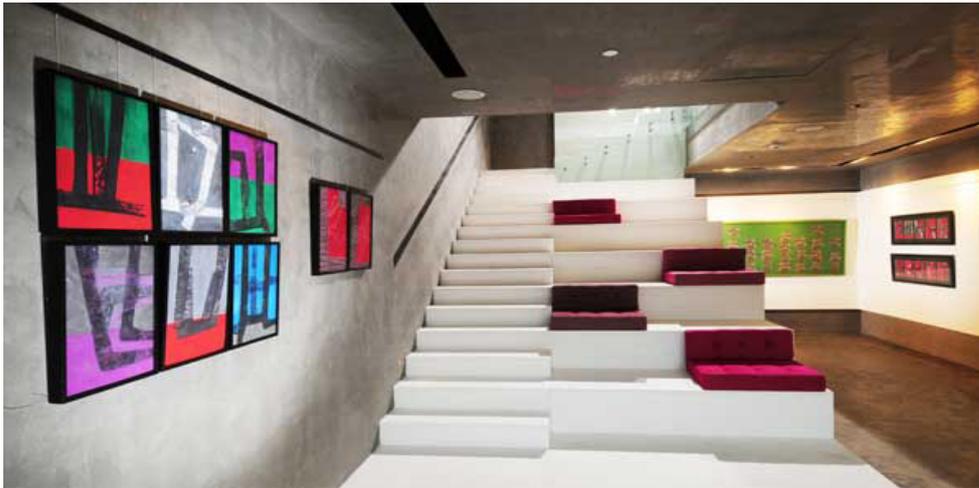


## Cairo's hottest new art hub opens at Designopolis



Tache is designed by Eklego as a multi-purpose, interactive art space perfectly suited to art display, as well as presentations, screenings and lectures.

By **Mariam Hamdy/Special to Daily News Egypt** January 21, 2011, 10:12 pm

For the past few weeks, Designopolis, Cairo's larger than life art and design complex, has been witnessing the steady preparations for the inauguration of its latest art gallery, Tache, due to open Saturday, January 22.

'Tache' is an acronym using the first few letters of both the founders' names: Taya El Zayadi and Cherine Badrawy. Both women have been progressively building their own art collections and delving deeper into visual art over the years. Finally, they decided to crown their love for collecting and supporting inspiring talents by opening a gallery together.

Badrawy has always been interested in art and antiques, scouring auctions and galleries in London, where she grew up, and steadily amassing a collection of works from all over the world. "I always bought art that moved me, but it was only in 1990 that I started focusing more on modern Egyptian art and artists, which further sparked my interest in the local art scene," Badrawy explained.

El Zayadi, on the other hand, has been genuinely immersed in the local art scene from an early age, stating that she "related most to modern Egyptian art."

"I've bought pieces by many non-Egyptian artists, but it's the local art that I fell most in love with," El Zayadi said.

Being close friends with a common passion, El Zayadi and Badrawy felt it was best to hone their passion for art by creating a space that can become a hub for contemporary art in Cairo.

Despite the simple introduction behind the concept of the exhibition space, by no means do the founders intend the gallery to be a whimsical space for 'art by the meter.'

"We've noticed that it's always the same people at all the gallery openings," El Zayadi said. "We're hoping to expand this circle and erase the intimidation that people have towards art and raise it to become a regular topic of conversation."

"We want to allow art to be accessible to the people, and not just an elite group of visitors who already know and understand it," Badrawy added.

Yet one questions the choice of Designopolis as a location that establishes this kind of accessibility. The ladies understand that the distance away from the city could be a slight hindrance at the beginning. In the long run though, they are confident that the location will become the future locus of the Cairo art scene.

Designopolis is not only the quintessential art and design hub of the city, but also the only location of its kind which allows for the construction of a purposely built gallery. Tache is designed by Eklego as a multi-purpose, interactive space perfectly suited to art displays as well as presentations, screenings and lectures.

The latter is the ultimate value that Tache wishes to add to the scene: To allow for the exchange of art and artists between Egypt and the world, as well as organizing lectures and workshops by both local and foreign art authorities to help educate and enlighten those interested in the field.



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Presenting established artists is a requirement for this educational process, yet Tache is hoping to launch unknown talents into the local and eventually international arena. Creating this rare dialogue between Egypt and the international art space is vital, as both parties stand to learn a lot from this exposure.

Their dream is to have the role of Tache extend beyond selling art, and although it's an objective not to be underestimated, both El Zayadi and Badrawy feel that "there are so many people that are hungry for arts and culture but don't know where to begin. We hope to provide them with that starting point."

With the idea of a starting point in mind, El Zayadi and Badrawy could not have chosen a better artist than Huda Lutfi to inaugurate their gallery.

Striking the perfect balance between modernity and traditionalism, technique and concept and ultimately a holistic approach to the culture itself, Lutfi's work presents the modus operandi that Tache is hoping to abide by: Contemporary art that is globally understood but quintessentially Egyptian.

One can only hope that El Zayadi and Badrawy succeed in their efforts — Cairo can use many more exhibition spaces with such sincere intentions.



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