

George Bahgory art in Sharjah



The Sharjah Art Museum, in its sixth edition of the Lasting Impressions series, is hosting an exhibition of works by Egyptian multi-discipline artist George Bahgory, spanning his entire career. The exhibition, which features 80 of Bahgory works in a broad range of mediums and styles, opened on 11 November and runs till 31 December.

The exhibition was opened by Sheikh Khaled Bin Abdullah Bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Chairman of the Department of Seaports and Customs. Attending were Sheikh Sultan Sooud al-Qassemi founder of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sheikha Nawar bint Ahmed bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, Manal Ataya, Director General of Sharjah Museums Department, and Alya Al Mulla, Curator of the Sharjah Art Museum. Bahgory was present in person to treat the audience to an introduction of his *Lasting Impressions* exhibition.

Bahgory's career spans more than half a century across disciplines ranging

from caricature to sculpture, starting from his student years in Cairo in the 1950s. He is known as the 'Grandfather of Caricature' for his political cartoons that featured in the Arabic press for decades.

Manal Ataya, Director General of SMD, said:

"There are few artists in this region more significant than George Bahgory in terms of impact and variety of work. He is best known as a caricaturist and political cartoonist, but is also an accomplished painter, sculptor, novelist and actor.

The collection shown at Sharjah Art Museum is split into themes representing periods of Bahgory's life and his varying artistic styles.

In 'Early Years', visitors can see examples of the young Bahgory's drawings, including sketches portraying his father, who was a schoolteacher. Bahgory enrolled in the School of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1949. There, he studied under Hussein Bikar, who was one of the leading figures of Egyptian modern art. During the 1950's, Bahgory worked as an illustrator and cartoonist for the Cairo weekly magazines *Rose al-Youssef* and *Sabah al-Kheir*, until he moved to Paris in 1969, where he would remain for thirty-five years.

The next phase – 'Rebirth' – features Bahgory's work in Paris in the 1960s and 70s as he pursued his artistic studies at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

In 'Experimentation', the exhibition explores the innovative way Bahgory expressed himself through a variety of media including drawing, painting, engraving, sculpture and tapestry. His diversity of artistic styles ranges from cubist, expressionist to surrealist influences. Even with his sculptures, Bahgory does not settle for one single material, but uses bronze, wood and other mixed media.

In the 'Memoirs of Egypt' section, Bahgory depicts the country of his birth as a land that appears timeless and unchanged using views of the

countryside or scenes of card players sitting around a table in a traditional café.

Bahgory is also famous for his portraits of the legendary Egyptian singer, Umm Kulthoum, who is represented on stage in a variety of manners, ranging from expressionist to cubist-inspired styles.

Last comes the 'Self Reflection' phase, and includes his numerous self-portraits. He painted himself with all medias, all formats and styles. Some of his self-portraits are satirical and humorous, while others express more profound and grave thoughts.















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