

Pharaonic influences on display at Egypt art show

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Contemporary and pharaonic art on display at the Egyptian Museum during the "Night of Art" exhibit in Cairo on October 28, 2017

Paintings by top Egyptian artists shared wall space with hieroglyphs and Pharaonic relics at Cairo's Egyptian Museum this week in an exhibition highlighting ancient influences on contemporary art.

Artists, intellectuals and ambassadors from around the world attended the Saturday night opening of "A night with Art at the Egyptian Museum", organised by the private Art D'Egypte organisation.

The exhibition, at the museum on Cairo's iconic Tahrir square, will be open to

the public until Tuesday.

"We wanted to highlight the link between contemporary art and ancient Egyptian Pharaonic art," Art D'Egypte founder Nadine Abdel Ghaffar told AFP.



A contemporary painting sits on display next to a pharaonic artefact at the Egyptian Museum during the "Night of Art" exhibit in the capital Cairo on October 28, 2017

The modern paintings included abstract portraits and other works by prominent contemporary Egyptian artists such as Adel El Siwi, Mohamed Abla, Ghada Amer, Farouk Hosny and Hoda Lotfi.

"This initiative shows that artistic creativity spans millennia reaching today," said Abla, who showed five paintings at the exhibition, reflecting ancient Egyptian influences.

"Contemporary art is an extension of art by the Pharaonic ancestors," he said.

The show also includes interactive seminars on ancient Egyptian art and its influences on contemporary artists.

Several prominent archaeologists and Egyptologists are to speak, including former antiquities minister Zahi Hawass.

Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Anani said it was important to preserve Egyptian heritage "because the antiquities belong to the entire world."

The ageing Egyptian museum, which is undergoing renovation, was a key tourist attraction before a January 2011 uprising toppled dictator Hosni Mubarak.

Visitors would wait in long lines outside its entrance, while the halls inside brimmed with foreign tourists and Egyptian visitors, including students on school trips.

But Mubarak's ouster unleashed years of political turmoil and sent tourist numbers plummeting.



Contemporary artworks sit alongside ancient Egyptian artefacts at the Egyptian Museum during the "Night of Art" exhibit in Cairo on October 28, 2017

During the uprising, which was centred in Tahrir Square just outside the museum, looters broke into the building, stealing and damaging several ancient treasures.

The fall in tourist numbers prompted the museum a few months ago to open its doors at night in the hope of attracting new visitors.

Among its best-known exhibits are a golden funerary mask and other artefacts from the tomb of 18th dynasty Pharaoh Tutankhamun.

His belongings are among exhibits set to be transferred to the Grand Egyptian Museum, a new facility currently under construction near the Giza Pyramids.

Anani said the facility should open at least partially before the end of 2018.