

# Lebanese Artist Feels More at Home in Paris



ARTIST FARID AWAD WITH WORK

A very interesting exhibition currently being held at the Gallery L'Amateur is that of Lebanese artist Farid Awad, who portrays in very vivid colors crowds of people in the streets, metros and sidewalk cafes of France.

Having lived in Paris for the past 15 years, Awad feels he really belongs there, but there's still the special attraction to Lebanon and his home town, which explains why he has returned for the second time to Beirut to hold an exhibition here-- he exhibited previously at Dar El Fan around four years ago.

"I love Lebanon," he said, "but socially I feel more at home in Paris, because there I can sit and paint the crowds unnoticed."

And, the reason crowds are the theme of all Awad's paintings is because he has anti-social tendencies. "I call myself a social savage," the amiable artist said. "By painting crowds, I am able to dispel a large measure of my emotion and sensitivity."

"I like to look at humanity from a distance," he continued. "If I'm sitting in the Metro painting people as they come and go, I absolutely can not concentrate if they stop to look over my shoulder or watch what I'm doing. So I hide my canvas in the fold of a newspaper and keep expanding my sketch unperceived."

Farid Awad was not born with painting in his blood. In fact, he never even thought of it or tried to paint until he was 19 years old, when the desire and inspiration to create struck him intensely.

"I dropped out of school then and joined the Butros Fine Arts Academy in Beirut for four years. After that I went to the Fine Arts Academy in Paris where I studied for a year and subsequently to the Decorative School of Arts, also in Paris,

## By Myra Mirshak

for a three month course," he said.

But Awad believes that you can never really learn enough about art, so until today he continues to study different techniques and attends all the art shows in Paris.

"When I first began painting, my works were much less complicated in content. Now I feel I'm 'nourishing' my paintings more and treating the themes more fully," he explained. "I'm very sure that I'm continually making progress and this feeling is what pushes me to carry on."

"Some years ago I couldn't even paint two or three people standing on the canvas...now I can easily paint eight, I used to paint portraits of people, but I was never able to show a full crowd until around six years ago," he said.

Like many good artists, Awad is not satisfied with his work, and is continually striving to improve. "The way I want to improve is not by painting larger crowds, but by giving my paintings a special mood which will eliminate all barriers between us," he explained.

Though he tends towards impressionism, Awad does not feel he belongs to any particular school of art. "I've developed between us," he explained.

Though he tends towards impressionism, Awad does not feel he belongs to any particular school of art. "I've developed my own style and I'm glad of that," he said. His medium is oil for most of the larger paintings and a combination of oil and crayons for the smaller ones.

The exhibition will be continuing till the end of the month and opening hours at the Gallery are 9 a. m. to 1 p. m. and 3 p. m. to 7 p. m. daily.