

# Not PC

... promoting capitalist acts between consenting adults.

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#### Bruce Goff's Crystal Chapel

Bruce Goff's Crystal Chapel, designed in 1949 - unbuilt, but recently modelled digitally so ....

#### The naked & the nudes

I spent the weekend with several dozen nudes. it was thrilling! There were women and men, big and ....

#### Postmodernism is bunk

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#### Projects, Day 7: Howick renovation

So some of you have been asking why blogging here has been so light, recently. There's a ....

#### Quote of the Day: On automation & A.I.

Author Henry Hazlitt makes an interesting differentiation between types of automation that is ....

#### Projects, Day 6: Remuera bungalow

So some of you were asking why blogging has been so light here recently - and it's not just ....

#### The Commerce Commission should ban itself

Here's a post from February that is relevant again today in the wake of the Commerce ....

#### Bruce Goff, architect

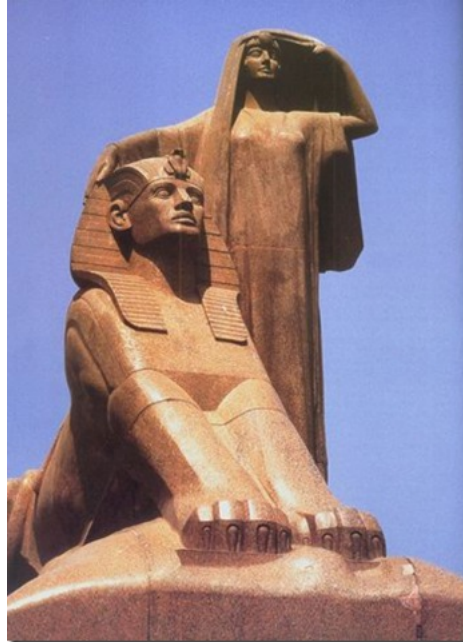
While I was visiting Canberra recently (as my more astute readers spotted), I met up with ....

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Tuesday, 15 April 2008

## 'Egypt's Renaissance' - Mahmoud Mokhtar



Static, monumental, lifeless, this piece is the diametric opposite of the vital sculpture of the likes of Rodin or Michelangelo or Bernini, in whose work the very marble breathes life -- indeed, it has more akin to the stodgy sculpture so beloved of Soviet artists. I'm not posting it here because I like it, but because it is nonetheless enormously symbolic in representing modern Egypt and its nationalistic 'renaissance.' In that sense, it is good art: it successfully concretises the messy abstraction that is modern Egyptian nationalism, which is no doubt why historian Scott Powell chose it use to illustrate his [post-lecture](#) thoughts on Egypt.

Completed from 1919 to 1928 in the wake of World War I and Egypt's rising tide of nationalism -- the only sense in which it can be said that Egypt has ever undergone a renaissance. [Scott Powell argues](#) that Egypt's defining characteristic is its several millennia old "sense of nationhood,"

an implicit premise embedded in Egyptian thinking that extends back to its "glorious" pharaonic past, of which the ever present pyramids and temples [and mortuaries and funerary palaces] provide a constant reminder... Egypt's sense of nationhood is a kind of subconscious estimate of the value of the people and their past which has been a major factor directing them to where they are today.

Let us not forget that the "glory" of Egypt's past was a culture that celebrated slavery and death the permanence that was death -- and an architecture that in its glorification of burial rites and death-worship was the perfect embodiment of these anti-values. If Mahmoud Mokhtar's art is both monumental and lifeless, that is because the "reawakening" it depicts is of a piece with this sentiment.

But while the nationalism of today's Egypt reveres the form of its past 'glories', it lacks the metaphysical base that was responsible for them. Since the death of Nasser, Egyptian nationalism's most vigorous standard bearer, Egypt's nationalism has withered in the face of the more explicit and integrated metaphysics and values of Islam, both of which are widely accepted by the Egyptian population.

Ironically (as a concrete symbol of the conflict between this nationalistic sense and the undercurrent of Islamism that directly challenges it), in the very year that Mokhtar's sculpture was completed in Cairo to express the incipient sense of nationalism in the Egyptian breast, a movement was founded in the same city to express the other-worldly metaphysics and death-worshipping values of [Islam](#). That organisation was the

### Featured post

#### We've got to do something about Islam's war on the west

More murder, more hand-wringing, but still no end to the horror. And yet, argues Yaron Brook, "Horrific events today can be prevented. B...



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### ... and the critics raved

MarkT commented on [Also To Meet Competency 12 Your](#): @ Anonymous: Even if you were right in everything you say, it has nothing to do with the job of a...

Anonymous commented on [Also To Meet Competency 12 Your](#): I am just reading through all the comments about the treaty principles and it angers me to read...

Anonymous commented on [Bruce Goffs Crystal Chapel](#): I read Hicks' Explaining Postmodernism of - apologies - two posts below. Actually I devoured...

Paul Scott commented on [Bruce Goffs Crystal Chapel](#): Music is good.

Peter Cresswell commented on [New](#)

 **55,376**

### Popular Posts this Month

[So, where is PC today?](#)

[So, where in the world is PC today?](#)

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Dear readers of Not PC, Peter suffered a herniated disc. He's in a lot of pain, and hasn't been able to update his blog; or do mu...

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### Topics

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Cities Afghanistan AFL  
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Greenspan Alex Epstein Alt-Right America's Cup Anarchy

Muslim Brotherhood, from whom many of al Qaeda's notions and luminaries are drawn.

The values of these two ideological forces have been in battle ever since -- the suppression of the Brotherhood and the murder of Nasser's successor Anwar Sadat by Muslim Brotherhood killers being two ready symbols of the conflict played out between the secular but disintegrating nationalism and the vigorous, violent and *persistent* Islamism that the brotherhood embodies.

This can be a conflict with only one victor. [Scott Powell argues](#) at his '[Powell History Recommends](#)' blog that because nationalism is merely a set of disintegrated implicit notions whereas Islamism is an "all-encompassing and explicit system of ideas," it is therefore "only a matter of time before it takes over."

Egypt is thus a nation in flux, and on its way to somewhere worse. "Despite the constant use of force by the Mubarak regime to suppress the Muslim Brotherhood," [notes Powell](#), "that Islamist organization remains the only organized political opposition in Egypt [as a recent [day of angry protest](#) was intended to demonstrate]. This matters because the country may be on the verge of economic collapse and widespread violence."

And this matters to us because Egypt is not only the source of one of the most virulent of Islamism's anti-western toxins, but because it has [the potential to be the next Poland](#) -- ie., "the next flashpoint that ignites an unexpected larger war, such as occurred in 1939."

**NB:** I recommend Scott's lecture course on [The Islamist Entanglement](#) as an excellent and enjoyable way to get a handle on the important events shaping up in and from the Middle East.

Posted by [Peter Cresswell](#) at 01:34:00 

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Labels: [Art](#), [Egypt](#), [History](#), [Powell History](#), [Sculpture](#)

## 1 comment:



**The Tomahawk Kid** 15 Apr 2008, 09:40:00

Now that you mention it, it really does have that "Russian Propoganda poster" look about it doesn't it!

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3. Read the post before you comment. Challenge facts, but don't simply ignore them.
4. Use a name. If it's important enough to say, it's important enough to put a name to it.
5. Above all: Act with honour. Say what you mean, and mean what you say.

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[Auckland Montessori Secondary](#): *Hi Jill, not sure why you're wanting primary and secondary at the same campus? Stephen's...*


[MarkT](#) commented on [New Auckland Montessori Secondary](#): *Sorry, I was mistaken, the school above that Peter did work for is secondary. Their website is...*

[MarkT](#) commented on [New Auckland Montessori Secondary](#): *I could be wrong, but I believe the only Montessori to offer secondary schooling is in Wellington. ...*

[Unknown](#) commented on [Weve Got To Do Something About Islams: I sent the top cartoon to an American friend. She responded with: Oh my! Sounds a lot like my...](#)

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### ... and the bloggers blogged

 [Utopia - you are standing in it!](#)  
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[Tim Worstall](#)  
[Dear God this is appalling economic analysis](#) - And from a Nobel Laureate no less: When Obamacare was enacted, Republicans had some claims, almost a theory, about why it was a terrible idea. It would, th...

 [Watts Up With That?](#)