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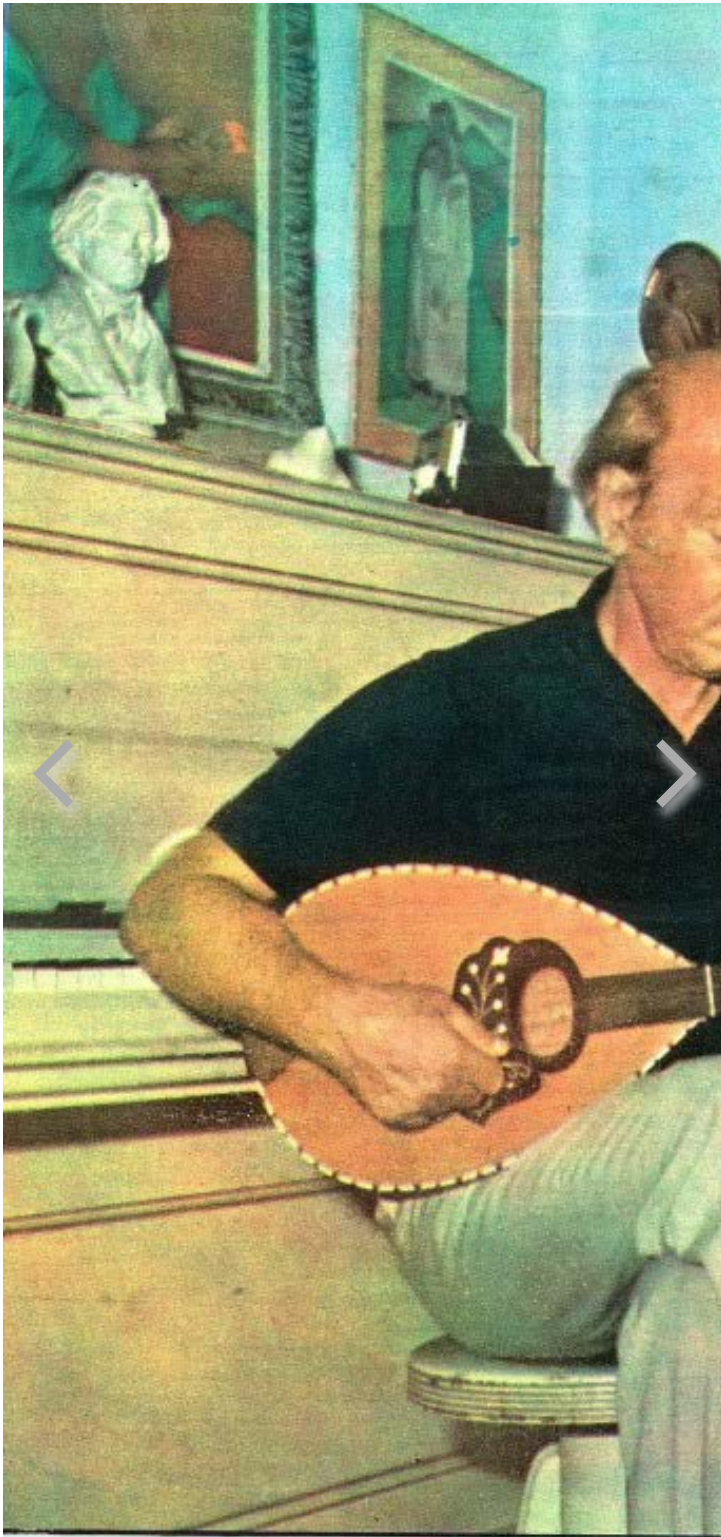
Hussein Bicar: Philosopher of Plastic Arts

Bicar's Portraits and Oil Paintings Depict Graceful Egyptian Peasants and Nubian Scenes



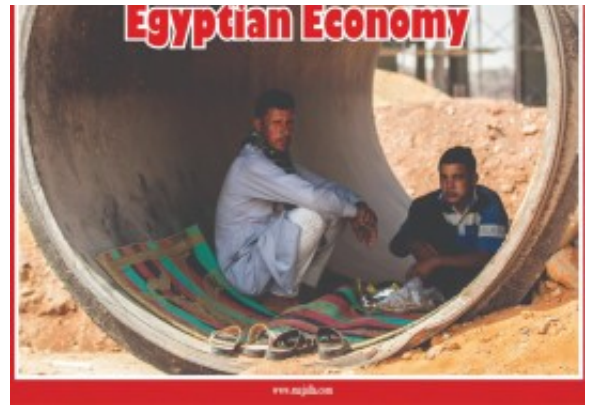
By Sarah Gamal (/taxonomy/term/210276)

04 February , 2022



Bicar playing Bouzouki at his home in Zamalek, Cairo (From dated February 25th 1983).

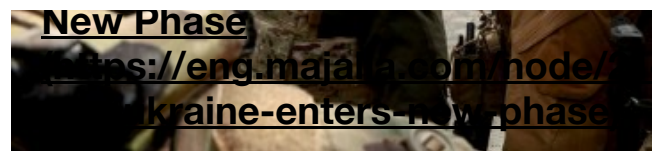
For more than seventy years, the late genius, Egyptian artist Hussein Bicar,



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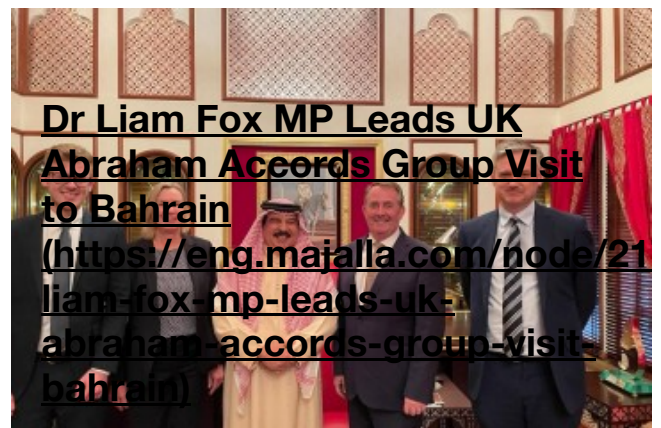
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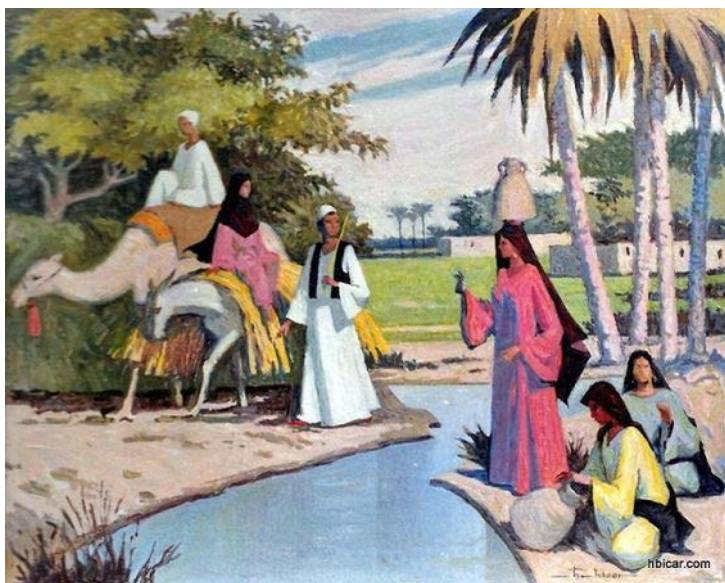
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was one of the most prominent faces of the second generation in Egyptian plastic arts varying between brush, calligraphy, color, music, poetry, criticism, and children’s drawings. He is also considered one of the most important masters of color and shadow in the Arab world and one of its strongest pillars, as he left his imprint on the plastic movement, with an approach, style, topic, and even a message.

Bicar had a clear insight and good taste. He loved music from his early childhood. He also wrote quatrains and quintuplets filled with wisdom and eloquence. He remained a benefactor throughout his life and a teacher of many generations.



Countryside by the late artist Hussein Bicar (1913-2002).

He was the founder of a journalistic art school and was the first pioneer in Egypt of children's journalism. He had a simple and clear style that raised the standard of journalistic drawing to a level approaching art. As for his oil paintings, he was distinguished by his



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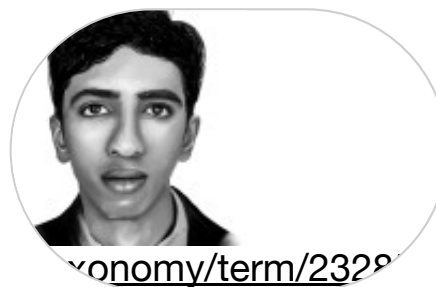


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high degree of composition, coloring and strength of expression. He was a delicate, sensitive artist, and a poetic art critic.

Hussein Amin Bicar was born on January 2, 1913, in Alexandria and died on November 16, 2002. He joined the College of Fine Arts in 1928, which was then called the High School of Art. He was 15 years old at the time and was one of the first Egyptian students to enroll.



The painting is by the late artist Hussein Bicar (1913-2002) entitled *Al Ashjar Tamout Wakifa* (The Trees Die Standing Up), 1995.

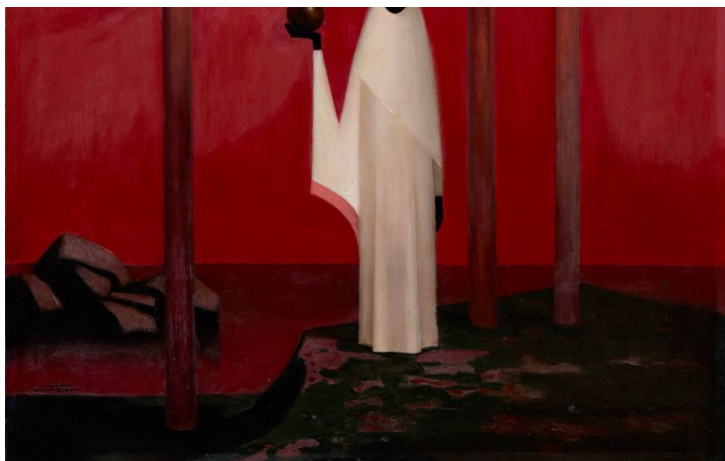
At the beginning, he learned from foreign professors until 1930, then from Youssef Kamel and Ahmed Sabry. After graduating, he worked in the establishment of the Wax Museum, and completed some works in the decoration of the Museum's agricultural exhibition.

Afterwards, Bicar moved to Morocco, where he spent three years as a drawing teacher, which was an important stage in his development. It was there that Bicar drew his first illustrations when the Spanish language teacher authored a book to teach the language to students and asked Bicar to translate words into pictures.

In 1944, he drew a set of illustrations for Taha Hussein's book "The Days," and when Mustafa Amin saw the drawings, he asked him to leave his job to devote himself to Akhbar Al-Youm newspaper as a painter and writer. His new job allowed him to roam the world on short trips, so he traveled to Abyssinia, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Spain and Japan, and his newspaper cartoons expressed a completely new and different style of journalistic illustration. He also wrote hundreds of critical articles.

Bicar's leadership and uniqueness were evident. He had enormous energy and technical capability since, in addition to his position as a master of portraiture, he composed hundreds of paintings depicting the countryside, Nubia, Upper Egypt, peasant women and national events.





The painting is by the late artist Hussein Bicar (1913-2002) entitled "Palm Trees and the Mountain in Nubia," 1978.

His brushwork was distinguished by its high sensitivity, the balanced distribution of shadows and shapes, the reduction of lines and the expression of the subject directly and permeably. It was as if Bicar's painting was a brilliant mixture between the depth of the idea and the delicacy of lines, between the clarity of expression and its many aspects and repetitions.

The great plastic artist, Ahmed Nawar, was Hussein Bicar's closest friend, so **Majalla** met with him to learn more about Bicar's art.



Ahmed Nawar, the great plastic artist, is one of the most prominent contemporary artists who

left an influential imprint on the history of Egyptian art.

Nawar is one of the most prominent contemporary artists who left an influential imprint on the history of Egyptian art. He also held a number of jobs throughout his artistic career: he worked as a professor in the Graphics Department at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Helwan University, and as a professor and the delegated Head of the Graphics Department at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Minia University, from 1983 until 1988. Among the artistic tasks entrusted to Nawar was the development of the Cairo International Biennale since 1988, the establishment of the Cairo International Biennale of Ceramics from 1992, and the establishment of the Egypt International Triennial for Graphic Art since 1993.

Nawar started talking about Bicar saying, “Bicar did not leave us, because his spirit revolves around every place in which he lived, inside or outside Egypt, and in his works of art hanging in museums or the homes of people who love his art. His spirit hovers in every line, color and space, and, as time passes, the appreciation of works does not conclude, but rather becomes more colorful, deeper and richer. He is an encyclopedic artist, we hear his voice and pulse whenever we contemplate his artistic creativity at a museum or exhibition.”

“Professor Bicar allowed me to approach him at his home and in my gallery exhibitions, and I remember the first article he wrote about an exhibition of mine in 1971 under the title ‘Bombs

and MISSILES. ARTISTIC and human communication continued for decades before he was on his deathbed. A few lines are not enough to describe Hussein Bicar, he needs volumes,” he said.

Bicar’s role in the field of journalistic fine arts criticism was a pioneering one, which has had a profound positive impact in encouraging new talent and introducing established artists while spreading aesthetic concepts among the newspaper's readership.

When asked about Bicar as a critic, Nawar said: “Bicar the critic is considered as an independent school in terms of his vision and also for his uniqueness in achieving a balanced and just critique with authentic cultural, cognitive and scientific foundations. He always aligns himself with the original artistic value, searching for new artistic expression.”





The painting is by the late artist Hussein Bicar (1913-2002) entitled "The Rebab Player and the Bird."

Bicar loved journalistic work and wanted it to be a gentle and supportive motivation to develop journalistic performance in form and subject. Successive generations were his loyal students and believed in continuity and development along the same path.

“In the journalistic field, he also had achievements in authoring, writing and illustrating for Egyptian magazines and newspapers. He shined in his black ink drawings of topics that expressed the rural environment, as well as people's lives, customs and traditions,” Nawar explained.

As for the Egyptian colloquial poetry bearing lofty social and moral values that he used to publish: “Although he is always linked to a works of art mostly drawn in black ink, if we consider his poetic writings, we will discover the unpacking and integration of the idea verbally and graphically into a single visual object indicative of sublime human, religious and moral meanings, as well as environmental and natural meanings,” Nawar told Majalla.





Portrait of Sayyed Darwish, 1962, by the late artist Hussein Bicar (1913-2002).

Hussein Bicar was subjected to a lot of criticism because of his Baha'i faith. Asked if it played a role in Bicar's fame, Nawar said, "As a close witness and through my responsibilities to many of the artistic and cultural institutions in Egypt, the announcement in the media about Bicar's religion may have caused a shock. But it passed like a meteor and vanished because Hussein Bicar had human values and an overwhelming presence in the conscience of artists and intellectuals."

In the field of color painting, he was known as a portrait painter. He also painted the countryside at the best of times, especially the time of harvest, and he painted the Nubians in various settings.

"What is striking in most of his artworks is the Ney [an end-blown flute that figures prominently in Middle Eastern music] with either a man or a woman

music], with either a man or a woman playing. Some of the works contain a Buzuq [a long-necked fretted lute related to the Greek bouzouki and the Turkish saz], which is a very special instrument. I saw it myself in one of my meetings with our teacher at his house.” Nawar explained.



A painting by Hussein Bicar from "The Eighth Wonder" documentary film directed by John Feeney.

Bicar's talent covered a wide range of topics, the most recent of which was his execution of the paintings for the movie "The Eighth Wonder" by Canadian director John Finney. The film tells the story of the Temple of Ramses II in Abu Simbel and its rescue from submersion after the construction of the High Dam. The film is a documentary about the relocation of the Temple. Bicar drew 80 paintings that show, moment by moment, how the artists of ancient Egypt created this majestic monument, from preparing the facade of the temple inside the rock until the completion of its last details.

"Bicar's creativity produced graphics

that accompanied the film, and the music that Bicar composed for it, inspired by the pharaonic hymns that priests sang in temples, made the film an immortal and timeless document that transcends generations,” Nawar concluded.

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