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#### Arts & Culture

Salah Taher: 100 Year Anniversary at Zamalek Art Gallery (<https://www.cairo360.com/event/salah-taher-100-year-anniversary-at-zamalek-art-gallery/>)

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## Zamalek Art Gallery: Salah Taher

REVIEWED BY Anne de Groot



If the artist is nicknamed 'the yogi of Zamalek,' you know you are onto something good. Zamalek Art Gallery is celebrating the centennial anniversary of prominent Egyptian painter Salah Taher.

Born in Cairo in 1911, this artist had an impressive career, first as the head of the Museum of Modern Arts, then as the head of the Khedival Opera, and finally in joining *Al Ahrām* newspaper, where he worked as the newspaper's artistic consultant until his death in 2007.

In 2001, he was honoured alongside Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz at the soft opening of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, where a book on his work was published. Taher was also a teacher at the School of Fine Arts and an NGO was established in his name; the Society of the Lovers of Salah Taher. One of his most famous fans was former US president Richard Nixon, who bought one of his pieces. It still hangs on a wall at the White House till this day.

#### Zamalek

Art Gallery currently has more than 130 pieces of Taher's work on display. All of them, to say the least, are magnificent. Taher's work is difficult to label. Some pieces could be put under the categories of expressionism and classicism, while other pieces are very abstract and surrealist. In the end, though; it is the epitome of Salah Taher's distinctive style.

The collection

at Zamalek Art Gallery is a combination of paintings and sketches. The paintings are very cheerful. A lot of colour is used, especially red and green; giving the paintings an eye-catching factor. There are pieces of the Egyptian countryside depicting daily life with peasants working on the fields and coastline pieces with boats floating on the water. The coastline paintings could be anywhere along the Mediterranean coast. The countryside pieces are timeless; some clearly depict the Egyptian countryside in the same way as we still know it today, while others could be of somewhere in Southern France.

A recurring factor in Taher's work is women.

What is especially striking is that they are either nude or veiled and nothing in between. The paintings are usually of women in groups, while his sketches focus mostly on individual women sitting or lying down.

Salah Taher's

work is for sale with sketches starting at 2400LE and paintings for up to 45,000LE. This is no surprise as Taher's work is exquisite. From the biggest paintings to the smallest sketches, all his works are masterpieces. Even if you can't afford to buy anything, you should definitely head over to the exhibition. This is Egyptian art at its finest by an extremely talented and respected artist.