



Salah Abdel Kerim

1925-1988



Artist & his father - 1930's

Front Cover:

Cesar - Oil on wood
100x130 cm - Signed 1964

Back Cover:

Cry of the Beast - Iron
75x165 - 1962

SALAH ABDEL KERIM 1925-1988

- **1925** Born on November 5th 1925, the third child in a family of five, in Fayoum (Egypt), where his father is a civil servant.
- **1937** His family leaves for Cairo.
- **1938** He meets Hussein Bikar in Qena. He will be his student for two years and will remain very attached to his teacher all his life.
- **1940** He meets Hussein Youssef Amin and the team of "Contemporary Art" in Farouk I high school in Abbasseya, who will make him discover Surrealism.
- **1943** Admission to the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo, "Decor" section.
- **1947** Graduates with the mention "Excellent with Honours".
- **1948** He is appointed Assistant Professor to the "Decor" section of the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- **1952** He obtains the "Ismail" State Prize and is sent to Paris on study mission by decision of Dr. Taha Hussein, who was then Minister of Education.
- **1953** In Paris, he will be the student of Paul Colin and André-Marie Cassandre for advertising and theater décor.
- **1956** Departure for Rome where he studies film set décor at the "Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia". A boarder at the Egyptian Academy in Rome, he also devoted himself to painting and ceramics, with the Italian ceramist, Salvatore Meli.
- **1957** He obtains the "San Vito Romano" Painting International Prize (Italy).
- He obtains his Ph.D. from the "Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia".
- **1958** Back to Egypt, he is appointed Professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- He starts to create his iron sculptures.
- **1959** He wins the First Prize for his sculpture "The Bull" at the Alexandria Biennial.
- He participates in the 5th Biennial of São Paulo (Brazil) where he won a "Mencão Honrosa" for his sculpture "The Fish".
- Marriage to Catherine Morel.
- **1960** He wins the "Guggenheim National Section Award" for Egypt with his painting "The Fighting Roosters".
- Five pictures of his metal sculptures are sent at the request of the São Paulo Museu de Arte Moderna to be kept in the Historical Archives of Contemporary Art.
- He participates in the Venice Biennial (Sculpture section).





- Birth of his daughter, Nevine.
- 1961 His sculpture "The Cry of the Beast", is noticed by René Huyghe, and is represented in his book "Art and Man": René Huyghe (Larousse, 1961, Volume III, p. 395), under the title: "Symbolique de l'Art Moderne - L'Angoisse et la Bête".
- 1963 He is sent to Seattle (USA) to organize the United Arab Republic pavilion at the International Fair of Seattle.
- A major exhibition of his works is organized at the Bab El Louq Gallery (Cairo) by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and National Orientation.
- He participates in the 7th Biennial of São Paulo (Brazil) where he won a "Mencão Honrosa" for his sculpture "The Cry of the Beast".
- Illustrations in the Egyptian Newspaper "Al Ahram" of the works of Naguib Mahfouz and other authors.
- He receives the Order of the Sciences and the Arts - First Class (December 16th 1963)
- 1964 He is sent to New York (USA) to organize the United Arab Republic pavilion at the International Fair of New York.
- - Decoration of the Palestine Hotel in Montazah (Alexandria): design and realization of decorative wall panels as well as furniture, fabrics, carpets and lighting.
- 1965 He receives the State Prize of Encouragement for Decorative Sculpture and Painting.
- He participates in the UAR pavilion at the International Fair of Montreal (Canada).
- 1966 He participates in the Venice Biennial (Sculpture Section)
- 1967 He receives The Order of the Republic - Third Class (February 6th 1967)
- 1968 He participates in the First International Triennial in India. The Indian government buys his sculpture "The Crab" for the Museum of Modern Art in New Delhi.
- He participates in the IVth International Great Prize of Contemporary Art in the Principality of Monaco.
- 1969 He creates the costumes (about 300) for the show The Cairo Millenium at the Balloon Theater in Cairo

- 1970 He is sent by the Abu Dhabi Emirate to Osaka (Japan) to organize their pavilion at the International Fair "Expo 70" in Osaka.
- Birth of his son, Fares.
- 1971 He exhibits several of his sculptures at the Musée Galliera in Paris as part of the Exhibition: "Faces of Contemporary Egyptian Art".
- He receives the First Prize in the architectural competition for the entrance of the City of 10th Ramadan.
- 1978 He receives the "Certificate of Appreciation" for all his artistic achievements.
- He is appointed Head of Section at the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- 1970-1980 Decoration of the Etap-Luxor Hotel: design and construction of decorative wall panels, furniture, fabrics, carpets and lighting.
- 1982 He is appointed Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- 1984 He is appointed Vice-President of the University of Helwan.
- 1985 He receives the Medal of Distinction (October 31st 1985).
- A major retrospective of his works is organized at the French Cultural Centre by Pierre Comte (Director of Centre) and inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Ahmed Heikal (Egyptian Minister of Culture) and H.E. Mr. Pierre Hunt (French Ambassador in Cairo).
- He retires.
- 1986 He continues to lecture at the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- He receives the State Appreciation Prize for the Arts.
- 1988 November 20th 1988, Salah Abdel Kerim's death.
- A day of mourning in his memory is decided at the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- 1989 An exhibition of his works was held at the Faculty of Fine Arts by Dr. Aleya Abdel Hadi. On this occasion, a commemorative plaque is place on the wall of the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- Several posthumous tributes to his memory are organized by the Syndicate of Plastic Arts (February 1989) and theater circles (1997). In 2001, the gallery Safarkhan organized two exhibitions and he was the guest of honour in the Alexandria International Biennial.



Artist & his family

PAINTINGS

It was Hussein Bikar who discovered the talent of Salah Abdel Kerim. He made him love painting and taught him the rules of drawing. This encouraged Salah Abdel Kerim to enroll in the Faculty of Fine Arts. There his talent strengthened thanks to renowned professors. He learnt that art is based on both sensitivity and work performance. Salah Abdel Kerim was an excellent student, he graduated with the mention "Excellent with Honours".

When Salah Abdel Kerim went to Paris, to study theater décor and advertising from two great masters, André-Marie Cassandre and Paul Colin, he became familiar with symbolism and abstract art; but he preferred to follow a different path. Indeed, at that time he had been seduced by the works of Picasso.

He opted for Cubism, however; he stood out using soft lines for human traits. He preferred warm colours to cold colours, but he did not hesitate to introduce these in his work to give them more intensity.

Furthermore, the surface of his paintings usually had a special texture as he often painted with a knife.

He established a concordance between the organic and the geometric, this is very clear in all his portraits and *The Beasts*. His background in interior design, film and theater décor and in other branches gave it, so to speak, superiority in the composition.



Abstract Portrait - Oil on Wood - 115x80 cm - Circa 1962



Portrait of Utta - Oil on Wood - 125x95 cm - Signed 1962



Aluminium tubes 180x60 cm - 1968

روحانية

فيك يا حديد روحانية

ان كنت مسمار و الالفاس

ان كنت مفتاح و الالبريمة

ان كنت سيف و الالبرة

ان كنت محرات

ان كنت مشبك شعر

ان كنت مروحة موتور

ان كنت مطرقة

ان كنت سيخ

ان كنت جنزير خرده في التراب

فيك روحانية

عشان ما بين الرب و الحديد

فيه ابن آدم

صلاح جاهين



Owl - Bronze 25x30 cm - 1980

Roy Hotel Dijon - 40x30 cm - Signed 1954



Owl - Wood - 25x30 cm - 1980/85

SCULPTURES

The personality of Salah Abdel Kerim is revealed in his sculptures, his profound vision and attention to detail.

The passion for sculpture, hidden in his heart, only emerged the day he saw this scrap merchant in front of the Faculty of Fine Arts in 1958. He learned sculpture in no time, he brought together the scattered pieces of iron in order to create a work to decorate his house ... and The Fish took shape.

He had a gift that he exploited and respected. He made a sculpture of an iron bull and another of wood. Every time he used a new material, his gaze was different. Similarly, his eye on the owl is different whether he used marble, ebony or copper. Salah Abdel Kerim had therefore the feeling for the "matter" but also for proportions. The proportions of The Christ and those of The Man of Industry are considerable because he wanted to express the symbolic significance of these two figures.



Skull - Bronze - 25x45 cm - 1972

A Girl with Red hair - Oil on Wood - 80x65 cm - Signed | 1956





Ciara - Oil on Canvas - 100x75 cm - Signed 1957



Graziella - Oil on Canvas - 135x95 cm - Signed 1957

THEATER DECORS & COSTUMES

For a long time, the trend in theater décor was to realism. When Salah Abdel Kerim went to France and Italy to study theater and cinema décor, his talent and training melded closely. He had a penchant for symbolism, for abstraction and cubism. Upon his return to Egypt, the art world began to discover his creative abilities. The theater scene welcomed him warmly. He had studied new technologies in Europe: moving items in the same act, between scenes, between acts, the use of motion of modern mechanics, rising and falling curtains. With Salah Abdel Kerim, theater scenery began to play a key role, closely combining the lighting, sound and costumes. He managed to impose his vision, enriching the set in order to support the text and movement of actors and to enhance the capacity of directors through the lighting and sound.

Interior design and interior architecture occupied a very important place in the work of Salah Abdel Kerim. The work he produced for hotels are among his finest achievements. In addition, at the Faculty of Fine Arts, in the Interior Architecture section he had created and in which he taught, he formed and marked a whole generation of students.



Decor - Death of a salesman - 50x70 cm - Signed





Decor the Sultan - 35x50 cm - Signed



Bedouin Costumé - 38x27 cm - Signed



Men Costumes - 32x46 cm - Signed 1972



Uncle Vanya I - 30x40 cm - Signed



أوريست حملات القرابين

1968

Decor Oreste - 64x82 cm - Signed 1968

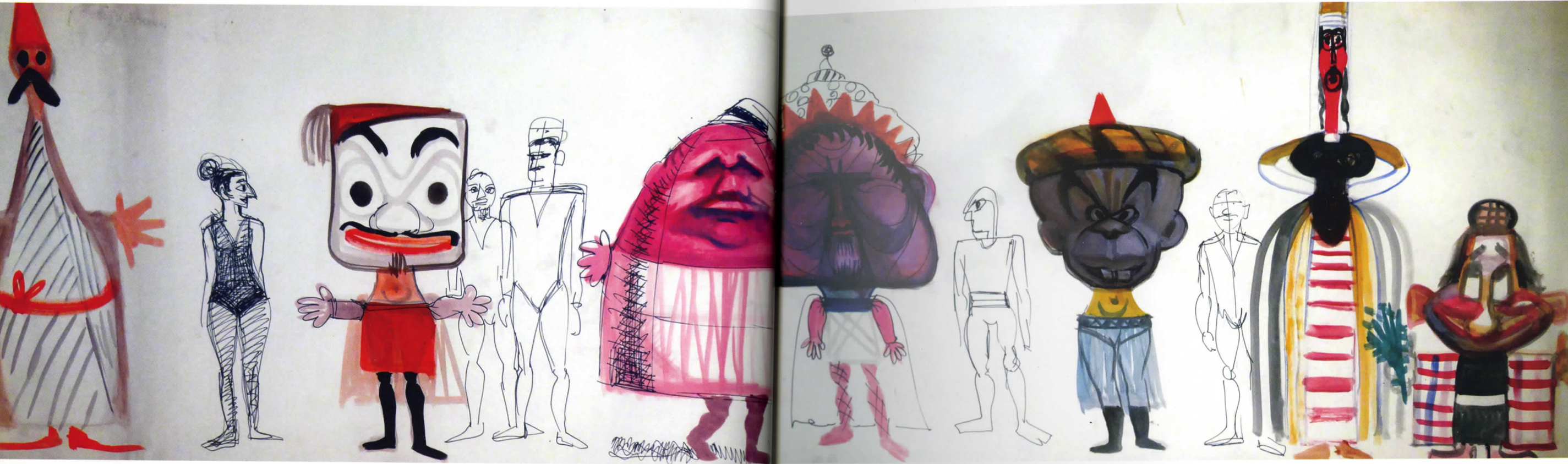


أوريست
حاملت القرابين
أوريست

Pylade - 40x28 cm - Circa 1968

أوريسنت
جامدت القرابين
كليبيسترا





Cairo in 1000 Years sketch - Salah Abdel Kerim & Salah Jahin - 220x60 cm - Circa 1960's



Bayonne - 35x40 cm - Signed 1954

BLACK AND SEPIA DRAWINGS

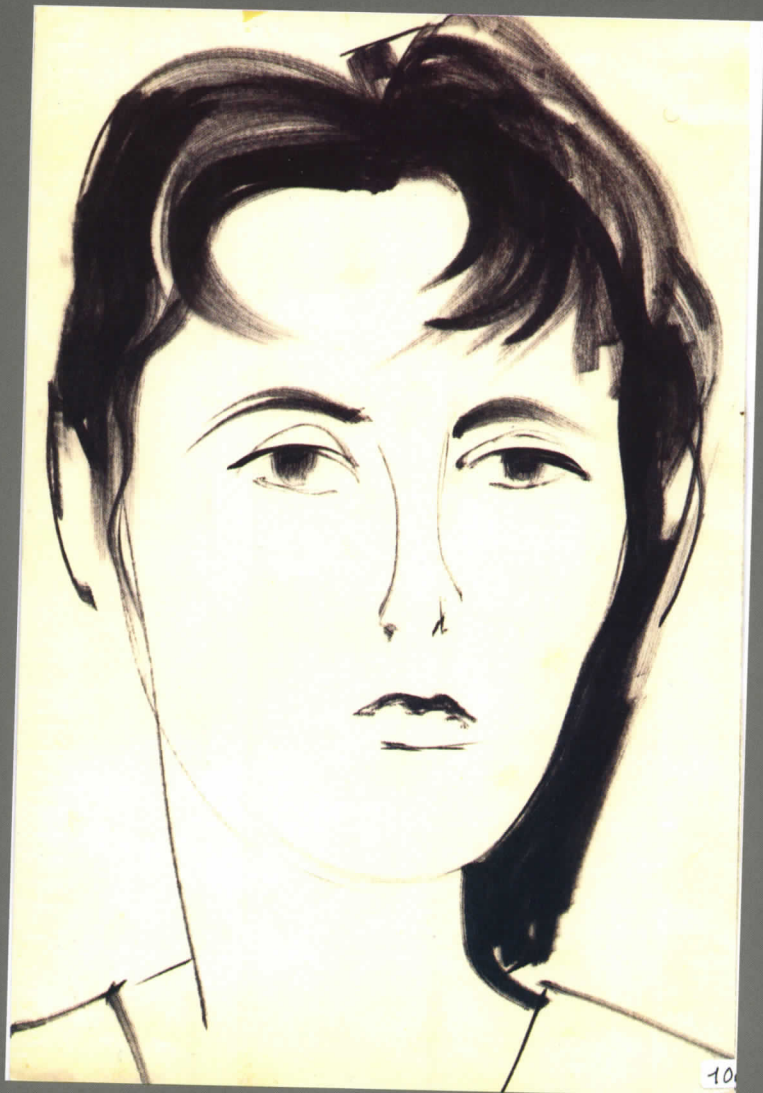
With this set of sketches made between 1953 and 1958, during his period of study in France and in Italy, Salah Abdel Kerim offers us one of the jewels of his talent. Each drawing is a true picture of perfection: the composition is controlled, tones are nuanced, perception includes the "full" and the "empty" at the same time; the lines run on the paper, full of life. The representation is accurate and the analysis penetrating. There is a strong structuralism in cold countries, but also the heat of the lines in Italy. For buildings, Salah Abdel Kerim humanized them using the "wash" technique (lavis).

In his sculpture drawings, movement inspires greatness and beauty. It exudes extreme simplicity, as in the sketch Boat in Geneva (1956). He also used different shades of black and sepia to animate the scenes and its details. Some of these sketches show a trend of conscious abstraction and structuralist cubism, such as in the representation of The Statue in Florence or the Swiss Mountain.



Ursula - 25x18 cm - Signed 1956





Jeanne 2 - 30x21 cm - Signed 1954



Seville - 45x40 cm - Signed 1955



Avignon - 35x40 cm - Signed 1954

GUGGENHEIM
INTERNATIONAL
AWARD
1960

The
GUGGENHEIM NATIONAL SECTION AWARD
for Egypt
1960
is awarded by
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation
to
SALAH ABDEL KARIM
and
SALAH E. TAHER
for their paintings
Fighting Cocks
Expectation

Solomon R. Guggenheim
President

THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION
ONE TWENTY BRADWAY
NEW YORK 5, N. Y.

June 12, 1961

Dear Mr. Karim:

On behalf of the Trustees of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, it is with the greatest pleasure that I forward to you your official National Section certificate for the 1960 Guggenheim International Award. This certificate is in recognition of the pre-eminence of your painting, FIGHTING COCKS, which was selected by the distinguished National Committee as the best painting to be executed in your country during the year 1960.

May I extend my personal congratulations to you and wish you continuing success in the future.

Sincerely yours,

Solomon R. Guggenheim

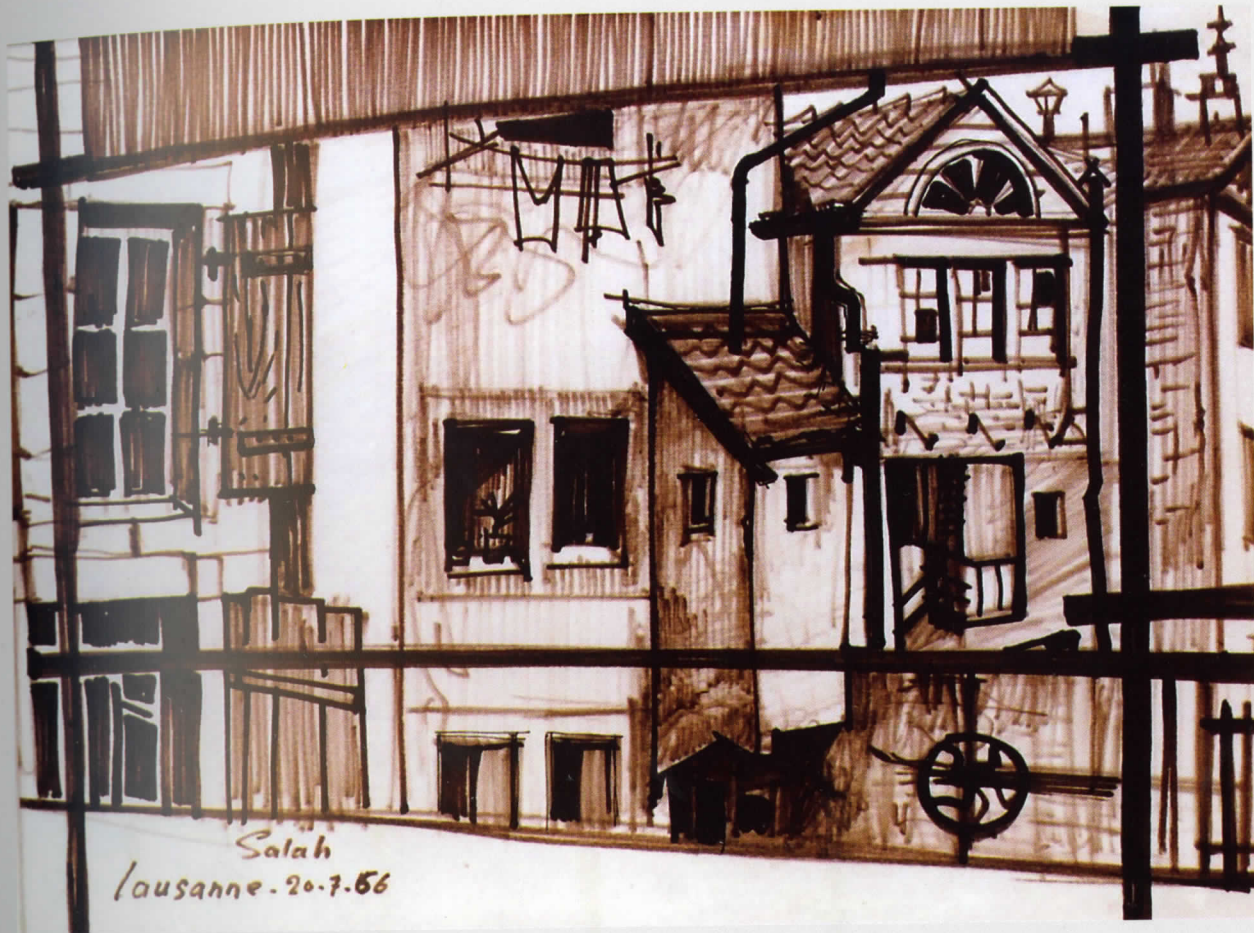
President

Mr. Salah Abdel Karim
Academie des Beaux-Arts
Midan Tahrir
Government Building
Cairo, Egypt

Certificate Guggenheim National Section Award



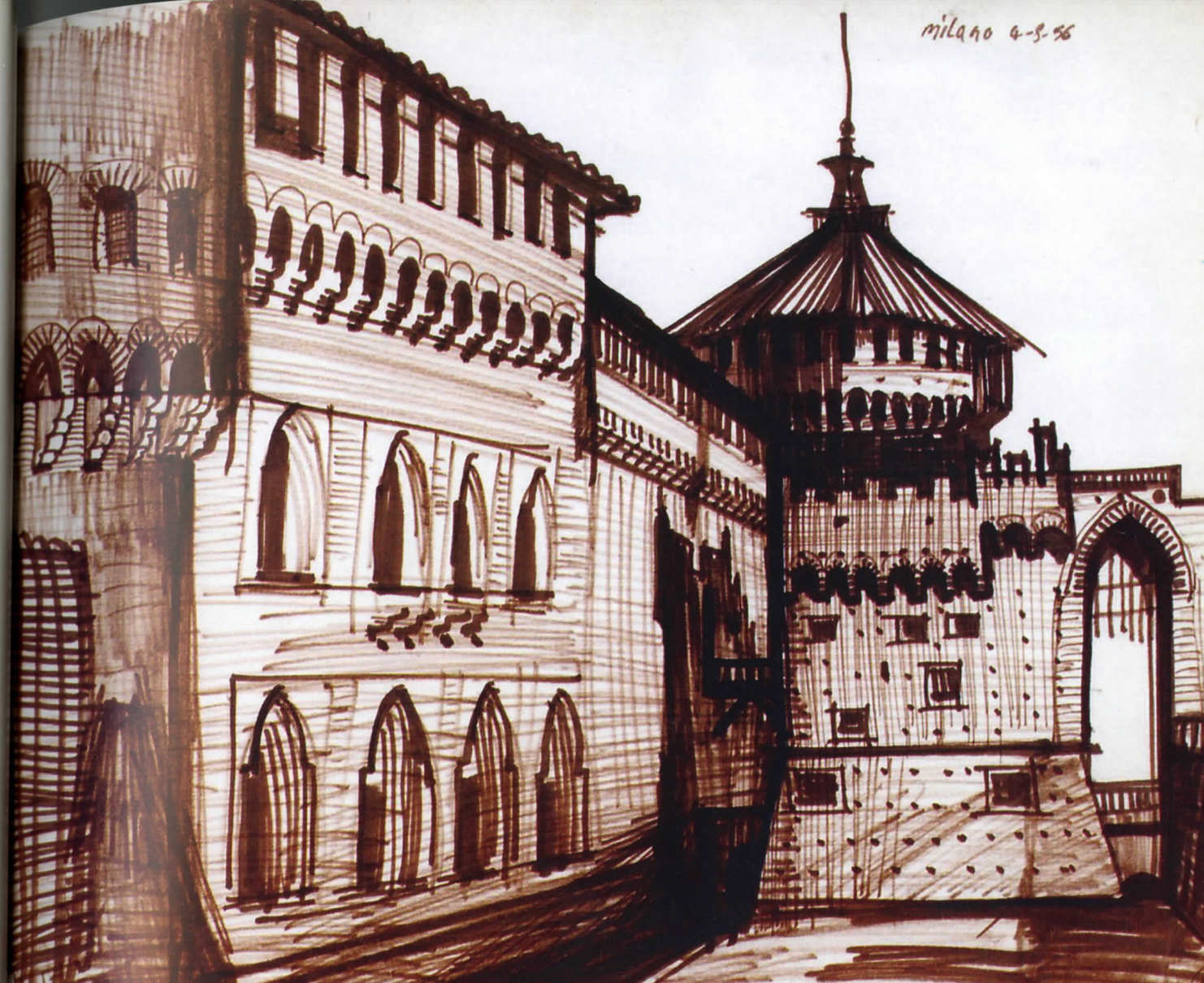
Salah
lausanne
20.7.56



Salah
lausanne - 20.7.56



Madrid
Salah - 1955



Milano 4-8-56



SKETCHES OF PORTRAITS

These are mostly people he was close to, friends, acquaintances, work colleagues. Here, the faces express the talent of the artist and a particular style. The lines are sharp, strong and precise, drawn on paper with ease.



ILLUSTRATIONS

The press made its debut in Egypt in the early 20th century, when it was mainly based on typography. Handwriting and illustrations were rare. Art Nouveau developed in Europe in the late 19th century and the use of illustrations in newspapers, magazine, books. In the East, the poet Gibran Khalil Gibran is probably the first to introduce the illustrations in his books. This art then took off slowly, reaching its peak in the 1940s in Egypt. Press drawings is emerging and caricature appears. A new generation followed in the 1950s, and the magazine Sabah El Kheir introduced new artists.

Around this time, Salah Abdel Kerim was becoming important as a sculptor, painter and decorator, but was not attracted to the press illustration. Thanks to the strong friendship between them, it was Kamal El Malakh who, in 1962, convinced him to draw in the weekly supplements of Al-Ahram. He began by illustrating the quatrain "Letter to a Soldier" by his friend the poet Salah Jahine, then the poems "The Cemetery", "Sayed Darwish and "The Streets". Throughout the year 1963, he continued to draw, illustrating among others, nine episodes of Naguib Mahfouz' novel "The Way".

The style of Salah Abdel Kerim was to quite unique and very different from the realistic style of other cartoonists. He was the first one to use the paper frames with different textures. He was once again a pioneer in the harmonization of surfaces, helping the reader to unconsciously capture the details in the literary work as the illustrations were part of the composition of the text. Also, it is because he understood the techniques of printing that he used a pen and special paper and not a pencil for his drawings.

* شعر بالعامة المصرية *

سيد درويش

للتشاعر صلاح جاهين

واقف لحد الفجر باستغفر
ورأ عمود مرمر
مشروح .. وأنا شايب
والخضرة فات بحصانه من جنبي
لابس صديري بالقصب دايب
طلب الحصان فطسان وطلع الفجر
الفجر كان أخضر
الأرض كاتت ريش نعام يميني
القلعه سوده والبيوت بيضه
في حل بيت حزنه
والخزنه مليانه شفق نساوين

نام الأفندي بئن بالتركي
والبياعين بينادوا ع الحنه
والرعد ساكت
والنقران بينغذ القوانين
الشععه وقعت في جب
اول رجب الف وميتين هجري
عشرين كيك مصري
انا كتبت سكران سكر شيخوخه
لكتي دربان بالي حواليا
اسكندريه الملح غطاها
حبيلت وولدت ورد حني ياسمين
ولمعت حديد حني نار
سبيصين على شيبالين على مراكيبه
قال اللي قال : حوشوا
كانت مراكب أصبحت توابيت
رد اللي قال : صلوا على طه
الواد « أبو السيد » في الفئار
في ايده ريشة سود
بيلون السموات سحب ورعود
يا مرجيه
نزل المطر ع الاهالي
خرجت جنازتي الضهور الأزهر
والضهور كان أحمر
فتحت أنا عينيا
من قبل ما أوصل للضريح وسحبت
على شفتي غثوة سنابيه
« أبو عرب » غناها لي

المقاسير

ياض الفغار .. وأوت في التوب
هناك زي حي السماي في الهنود المصل
هناك زي نسا الحور في القسم الفطيل
هناك الحب
هناك حشر يسبح لرحله تسيب على براس الحورود
هناك كنه راقع طمش ليرك انت اللي واني فطور
رأه الزهور
هناك بالفاق على الأرض .. يا صروفه يا بتخضر
حسين نوات المطور
وتصمها عطر حننه اسمه ملا : نيم القمر
سده وكسب يحيى
يردس على القسم وتقول كلام طسه
ويطال كتب
ده غير التواب التي بغر كمان كسيه
من الفلحه ع المنين
أفوا عباره .. وسها استفاده .. ومنها كتب
أهوا السب
ياض الفغار .. لكن
سجالي الزرين
ياض البيوت .. واللي فهوم .. زياده ..

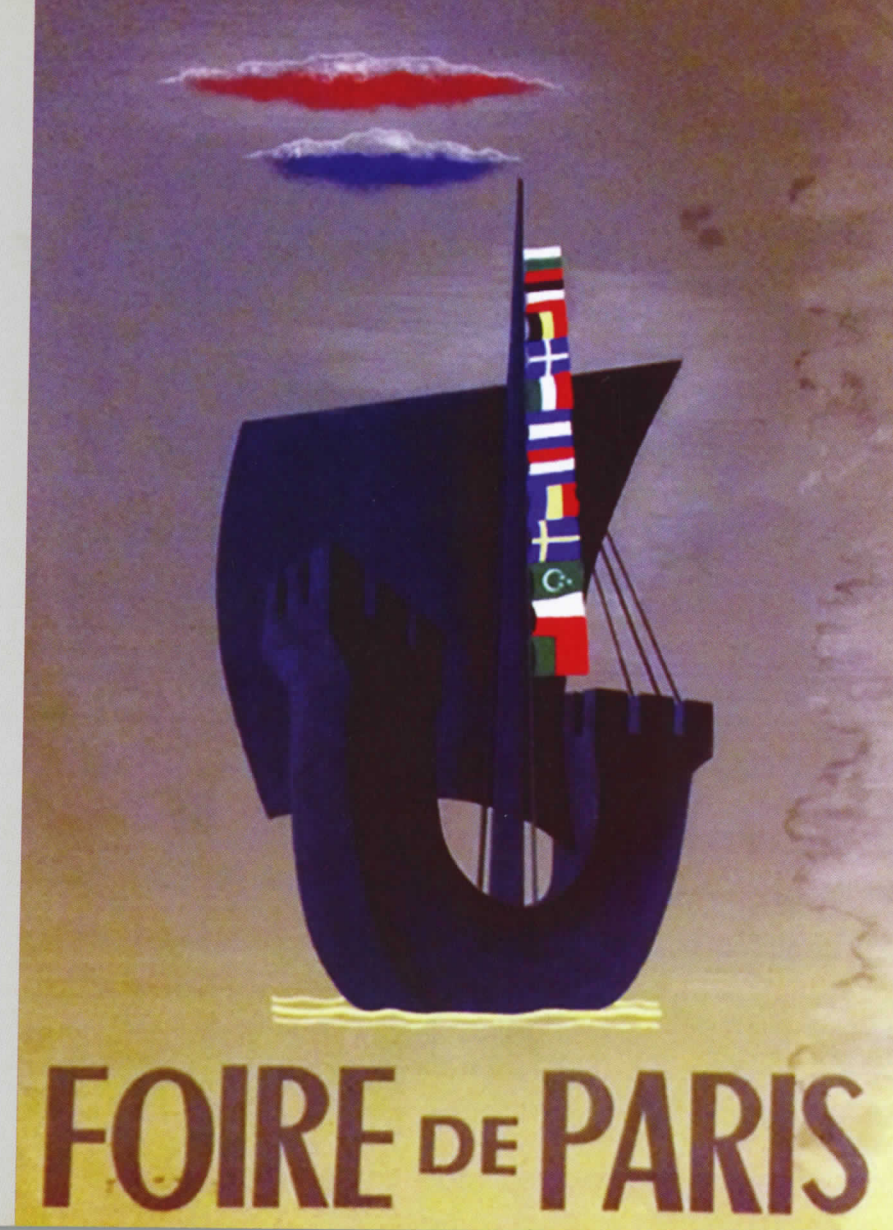
صالح جاهين

قصة الدكتور فاوستس

لترانس جانت

ترانس جانت، الدكتور فاوستس

كيف نشأت قصة الدكتور فاوستس ..
في كتاب قصة فتاة اعزى هذا القصص



GRAPHIC DESIGN

Painter, poster artist, but also a stage designer, Paul Colin (1892-1985) founded the "Ecole Paul Colin". He professed that everything goes through a thorough understanding of drawing. In his various workshops that grouped students of all nationalities, he taught, with great respect for the individuality of his students, drawing, painting, advertising, graphic design and stage décor. It is with this master that Salah Abdel Kerim learned the art of graphic design and advertising and completed his knowledge of stage décor he had acquired with André-Marie Cassandre.



CERAMICS

During the two years of study (1856-1957) which he spent in Italy, at the Egyptian Academy in Rome, Salah Abdel Kerim attended the workshop of ceramist Salvatore Meli. Most of the beautiful ceramics he created there were kept in the Egyptian Academy by Dr. Salah Kamel, director of the Academy.

Unfortunately, back in Egypt, he could not, for lack of having a kiln, keep practicing the art Salvatore Meli had taught him and for which he has so much attraction and talent.



Flat Face Ceramic - 30 cm - 1957



Crocodile - Ceramic - 30 cm - 1957



Rooster - Ceramic - 50 cm - 1957



Bird - Ceramic - 50 cm - 1957



Salah Abdel Kerim & his Wife Katherine

"Remembering the renowned Egyptian artist Salah Abdel Kerim who was uniquely able to merge eastern and western cultures through his multifaceted and diverse art forms"

Sherwet Shafei and Mona Said - January 2015



Salah Abdel Kerim and his daughter Nevine



Salah Abdel Kerim and his son Fares

Salah Abdel Kerim in La Rousse next to Picasso & R. Muller



1390. A gauche : Francis GRUBER (France, 1815-1848). « Ce qui dit à l'un sépulture, dit à l'autre : vie et splendeur. » 1839. — *Phot. Marc Vanc.*



1400. A droite : Agostino FANTARI (Italie, 1911). L'Homme atomisé. Détail, 1959. — *Phot. Olycomati.*

des temps d'individualisme, ne marque une régression et ne cède le pas à des arts d'expression plus globale et plus ample. Depuis plusieurs années, un sourd désir de restaurer la peinture murale, qui a fini par se condenser dans la renaissance de la tapisserie, semble traduire cette muse. Et il est de fait que, curieusement, les images d'un Lurcat, par exemple, qui a été le grand artisan de cette résurrection, distillent les thèmes d'angoisse : avec lui, coqs, soleils, raisins chantent l'ardeur des forces naturelles, du végétal à l'univers, et frémit l'allégresse de la vie. Ce brusque changement de registre, lorsqu'on passe de l'échelle individuelle à l'échelle collective, doit faire réfléchir le psychologue.

Mais l'image est indifféremment le reflet de l'un ou l'autre de ces deux niveaux : elle n'exprime jamais que ce qui est ; les formes édifient au contraire ce qui veut être, car elles sont nécessairement le résultat de l'élan de générations entières pour se constituer dans leur réalité neuve et affirmée. Or les formes, celles de l'architecture, de la sculpture, nous parlent-elles un langage différent ? A coup sûr, non plus celui du présent désespéré, mais celui de l'avenir en gestation.

II. L'ANGOISSE ET LA BÊTE

La vide se révèle comme une attente. La menace le remplit. L'angoisse s'exprime par des figures de désespoir (1399), de panique (1397-1400) ou de mort (1398) et s'incarne dans la bête qui retrouve la férocité des primatifs (1401 à 1405).

Les formes et l'énergie.

En ultime ressort, les écoles les plus audacieuses de la peinture ont abouti à l'informel, c'est-à-dire qu'elles ont renoncé aux formes, à l'effort d'appréhension et d'emprise sur le chaos du monde. Mais si nombre d'artistes éprouvent devant cette carence, contraire au génie même de l'homme et à ses nécessités primordiales, un vertige du vide et une angoisse de ce néant qui pour notre esprit est l'absurde, s'ils font ainsi écho aux thèmes que retrouve la philosophie contemporaine, surtout celle de l'existentialisme, de Sartre en particulier, à ces signes négatifs s'en opposent d'autres, positifs. Au bout de ce dépeuplement, et pourtant seul le justifier, doit se trouver, achetés à ce prix, le principe novateur de demain. Nous l'avons pressenti depuis ses premiers signes annonciateurs, au XIX^e siècle : c'est l'énergie.

Et, en fait, certains peintres, au bout de l'épreuve de l'informel, rencontrent sa présence exaltante, mais encore en



1406. Pablo PICASSO (Espagne, 1881). Monstre qui consommerait quatre enfants. Gravure, technique composite. Vers 1933. — *Phot. Larousse.*



1404. Ci-dessous, à droite : Salah ABDEL KERIM. Le Cri de l'animal. Boulons et pièces mécaniques, 1960. — *Phot. Colorphoto.*





1403. A gauche : Robert MULLER (Suisse, 1909). La Broche. Fer martelé (tôle repoussée), 1953. — *Phot. Luc Joubert-Galerie de France.*



SAFARKHAN Art Gallery

6 Brazil St., Zamalek, Cairo Tel: +202 2735 3314

www.safarkhan.com info@safarkhan.com  Safarkhan Gallery  Safarkhanarts