are unstudied and whimsical, yet lack the spontaneity, which allows this non-chalant whimsy to come alive in a painting.

Another major influence on Fahmi's work is Mondrian, who was quoted by her use of irregularly shaped canvases. It's a bold attempt, since it isn't a particularly conventional approach to paint supports, but sadly that's all it was: a mere failed attempt.

The work portrayed in these odd-looking canvases doesn't make use of shape, nor does the irregularity of the canvas figure aid the subjects depicted in these pieces.

Having said that, the subjects themselves reveal a level of indifference as the work portrayed, provoking the highly undesirable reaction of "and.?"

Furthermore, the titles given to each piece are weightier and a lot more interesting than the pieces themselves, which in turn drew attention to a dimension they didn't embody. Fahmi's exhibitin feels like an amateur show, one whose creator stumbled on through a trial-and-error search for originality. The highlight was visiting Villa Grey, which goes to affirm the saying that the whole is certainly greater than the "sum of all parts.



What's This ?

[Add Comment...](#)



Related Stories

There is no related article

[Most Read](#) [Commented](#) [Emailed](#)

[24 hours](#) [3 days](#) [Week](#)

[Daily News Egypt: Final words](#)

[No to a bloody future for Egypt](#)

