

An Analysis for the surrealism Egyptian artist Abdel Hady El Gazzar



Abdel Hady El-Gazzar (1925-1966)

**"Let me live in the world of magic that I love
as I don't want to know what things really are."**

Gazzar

The deep involvement of Gazzar's art in the folklore is classified as surrealism because of utilizing of symbols and mobilizing the motif of popular folkloric cults besides the dreamy state of mind which specifies the surrealism as an artistic movement. But mainly the folkloric figures and symbols not only depends on the dreamy state or the distracted subconscious of surrealistic art, but it also depends on a deep authentic cultural heritage that is inherited and surviving over a lot of generations, from such point of view we are going to discuss the artistic creation of Gazzar, after we presented his works regarding nationalism and political movements, the charming world of Gazzar is in his folkloric heritage interpretations.

His paintings reflect a pure Egyptian essence as he is expressing the world through his artistic vision based on creative elements inspired from the popular Egyptian reality consisted of people, men and women, children with their features and their emotions, the full depiction of their customs as well as the type of elements that can be found in a popular café with its ornamented structured inscriptions. The units extracted from the popular Egyptian life are very clear as a motif in his paintings through the symbols of the epics like: (animals: Lion, cat, horse) also the five fingers hand, the fish, the eye and also the tattoos of peasants and workers beside the ornaments that can be found on the facades of different buildings.[1] In the art of Gazzar he is setting an argument between human and the world, his passion of expressing human emotions and worries was unlimited, also his childhood and early life in the popular city of old Islamic Cairo enriched his memory with a lot of experience based on the authentic cultural heritage and traditions of the Egyptian folks, the traditions and customs of wedding ceremonies, the festivals of (Mouled) which is a celebration for the day of birth for a sacred religious figure, moreover the festival of zar and the beliefs of magic and the stories of folkloric cults and epics, with a lot of cultural background he could utilize all of these resources to express a charming world of artistic creativity rich of authentic motifs and very well expressed in a surrealistic expression which is not disconnected from the original mythological subconscious of the Egyptian human. Gazzar spoke with his own special surrealistic language depicting humans coming out the earth, the sea and the shells. He discussed the fear of people from the future and the pessimism spread among people making a burden, and the strong bull which is helpless against the unpredictable power, and the surrender of human to his disappointments and repetitive depressions. Gazzar did not ignore such massive inheritance of folkloric cultural heritage, but he made it a main base for his start-up, he realized that the human flinging into conjuration, witchery and black magic also the belief in spellers, all of this are just a shelter to save from the unpredictable destiny.[2]

It was very obvious in the art of Gazzar that he gave an important attention to the human struggles, as much the struggle of human against the unknown destiny he also went through the struggle of human and machines, the new technologies appeared in the world made him think a lot about the struggle of the human to prove himself against the machine as a lot of workers can be replaced by one machine which also touched the concept of the main struggle discussed by Gazzar between the human and the unknown destiny. During that stage the human was transformed in the artist's paintings to be represented in thousands of elements and particles may be atoms or molecules that nothing connects them together but a figure that lost its soul. This is how specifically Gazzar could see the crisis of contemporary human (according to his

time of early to mid sixties). The artist take his visitors in a magic and vague world, where the whispers are combined with noise, in such a horrible trip between heaven and earth introducing his visitors to another creatures from other planets.[3]

In his painting "the world of spirits" we can find the dead bodies arranged in the coffins endlessly waiting to be recalled to life while people outside are crying in a horrible scene one of them is hugging a bird, in this painting the inspire of ancient Egyptian motif of the pharaonic funeral ceremony and the beliefs of recalled life and the cult of the second life in ancient Egypt.[4]As an artist Gazzar went through different stages all of them were unique, he is one of the very unique and special artists who set a valuable dialectics in his artistic interpretation for the life struggles subjects. He applied the his discourse of arguing the relation between human and surrounding conditions, also the essence of Sufism emitted from the paintings of Gazzar holding his message of peace prevail.

"... the viewer believes that the nature it sees in the drawing is a created object and this is untrue. The true creation starts when the universe began existing and it will end when this universe ends. The artist himself does not know when it started the painting and how he finished it as the painting and the artist is one piece. The different images get melting into the soul of the artist as the artist gets melting into his artistic works. It is the same process like the universe itself when the soul melts into the substance and the substance melts into the soul." Abdel Hadi el Gazzar

* Here in this link you can find group of images for his paintings :

https://www.google.com.eg/search?q=abdel+hadi+el+gazzar&client=firefox-a&hs=NON&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=nts&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=Sw2AVMDGDMjV7QaeqIGIDg&ved=0CCwQsAQ&biw=1366&bih=635#imgdii=_

[1] El Hindi, Inas. (2010), *Abdel Hady El Gazzar as a reading to a society's conscious*, Cairo, The Supreme Council of Culture, page:79

[2] Al Baghdady, Khaled, (2010) *The Egyptian Artistic Movement 60s & 70s years of the path*, Cairo , Supreme Council of Culture, Fine Arts Committee page 109

[3] El Sharouny, Sobhy. (1966) *Abdel Hady El Gazzar the artist of mythology and space world*, The National Printing House for press and publishes, page 15

[4] Al Baghdady, Khaled, (2013) *The Attractions of picture and text in Modern Egyptian*



art, Cairo , The General Authority of Books, page 130