

PIECES



Sphinx of Giza restored in 1989 by Adam Henein

## The spectacular sculptur

*The artworks displayed at SAF's "Lasting abstract painting — int*

Arab News | Cairo

The acclaimed Egyptian sculptor and painter Adam Henein turned 90 last year, and his work remains relevant today, as visitors saw in a new retrospective — organized by the UAE's Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) — at the Sharjah Art Museum.

The exhibition, which ran until November 16 last year, boasted around 80 artworks created during Henein's eventful seven-decade career. It was part of SAF's "Lasting Impressions" series, which, once a year, highlights a prominent Arab artist.

"We chose Adam Henein because we thought that, as a person who (has been working) since the 1950s

until today, he's one of the very few (artists) alive and who link the modernist and contemporary styles," curator Sheikha Noora Al-Mualla said.

Born in Cairo to a family of metalworkers and jewellers, Henein's defining encounter with art dates back to his childhood, when, aged eight, he reproduced a clay sculpture of the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten after seeing it in the Egyptian Antiquities Museum. Impressed by his talent, Henein's supportive father would go on to display a few of his son's sculptures in his shop in Old Cairo.

Henein went on to gain a degree in sculpting at the School of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1953, before receiving a scholarship to study in Europe. He enrolled at Munich's Academy of Fine Arts, where artistic luminaries including Paul Klee, Josef Albers, and Alphonse Mucha once studied. And, as with so many artists, Paris was another stop for Henein — he and his wife lived in the French capital for nearly 20 years.

The time he spent in Europe was liberating and eye-opening, enabling him to experiment artistically and acquaint himself with the works of Western sculptors, according to Al-Mualla.

Henein returned to Egypt in the 1990s, and has since been heavily involved in helping to elevate the country's cultural scene. When the government decided to initiate restoration work on the Sphinx of Giza in the late Eighties, they approached Henein to lead the design team. He was initially hesitant about taking on such a major commitment, but eventually agreed in 1989. The project was finished in 1998, and Henein was decorated for his work on it.

In "Lasting Impressions," Henein's works — most of which have arrived directly from his home-turned-museum in Cairo — were displayed in a minimalist layout over two wings. The exhibition revealed the artist's little-known experimentation with abstract painting — intertwining shapes and colours creating a harmonious composition.

Henein did not limit himself to a single artistic medium or surface; he created paintings on delicate papyri, Japanese paper, and tempera.

"He did not (belong) to a certain school or method of painting and sculpting. His experimentation was different than anyone else's," says Al-Mualla.



Adam Henein works on a project



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SHEIKHA NOORA AL-MUALLA

## Saudi calligrapher Nasser Al-Salem's modern take on Islamic art

*Al-Salem is one of 10 contemporary artists awarded the Al-Burda Endowment in 2018*



Nasser Al-Salem

Arab News | Dubai

Jeddah-based Saudi artist Nasser Al-Salem's latest project, was showcased at the Al-Burda Endowment exhibition organized by the UAE Ministry of Culture and Economic Development — last November.

Al-Salem is one of 10 contemporary artists awarded the Al-Burda Endowment. The endowment is awarded to artists who explore Islamic art practices and contribute towards developing contemporary Islamic art.

That is something Al-Salem has been doing, dating back to his time at the Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Makkah. In 2017, Al-Salem came second in Saudi Arabia's National Film Festival.



The idea (behind the) green screen room is that every (filmmaker) can create a scene, then edit the picture and add backgrounds that are sometimes surreal or difficult to achieve in real life,"

NASSER AL-SALEM