

1773

Captain James Cook becomes 1st to cross Antarctic Circle (66° 33' S)



1912

Captain Robert Scott's expedition arrives at the South Pole, one month after Roald Amundsen

1946

United Nations Security Council holds its 1st meeting

1991

Operation Desert Storm begins, with US-led coalition forces bombing Iraq, during the Gulf War



A handbag printed with a painting of Celia

Highly productive during the 1970s and 1980s, Celia El-Hadi created around 4,000 works of art. She tried her hand with the classical themes of portraiture, still-life and landscape painting, often portraying people and places that meant the most to her



Celia El-Hadi

seams and government buildings in Lebanon, and private collections across the world. After her passing, Celia's home in Bzebdine was turned into a museum, inviting visitors into Celia's private world.

What makes Celia Creations unique is the thoughtfulness of the overall design of each and every crafted handbag. Elements of Celia's life and spirit permeate through the smallest of details. For instance, a vintage handbag that Celia formerly owned inspired the shape of the current handbag design. In addition, some of the brand's bags are embellished with beading stitched by an artisan in Bzebdine who was Celia's friend.

Most significantly, the clutch's copper clasp is beautifully engraved with Celia's own signature, adding

a personal touch: "A lot of people told me to do another logo. But I told them that there's nothing that can top her own signature — it's as if she actually touched each bag," Youssef said. Ethics lie at the heart of the brand — all of the handbags are vegan, meaning leather, fur, and animal skin are not used — something Youssef feels is crucial.

Although Celia Creations is in its infancy, there is significant potential for growth. Youssef plans to expand the brand, but said he is wary of it becoming too commercial. "Anyone who wants to buy our bag needs to know the value of the painting," he explained. "You're not buying a handbag, you're buying a piece of art and you're buying the spirit and ideology of Celia, a woman who was fearless and always took risks."

ut-based architect-student Youssef was 20, he depression project honours his late little-known Lebanese El-Hadi, who

woman like Celia — someone so giving and thoughtful — should have the recognition that she didn't get when she was alive. That's why I started the brand."

A bold beauty with bouffant hair and arching eyebrows, Celia led a fascinating, cosmopolitan life: born in Mexico (where her family es-

tablished soap factories), she was educated in Egypt, and travelled to Europe — all of which were quite unheard of for a woman whose family came from the Lebanese village of Bzebdine. As an artist, Celia was mentored by respected Lebanese artists Aref El-Rayess and Rafic Sharaf, and became a dedicated art instructor

herself, teaching at Beirut's Russian Cultural Center and the Soeurs des Saints Coeurs schools in Hadath and Ghazir.

Highly productive during the 1970s and 1980s, Celia created around 4,000 works of art. She tried her hand with the classical themes of portraiture, still-life and landscape painting, often portraying people and places that meant the most to her. She once said that she preferred to paint in oil, "because it obeys me more and makes me feel more comfortable."

Aside from producing charming imagery, Celia also pushed boundaries in terms of style, according to her grandson. "She was one of the first artists in her era to draw nudes and to paint with live models, which was very shocking — a taboo," said Youssef.

Today, her paintings are found in the family's residences, a few mu-



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YOUSSEF EL-HADI

Celia Creations is a beautiful, all-Lebanese brand. From concept to production, the brand incorporates a series of handbags, meticulously designed by Youssef, assisted by other designers and artisans. Youssef is obsessed with Louis Vuitton and all things luxury, he said. "So, they are what we have in our

presence, the design is inspired by Celia's nurturing. She accompanied him and taught him how to paint and enlightened him through conversations on art. Her grandmother was the first in the family to have this said. "I thought a



A woman holds a bag designed by Celia Creations



A handbag with a painting of Celia

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Bazaza fuses storytelling, fashion design



Hussein Bazaza walks on the ramp with a dress designed by Hussein Bazaza

designer," Bazaza said.

Bazaza's label has a unique take on fashion, he believes. "I have a special way in mixing colors, mixing fabrics and textures together. I love to combine between haute-couture and ready-to-wear."

The designer's love for haute-couture fashion inspired him to create mash ups of glamorous red-carpet styles and more effortless looks. "I did not know people would love this combination. People started referring to this style as Hussein Bazaza's style so that was something I am proud of," he said of his sporty chic aesthetic.

Before studying fashion design, Bazaza wanted to major in film making and it is why the designer loves creating stories with his pieces. "My main inspiration is not fashion, it's the story I create, the character I create to dress up in this collection that I'm making every season," he explained.

This desire to tell a story first came to the fore in his Fall/Winter 2018 collection, "Lilly."



Hussein Bazaza sits beside a dress he designed

"Lilly" was like a big story and people were so involved with this story. We live in a... digital world with social media and everything and I wanted to show people that we still have feelings, emotions and I wanted to create a story about this."

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