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Commemorating Aref El Rayess

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Aref El Rayess (1928-2005)

Born in Aley, Mount Lebanon to a Druze Family, Aref El Rayess was an award winning, self-taught artist who worked with a variety of different media. His art has gained international recognition and he received many awards over the course of his career, including the Lebanese Ministry of National Education Award, the Unesco Prize, the Ministry of Public Works Prize for Sculpture and the Sursock Museum Grand Prix de Sculpture. First exhibiting in Lebanon in 1948, Rayess spent many years traveling throughout Africa before moving to Paris to study at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. He briefly returned to Lebanon in 1957, but moved to

Florence two years later after being awarded a scholarship by the Italian government. Rayess returned to Lebanon in 1963, and over the years exhibited more than 15 one-man shows.

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(<http://cloudoflace.com/follow-us/>) While his reputation as an important Lebanese artist grew, he was commissioned by the Lebanese government to design and execute a number of works, including a tapestry presented at the Unesco Center in Paris, and two sculptures to represent Lebanon at the World Fair in New York. Rayess spent time working in Saudi Arabia and was appointed the city of Jeddah's Art Consultant. The Saudi Arabian government commissioned him to produce several sculptures, the most outstanding being a stylized name of Allah. Built in Italy from aluminum, the piece stands 27 meters high in Palestine Square in Jeddah. Rayess was a respected teacher of fine art, working for many years at the Lebanese University and the Lebanese American University, and was eventually appointed President of the Lebanese Association of Painters and Sculptors.

Internationally, his individual exhibitions include the Poliani Gallery, Rome; Numero Gallery, Florence; D'Arcy Gallery, New York; Excelsior Gallery, Mexico; the Rodin Museum, Paris; a retrospective of his works from 1957-1968 at the National Museum of Damascus; Ornina Gallery, Damascus; and the Gallery Rasim, Algeria.

Rayess continued to pursue his passion for art until his death in January 2005.



{Labyrinths of the Millenium by Aref El Rayess}

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Currently studying at the University of Music, Vienna, Ribal is a member of Sarband Ensemble as well as the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. An active member in the Jamil Molaeb Museum, Ribal is the founder of "Molaeb Festival for Chamber Music and Fine Arts" in his hometown, where he aims to make classical music and fine arts closer to people.

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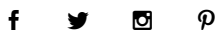
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