

# Retrospective of Egyptian artist George Bahgory to open in Sharjah

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The acclaimed Egyptian artist George Bahgory, whose career has spanned more than 50 years across an array of disciplines from caricature to sculpture, will be hosted at the Sharjah Art Museum in the latest edition of the Lasting Impression exhibition series.

Bahgory will be in Sharjah to personally attend the exhibition, *Lasting Impressions: George Bahgory*, which will feature 80 of his pieces across a range of mediums from his student years in Cairo in the 1950s to his most recent work.

Running from November 11 to December 31, the exhibition is the sixth installment of Sharjah Museum Department's (SMD) *Lasting Impressions* series, which each year features a different prominent guest artist.

It is the first time SMD has teamed up with the man widely known as the 'Grandfather of Caricature' in recognition of his political cartoons that featured in the Arabic press for decades.

Although best known as a caricaturist and cartoonist, he is equally regarded as one of the region's most distinguished contemporary artists and an accomplished painter, sculptor, novelist and actor. His artwork has been displayed in more than 30 exhibitions around Europe and the Middle East, including the Louvre in Paris.

Manal Ataya, Director General of Sharjah Museums Department, said: "It is always a privilege for Sharjah Museums Department to introduce exhibitions of work by celebrated artists from around the Arab world.

"The *Lasting Impressions* series was conceived as a platform to showcase distinguished artists from the UAE and the wider Arab region who have left a prominent mark on the region's artistic landscape. Bahgory fits that description effortlessly."

SMD is currently installing the exhibition after shipping Bahgory's pieces from his home in Cairo and studio in Paris. Other pieces are being brought in from private collections.

The collection includes five notable oil on canvas artworks, which reflect both his contemporary style and his many beautiful portraits of the Egyptian singer and actress, Om Kalthoum. The pieces are: Musicians, Mechanics, Om Kalthoum and Musicians, and two pieces entitled Om Kalthoum.

Born in 1932 in the village of Bahgora, Egypt, Bahgory's career as a political

cartoonist began in 1953, and he went on to feature in the weekly magazines *Sabah Al Khair* and *Rose El Youssef*.

In 1955, he studied painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Zamalek, Cairo, under the guidance of the Egyptian artist Hussein Bikar. Bahgory is most famous for his political satire, which his admirers followed closely in *Al Ahram*, Egypt's most widely-circulated newspaper.

In 1969, Bahgory moved to Paris, and a year later studied at the Academy of Fine Arts. He described this period of his life as his rebirth – his 35 years of freedom.

Influenced by Pablo Picasso, Egyptian modernist Abdel Hadi Al Gazzar, German expressionist Paul Klee and the Egyptian Fayoum portraits, Bahgory has become one of the region's best-selling artists.

He has mastered various fine art mediums, including drawing, painting and prints, as well as photography and sculpture. His artwork is considered unique in the way that it pulls together elements of classic and contemporary art and adds a comical twist.

"Our aim is not only to display the artworks, but to give visitors a unique insight into Bahgory's story and the kind of man that he is," said Ataya.

"This retrospective of his work is also a chance for local artists and students to gain exposure to, and be inspired by, a different style of art and at the same time appreciate the wide range of artistic styles that the *Lasting Impressions* series is able to offer to our audiences."

