

Playful creatures in new sculpture exhibit



A sculpture exhibition by artist Gamal Abdel Nasser.

By Mariam Hamdy/Special to Daily News Egypt **October 19, 2011, 5:40 pm**

The Zamalek Art Gallery is currently hosting a sculpture exhibition by artist Gamal Abdel Nasser. An artist with a steady list of exhibitions since 1983, his sculptures have evolved and matured while always retaining a distinct style.

The exhibition showcases a myriad of his styles, ranging from colorful masks and torsos, to figural representations and portraits, to gorgeous whimsical creatures. It's quite unlike any of the recent exhibitions in that the work seems otherworldly, with vast quotations from Giacometti, Degas and Picasso.

Upon meeting Abdel Nasser's sculptures, one always thinks of something fun. Like a grown man who refuses to grow up, his sculptures have adult figures but playful poses, always veering to the left when right would be more proper.

Some of the works fare better than others. Among the less interesting are the torsos, huddled in a group of three. Hung on the wall, the pieces look like papier mache experimentations, unrepresentative of the artist's flare for whimsy and his ability to skew figures into elaborate shapes. Unlike the rest of the works, they feel static and grand whereas all the fun lies in the moving and fantastical.

Like Alexander Calder's sculptures, Abdel Nasser relies on the mind's eye to fill in the gaps. Despite the use of bronze — a heavy medium used by the classic sculptor — the work itself is fluid and almost clay-like in essence, moving freely as though with a mind of its own. Figures are molded into bodies with snake proportions, heads have features that are pushed into each other in the way Picasso's rearranged faces of his weeping woman and animals are given inanimate body parts. The artist presents the results of his rampant imagination and it is the job of the viewer to make sense of it all.

Many of the sculptors are personal favorites, but the first of which would be a hybrid creature made up of what appears to be an awkwardly fat body of a giraffe, a head of a duck, antelope horns and the tale made of a comb. It's hilarious in the most charming of ways, standing there with an upright formality of someone important. It's the most adorably silly little creature that just captures your heart.

Equally darling is this clumsy little goat, which the artist twisted around in a way that makes it appear confused and lost, making it even more endearing.

A trademark sculpture by the artist is the man on a bike, which was usually presented as colored bronze, but here, is bronze only. The uncolored version is a better evolution of the sculpture, bringing a distinguished element to the otherwise awry figure. Less contorted are two lovely sculptures on display, the first depicting a man standing tall against the wind (and presumably, rain) as he holds an umbrella. The instant thought is of Frank Sinatra's "Singing in the Rain," and once again, the word that comes to mind is charming.

The other is of a couple either dancing or heading towards each other for an embrace — and it is in this sculpture, as well as his Picasso-esque portraits, where Abdel Nasser's sheer skill in figural abstraction can be seen. The height of the man's torso atop his lanky legs, towering over the woman's bottom-heavy figure topped by a long neck, is a sight to be seen. How large and gauche their hands are, yet how delicately entangled they appear, is exquisite. These sculptures perfectly portray the artist's skills as a sculptor.

There are countless sculptures at the show; the ones described being the most prominent, followed by a handful of portraits



Related Stories

There is no related article

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

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

[Daily News Egypt: Final words](#)

[Farewell Note from the Shareholders of EMS](#)

that are both typical of the artist's work as well as excellent examples of how to abstract a face. The rest are all good, but not as final or sound as the ones described. This is a show that must be seen, if only for its feel-good experience.



[What's This ?](#)

 [Add Comment...](#)

[About Daily News Egypt / International Herald Tribune](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertising Guide](#) | [Subscribe to the International Herald Tribune / Daily News Egypt](#) | [Subscribe to DNE e-paper](#) | [E-paper](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Archive](#)
[Cartoon](#) | [Blogs](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Events](#)

© Daily News Egypt 2008, All Rights Reserved.

Technology Managed by El Motaheda Web Designs 