

UNIVERSAL

206

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ASHENAFI KEBEDE

*Artist of the
issue*



"Things are not
changed very
much in our
life..."

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UNIVERSAL COLOURS

European Union Migrants Artists Network Magazine

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What does it mean, if you are an immigrant? What does it mean for others, for you and for the cultural environment that you live and work at?

Perhaps it is the ever repeated question, perhaps it does not add anything if you ask it or you keep quiet. I mean for others.

But on the personal level, you need to have answers to your questions; you need to treat your issues that you can continue life in a better way. All what you need is someone to take your hand and show you the bank you must reach.

Some issues before, I wrote about a sensitive subject as one friend said: it was about what we have achieved in EU-MAN, what did we add or delete? These are necessary questions because our work is, as I insist always, a cultural one, it is not anything else, and what we are doing has an identity, its own identity.

So our coming exhibition, which is under the name of "Third Culture", will try to prove that identity. That is why we asked all artists to work with that theme and we are not involving ourselves for some other purposes.

In this issue the reader will know about our theme of the third culture more, even though we know it is not a cultural term, but a scientific one, which C.P. Snow created it on the year of 1953 when he was searching about the characteristic of mixing two types of genetics, in the medical field.

As we know that there are a lot of researches on the third culture kids, and how these kids are talented in the mathematics, languages and other aspects. We started our project with the same theme. It was the Third Culture, and the person who visits our web site will see why we started and what kind of aims we have.

We do believe that our products are different than others', exactly as the third cultural kids are. We, as human beings behave in no different way, if we are children or adults. The behavior that we produce is our output, and since we live in two cultures we should behave in different way.

Well, a researcher or a scientist may say that this is not a correct talk, but I should conclude this discussion and refer readers go to our web site to read more about why we have started. Just because it is a very long research and I am doing, or in other words trying to do, some work with it to definite it and to prove that we, the migrants, are producing different art.

Yes, we produce different things in all levels, but what is important to me is the field that I am working at and dedicating my life to. Because as I believe that we, the people of the globe, are who write the history as Michael Fockot said once. And our duty is to identify ourselves all the time.

Amir Khatib

AYA GALLERY

Coinciding with London's *Festival of Muslim Cultures 2006*; ayagallery is proud to host this unique exhibition featuring a rare collection of works by one of Iraq's most distinguished multi-talented artists, the late **Issam El-Said** (1938-88).

The first ever since the artist's untimely death, this exhibition includes artworks, some of which have never been shown before, in a range of media providing insight into the artist's life; background, intellect, artistic and scholarly achievements during what was relatively a short life span, where he died in London 1988 at the age of 50. The creative work of Issam El-Said be it painting, sculpture, printmaking, calligraphy, design or architecture shows his dedication to the expression of the Islamic cultural identity, wonderfully demonstrating that the spiritual values of Islam can be integrated within the practice of art and architecture.



"Farewell" Issam El-Said, 1961

Born in Baghdad 1938, Issam El-Said was the son of Sabah Nuri El-Said and grandson to Nuri El-Said Pasha, who was the Iraqi prime minister from 1930-58. El Said achieved a BA Architecture from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1961; studied Art at Hammersmith College of Art and Design, London, 1962-4 and prepared for a PhD on the *Methodology of Geometric Proportioning in Islamic Architecture* at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1988, which was sadly not completed due to his death that year. Key extracts from his thesis however were published in the book *Islamic Art and Architecture: The System of Geometric Design*, 1993. El Said was also the co-author of *Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art*, published by the World of Islam Festival, London, 1976 and contributed numerous articles on Islamic art and architecture published in Europe and the USA. Soon after his death in 1989 the Issam El Said Foundation published *Issam El Said: Artist & Scholar**, a tribute to and celebration of the artist and his achievements.

Issam El Said's artworks are in private and public collections world wide including the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; MOMA, New York; the National Museums of Modern Art in Baghdad and Amman and important others.

He held numerous solo-exhibitions and took part in group shows in the Middle East, Europe and the USA. His works, which have also been sold through renowned international auction houses like Christies and more recently Bonhams (London- April 2005) are highly sought after by collectors world-wide with an increased rise in demand particularly over the past year.

In the words of **Mushtaq Parker** *"The untimely death of the Iraqi artist, Issam Sabah Nuri El-Said, in London at the tender age of 50, has deprived the Arab and Islamic world of one of its brilliant icons. His artistic temperament underlined a creative genius which touched all his activities, whether as a printmaker, painter, decorative designer of furniture, lamps, carpets and tiles, architect and etcher. Perhaps the saddest legacy of this Cambridge architecture graduate will be his unfulfilled ambitions and his unfinished work."*

* The book *Issam El Said: Artist & Scholar* and selected artworks are available for purchase from ayagallery.

The exhibition runs alongside newly acquired Iraqi art drawn from ayagallery's In-House collection.

ABOUT ME

Gallery Huuto in Helsinki hosted the Solo exhibition of the Iraqi artist Adel Abidin from the 26th of April till the 7th of May 2006; the exhibition consisted of Adel's latest works in Media Art.

Adel was telling his life story as an Iraqi person living and working in Finland. He showed very contemporary art-works. An installation such as a refrigerator standing on the front of the entrance of the gallery has a lot of little picture images on it the freezer side. The upper side has a peephole like those on the outside doors of the houses.

Viewers can come and see the peephole as if they see some person out side the house, they see some one speaking, Adel has put a video that viewers can see the message that Adel wants to say.



On the other side of the gallery Adel put another video installation, it shows Adel himself sweeping the snow of the north; "of Helsinki" in front of the video installation, the ground is a broken glass. This installation shows the life of the artist and reflecting his days in the country.

In the other little room of the gallery Adel put flyers and some posters as if the viewer enters a travel agency, but it is an ironic travel agency, because person can immediately notice that these advertisements and flyers are about Adel's home country at this time.

To some extent Adel was successful in his show and in choosing the title of the exhibition which was "about me"

ABOUT THE THIRD CULTURE PROJECT

We have received up till now more than 20 applications for our large-scale exhibition "the Third Culture" which we reserved one of the most important venue in Helsinki for the cultural events The Cable Factory.

Our Third Culture exhibition, which will take place from The 28th of February till The 18th of March 2007, will be on one theme. It is the third culture itself; the third culture attracted a lot of artists, researchers and other scientists.

But what do we mean by the third culture? It is simply the culture that we produce, we, the immigrants, just we rose this term when we started to work on the 1997, we were thinking that our area is different than the others', not for a particular reason but it is a natural consequence of our existence.

I am an Iraqi person, forcefully I have the Iraqi culture with me, I am living in Finland, and forcefully I have to deal with the second culture (the Finnish one), but the main question remains; am I producing Iraqi culture, or am I producing a Finnish culture? Of



Turku Culture Centre 1998



Autumn salon 2000 - Krakow



Paszowka Palace - Poland 2002

course none of these cultures I produce, but I produce a third one, which has and has nothing to do with both cultures.

This theme, as mentioned, attracted a lot of people, not now I mean when we have the 10th anniversary exhibition but since we started to work with this little big organization of EU-MAN.

Many discussions were about the theme even the Finnish biggest daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat wrote on the year 2000 a title of "the berth of the third culture" but we restarted with the same question are we influencing the so-to-say the native European by producing the third culture?

This exhibition will raise some questions too, it is not going to answer any question, but it will give examples of our third/hybrid culture, as you can call it. Many artists are already working on this theme, but our condition is that how artist can identify this third/hybrid culture in her/his work.



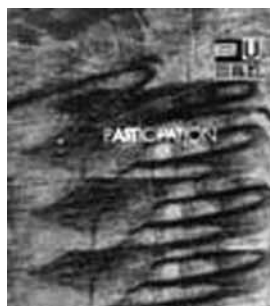
Copenhagen 1998



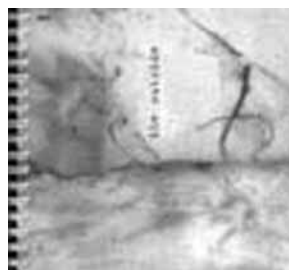
Autumn salon 1998



EU-Man at Malmitalo 1999



Participation 2000



The outside of inside - Austria 2001



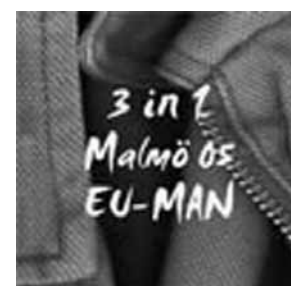
Dialogues - St. Petersburg 2001



*Exo Art - Art Hall,
Porvoo 2003*



EU-MAN '05 - Vaasa, Finlan



3 in 1 - Malmö, Sweden 2005

MEETING IN THE MINISTRY

On the 18th of April, three EU-MAN board members went to the long-awaited-for meeting in the Ministry of Culture in Helsinki, by the door after we took the visitors' name tags, a wonderful lady received us, led us to the room where the meeting was to take place, and she was the Assistant to the Director General Mrs. Pirkko Lehtokoski.

As a matter of fact we, all of us were ready for this meeting, we also were happy for it, because as I mentioned it was waited for and we knew what to say and what to do.

The meeting was one of the most important one in our existence, because we carried with us a suggestion to the officials of the ministry, and since we knew that we are going to meet Mrs. Riitta Kaivosoja the Director General of the Department for Cultural, sport and Youth Affairs, Mr. Risto Ruohonen Director of Arts and Cultural Heritage Division Special Government Advisor, Mr. Veikko Kunnas counsellors for cultural affairs and Mikko Cortes-Tellés planning officier.

We made three presentations, Mrs. Elvira Hilkevich presented the history and the work of EU-MAN, Mr. Moustafa AL Yassin presented models of a similar organization as the EU-MAN and Mr. Amir Khatib presented a suggestion.

The suggestion was, to establish a unit or any kind of institutional organization using the initiatives of EU-MAN to develop work and to widen the base of it on the official level.

I do not want to go into the details of this meeting as I want to say how we were feeling while discussing the matters and how we went out with a very good feeling, personally I still have its taste in my mouth.

How we could renew everything, how we could have this kind of feeling, that we are not separated, but real integrated in this society, yes we are doing some influences through our work and that is by itself a great achievement.

AMIR KHATIB SOLO EXHIBITION

2002 witnessed the last solo exhibition of Amir Khatib, now we are in 2006, four year we have passed, of course man can change during these years, and one can do exactly different things, but this is not with Amir's case.

At Käytävä Gallery in the Cable Factory, Amir presented the largest cultural complex in Finland, a solo exhibition that consisted of his old work and some three new, these three new artworks were as the old ones, but he used more natural material towards implementing his theory about the black hole.

His Excellency the Mr. Mejbil Al-Samraei the Iraqi Ambassador to Helsinki opened the exhibition that was attended by a lot of people, and who expressed their interest and understanding to the type of art.

The opening was on the 3rd of May and the exhibition will continue till the 30th of May.



Ashenafi Kebede

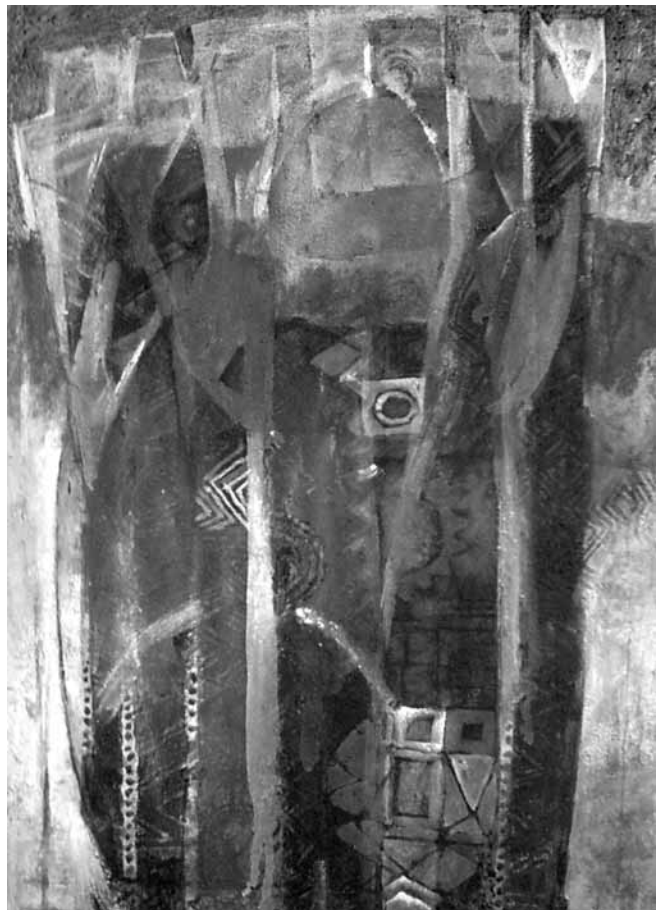
Expressive in colours in using material in using images from the very far memory, he was born in Ethiopia, which gave birth to the world first icon, first architect in caves, at least that what Ethiopians believe.

Ashenafi studied graphic designing in Addis Ababa, went to exile for 7 years in Moscow, studying at the institute of Surikov, painting was his major.

He then left Russia to Finland in 1997 to work as an artist, what does that mean to him?

Finns, like other Europeans, want something new, the artist should always know what to do

“The people of the globe ... what govern them is the instinct and material.”



the artist should always know what to do and how to create an exotic art, here in Europe even native artists should know how to attract people, Ashenafi insists that art life here in Finland is like any other life elsewhere, all are struggling to live, it is not an easy matter if you want to be on the track.



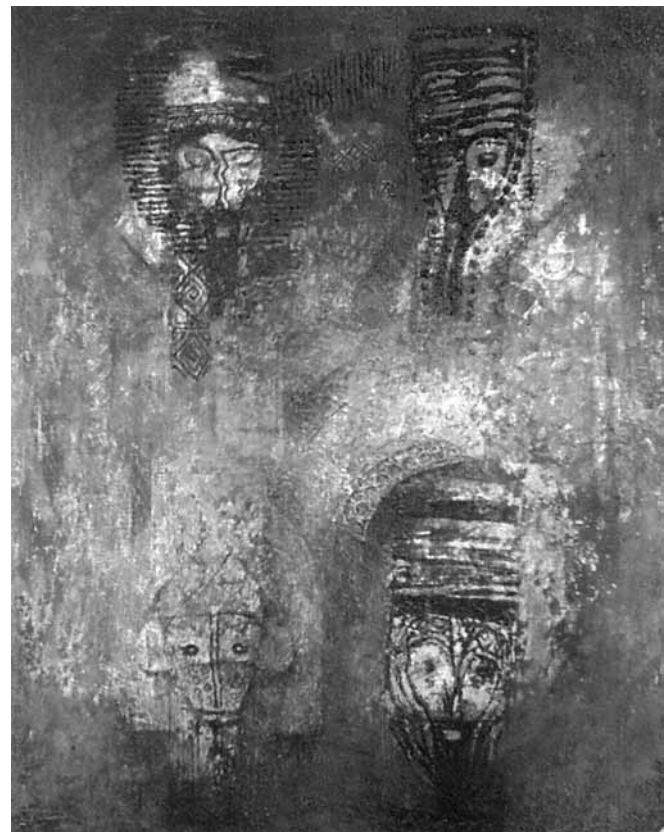
About if he believes that, living in between two cultures is a healthy matter, he said: "of course, I spent all my life between two cultures, and I think that it is natural and an enrichment to live between two cultures, simply because you have more resources to use and you have more freedom".

Things are not changing very much in our lives, that what Ashenafi believes, because he thinks that people of the globe are still on that level and what govern them is the instinct and material.

Other people just do changes in the out shape, the manners are the same, may be the health sector changes, but if one talks about culture or people's behavior, we are still doing the same.

Indeed Ashenafi is a thinker, besides that he is artist, he is thinks before he does any work, the theme of each work takes its time in Ashenafi's mind, as well as the technique.

When I visited him in his studio one day to take some pictures of his works, I was introduced to a researcher.



Ashenafi Kebede

I imagined that I have entered a laboratory; his table was full of papers, colours, brushes and even some geometric tools, the wall of his studio was not a normal one as in others studios, he almost studies each and every space of it, that he puts things in order.

That is what I call the place of a researcher, why not since art is a forever research, artist cannot stop searching, it is death that stops artist from discovering new things in life, try new life in each moment, artists are full-of-life creatures, it is not at all empty it is busy and exiting life to be an artist.



"Finland is a peaceful country and some times I love my life here," "this land has a very variable changes of whether, I do enjoy winter, summer spring and autumn as well," "seasons have a unique

characteristics," said Ashenafi.

"These characteristics inspire me to imagine that I live in different places at the same country," he added.

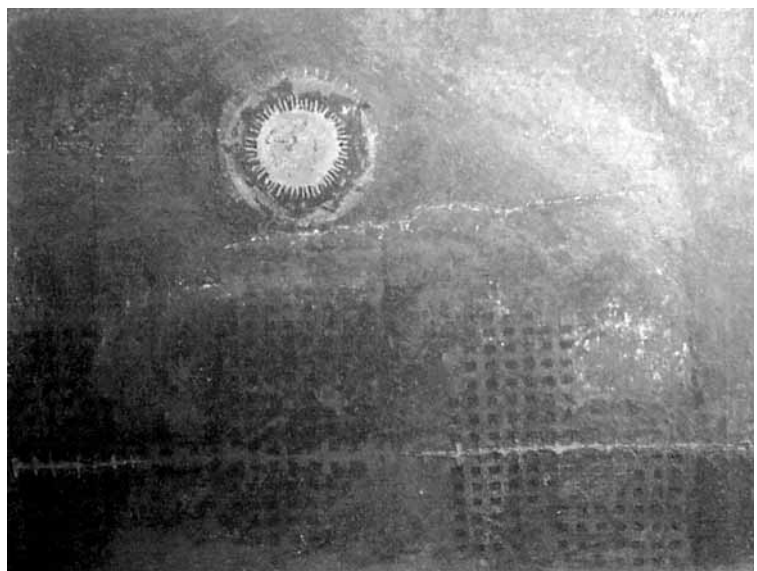
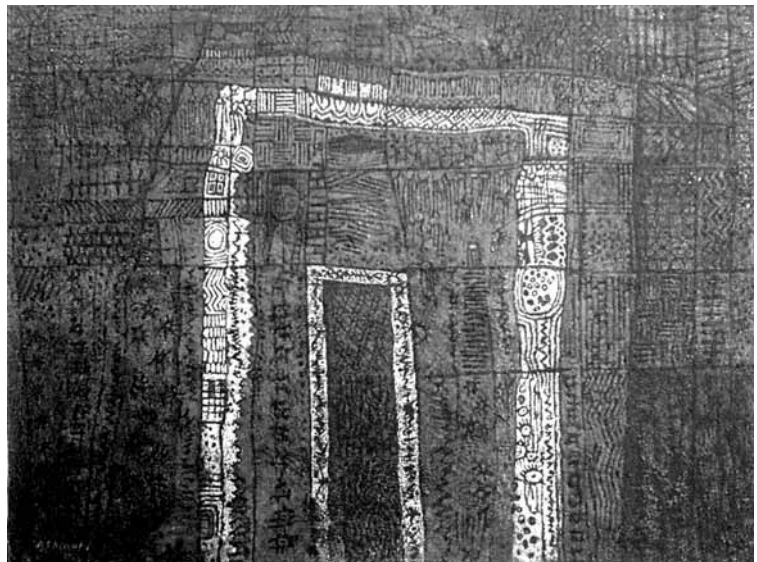
"Of course mankind takes her/his nature from the land's nature, from the whether, from the whole surroundings, that is why there is variety in Finland, I do not mean in art, but on almost all levels".

About the change of the art as a concept, the contemporary art as a concept the UC asked him, he

was thinking that the change has to do with the technology, when technology is developing it needs to develop the surroundings too. Look at mobile phones, do you remember when they came, it was not very long ago, it was in the beginning of the 90's, they were totally ugly, big, unpractical, but now where are they?

The need always pushes people to create different culture, what is the need of art nowadays? Ashenafi believes that people need art all the time, they need to move the culture forward to create satisfaction, to make life easier and better quality, so what is the better quality of the art of the contemporary time? That is what Ashenafi is positive about.

Visual art moved from painting to installation during the late 80's and the beginning of the 90's, then it moved to the media art, then it will go some where else, but do you think that people stop needing the picture on their wall; Ashenafi insists that all lines in life go parallel and nothing will vanish. ■



ERNESTO NETO

By: Farouk Yousif



“Ernesto does not care to enlarge his formal items; he does care about imaginative approaches to realistic forms”

It is a unique event that "Kunsthall" the City Art hall of Malmö third biggest city in Sweden, receive the exhibition of the Brazilian well-known artist Ernesto Neto. It is a unique event not because it is only strange, astonishing and magical presentation that he has done, but because it is an opportunity to the wide audience to know one of the most important experiences in the contemporary art in the world.

Ernesto's experience gut since many years on the distinguished attention from the art critics, art galleries and the art museums in the USA, precisely in NY where he lives and works.

The viewer with Neto does not see boards hanged on walls, she/he does not go around a sculpture like those in museums, but she/he finds her/himself in the heart of the artwork, and on the first step which leads her/him to white looseness that the artist creates its ways.

The artist uses hundreds of meters of cloths, the material that Ernesto is very talented of using it, to compose his transparent forms. Those forms which remind us of an imaginative reality, which does not lead us to the reality.

Here is the radial of Ernesto's game that is distinguished in his presentations. His huge mollusca forms which does not cut its relation with its inspirations resources, but at the same time it does not put those resources that eyes can consume them directly, it does not scare the eyes but it allow the eyes by its imaginative capacity, goes to far extant of its aesthetic possibilities.

Because these forms are huge, the viewer usually become as victim to successive visual illusions, Neto insists that viewers should see the artwork totally, when he entertains his audience by the parts which deliver a fling aesthetic sense, aesthetic in its way to absentness, at each look.

Everything that this artist has is a temporary, like his material which curators scared that it will be dirty by the curiosity of the audience, curiosity that pushes them to touch.

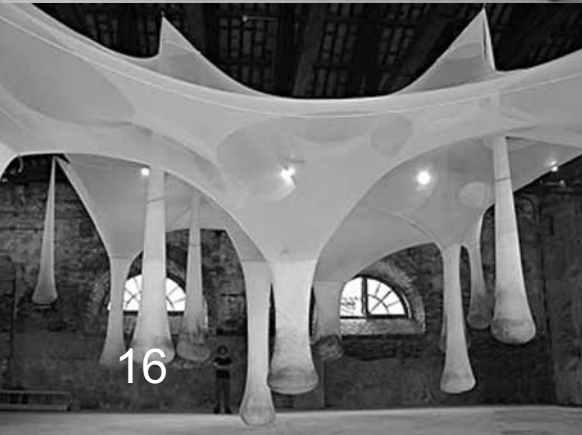
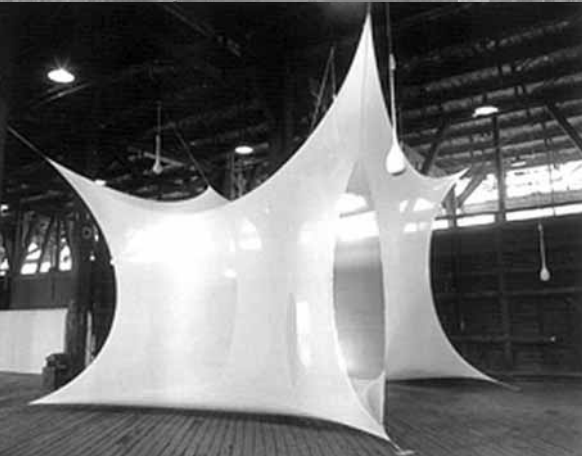
So there is something which makes the audience busy of seeing the whole body of the artwork as complete object, details, so when some one tries to touch a part of the artwork, and when she/he hesitate to touch it, so when she/he puzzle standing in front of cross way inside the artwork, then She/he spreads her/his uncertain looking between the directions.

Inevitably an audience feels a change in her/his aesthetic test, her/his way of looking to things. As I see, that Neto or other pioneers artists in this type of art, they include these mood changes, as it is an expansive aim they climb to it through art.

Ernesto does not care to enlarge his formal items; he does care about imaginative approaches to realistic forms. Animal's feet, flexible walls shirts, treated tents, spider net of ropes, moveable roofs and everything he makes of the delicate cloths, which its sensitivity might gives the meaning of the nihilism.

Forms that Neto suggests does not return us to something that we know, but it lead us to





ERNESTO NETO

what we do not know about life that we kept secret. It does not remind us, but tries to return us to life that it is in its way to be built.

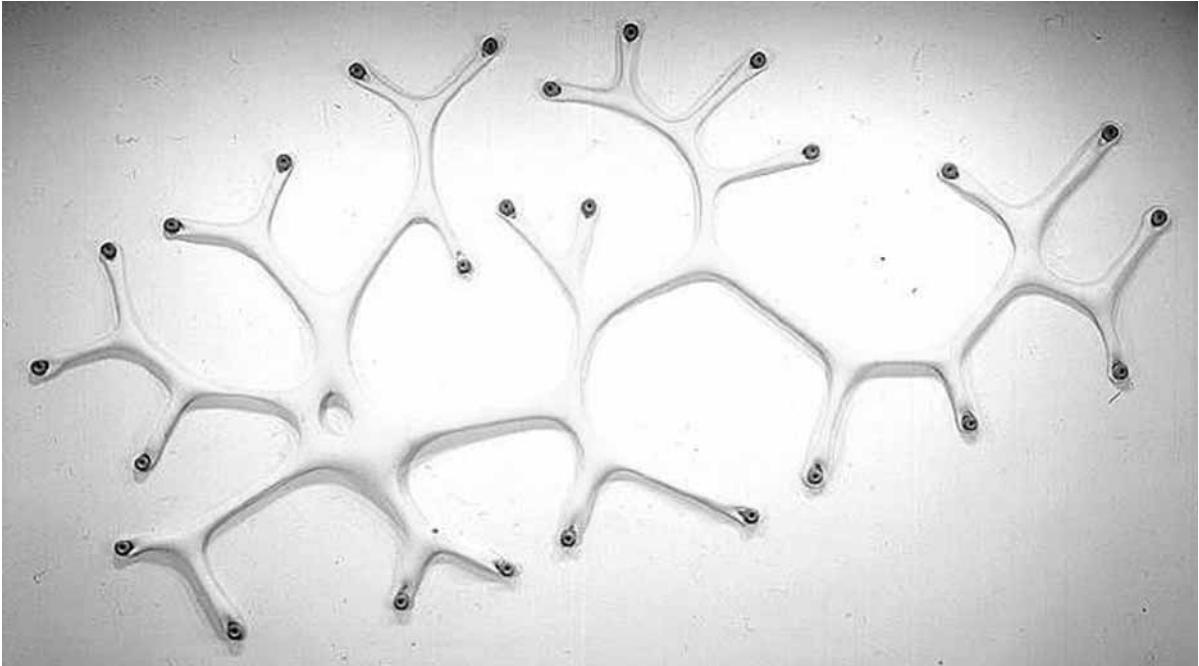
(Looking is not enough) this title should be for Neto's works, but it might be suggested whispery, meditating these works leads to great scattered in the feelings, the priority to the hand which it touches and feels, the eye which think and see, the ear which listen and faint, but all of these mixed feelings should lead to something else, something that meditation knows it.

Meditation on one level of its astonishing expression and it is the reason of its strong unique of all that what leads to it. Person who go through any work of Neto become as if she/he took from her/his inside the material that she/he treats her/his impulsive mood.

The idea of purification seems here, as it is close to the artistic professionalism, that professionalism which provide us by added imaginative power we can through it discover possible ways, ways which put us in front of our steps, different and distanced ways of faith.

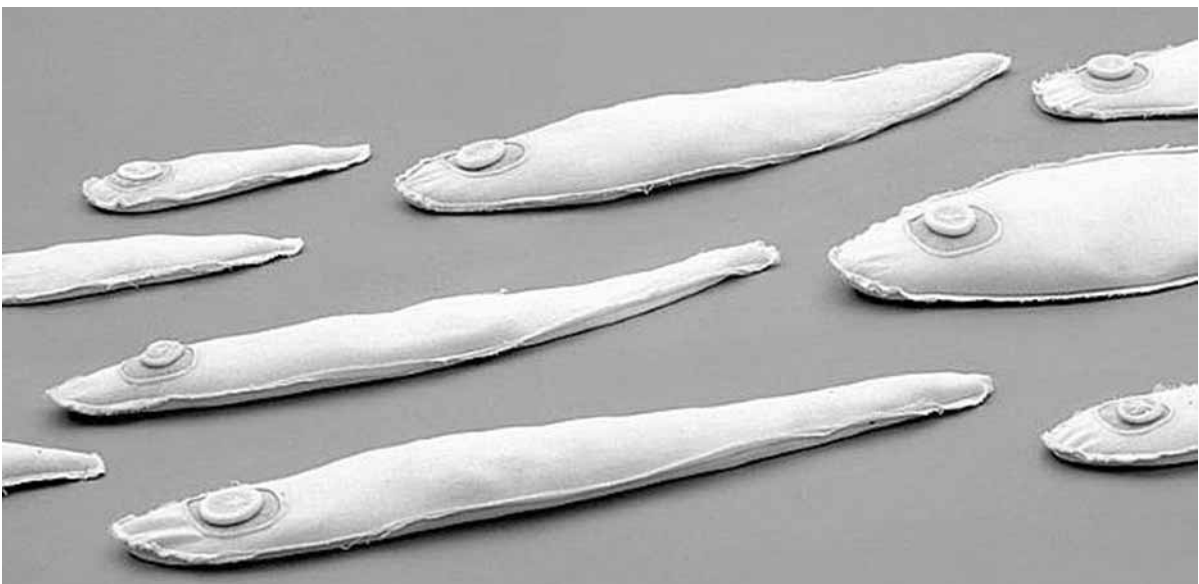
Before Neto does not lead us to after Neto. Air (which is an important construction item to this artist) the air is full of friend ghosts, Neto does not put a limit through his lost to our, as he insists that lost, but we find the space in his works which leads to our lost as an Nobel idea and prophecy of difference.

Ernesto Neto was born in 1964, he does not draw, does not make sculptures now at least, but



he do both in a genius way. Genius of visual imagination, he is attracted by making musical spaces from the cloth, it does not inspire by any end, what we carry with us, remind us by some ends as the expressionism of Monck do, or the surrealism of Maghrat do, or the realism of Hokny do, but it does not return us to a certain sceneries, but it relies us in a poetic luxury which does not care about meanings as care to put out of it its voices as music goes higher and highr.

Neto's works invite us to let them, to what they tell us about life as it is an open horizon to the happy delightful surprises. Art for this artist cool game, game which return us to our childhood by the steps of uncertain adults. ■



The Mediterranean Partnership

Moroccan Visual art an example

By: Ali Najjar

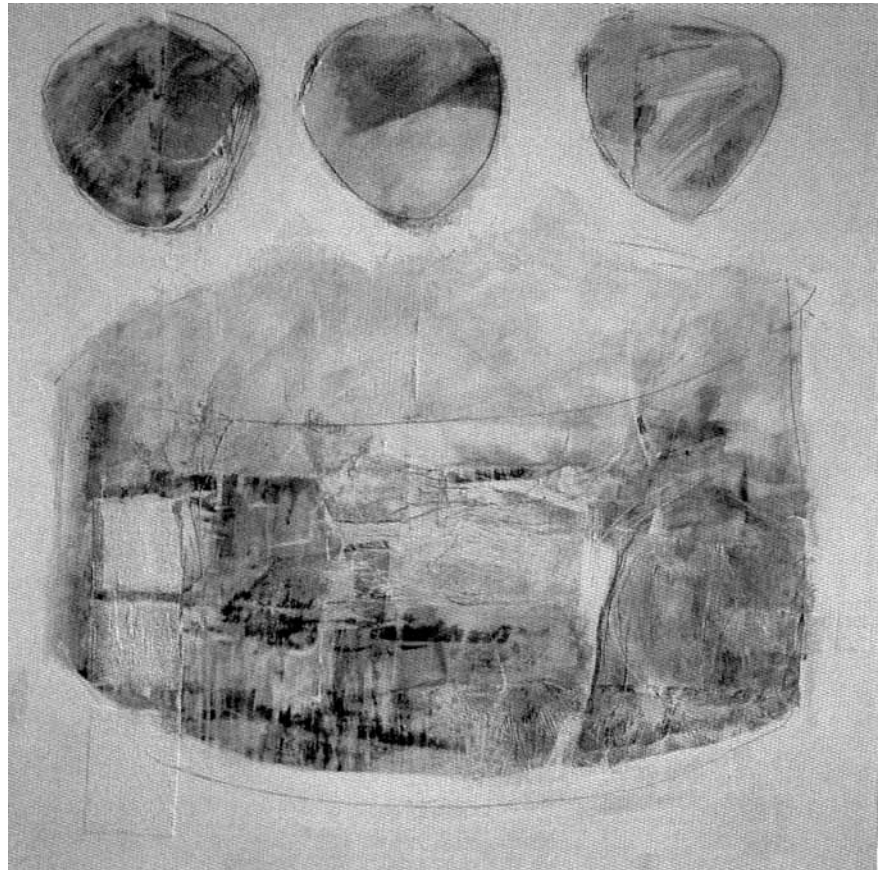
When you pass through any Moroccan city, you hear many languages, usually you hear some French words, or some Spanish or even some times Italian, through these tongues you hear the Arabic, Amazigy and Barbary to that extent which you make a language composition that is far from the Arabic in the east side of the Arab world.

As the French language is the dominating daily life, it is dominating the cultural life of the country, in almost all cultural products, so, still there are a lot of cultural and philosophical Moroccan publications out of the frame of the Arabic language, if it has not been translated into Arabic.

This language "hybridism" makes a vivid path for understanding others (the European Mediterranean) through its interfering of the cultural and behavioural depth to that imaginative other. The imaginative other is possible here, in our contemporary time, just to break the traditional borders, as the new incredible information system passes by.

The matter is not limited to the information from out or inside the media by its huge

“French language is the dominating language of the daily life of the people...”



Blanca Orozco

tools, but the visual art is one of the pillars of the media or the whole system, and it is not strange that Moroccan artists invested this important channel toward going through and been spread to the near cotenant, using the visual products for its special location, for its huge creativities as it has variable of quantity by a humanistic way, which is suitable to interference and spread by easiest ways, which always cross the limited national border to make important paths for a new location, that I can call the geographical relationship, strengthening through it the concept of intercommunication.

Intercommunication, which is an important joint of the cultural globalisation joints, which is more active on the cultural, aesthetical and knowledge production levels, as it is clear that Moroccan are preparing for an equal partnership to all Mediterranean shores throughout the Moroccan visual arts experience, which Moroccans want it to be exchangeable intercommunication with the north of Mediterranean, which is a vivid example, although it is very young, as the statistics say:

1- Participating in Paris Biennale 1959 mentioned the level of the participating Moroccan artworks by many art critics, such as the Italian Lionello Venturi as he said: surprise comes from Morocco (2)

2- Rabat exhibition for the Moroccan visual art 1963-1964, participants were 25 artists from Paris school of art.

The Mediterranean Partnership

3- The newest participation was the group of visual artists in the UK (The Wonderful Fund Collection) with the Moroccan visual art in Funon exhibition in Marrakech museum 2005

4- (Solidarity Cultures) was the title of the exhibition which was held in Casablanca that was at the same year on the order of (FAM) who is sponsored by the UNESCO, so there were a lot of female participants from the Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Turkey, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus and the Arab countries of the Mediterranean.

5- Other examples of this year, is the photo exhibition for the French-Moroccan association (SNAP 11) in Rabat City that the exhibition occupied the most important two venues in the capital.

Other vivid example, from the geographical cultural aesthetical work point of view and its internationality, the Moroccan visual art group (EL PLACER DEL SIMBOLO) showed their works last year at Martel hotel in the Spanish city of Mirabella, sponsored by the Andalusia cultural centre, for the interaction of the Spanish cultural environment, the organisation of (FMC), which made an exchange of two exhibitions, for the Moroccan group and for some other Spanish group called (ARTISTA PLASTICOS DE VALGECIRAS).

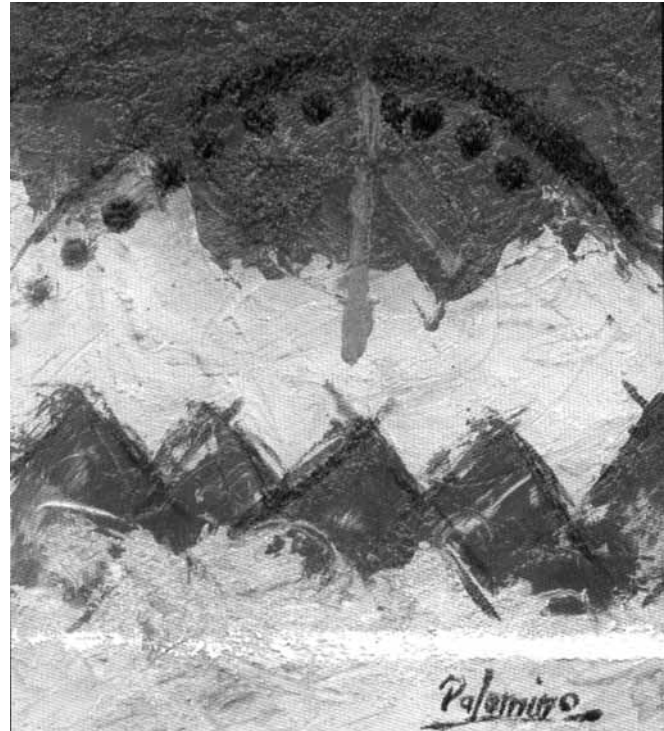
The Moroccan group showed in AL-Hamra gallery in Andalusia and the Spanish group showed in AL-Nadera Gallery in Rabat.

Notices on the exchange exhibition

“...in this show we find very clear similarities with the Moroccan and the works of the Spanish...”

Accept that the Moroccan visual art movement works on its local resources and its environment, three mixes of foreign influences control its evolution, which are not far from their familiar cultural environment that is the modern schools of art, the French, the Spanish and the Italian.

First, because of the mixed colonial history, second, of the direct output of the research of the Moroccan artists themselves in these Mediterranean neighbour countries.



Mekki Plamino

Here we can find a huge similarity in the performing area and then the professionalism of the art objects, which was not strange that they become integrated and then to find a space of mutual taste, sometimes inspired by the differences of the geographical colours expressions, and some other times on the calligraphy which is interfered by the Moroccan art products throughout the appeared influence of the southern Mediterranean on the northern part of it.

These artistic products that are exchanged on many of the details of the emotional expression, especially with the French and the Spanish products, in this show we find very clear similarities with the Moroccan (Mekki Plamino) and the works of the Spanish (Blanca Orozco) as we do not deny the Spanish Tepee on most of the Moroccan art which works on the surface technique inspired by both Mediterranean coasts.

As the climate and environment of Morocco influenced the European visual art stages, which it was an important resource to activate creativities of light and fantasy in the visual art of Europe in general, so the exchange of location now crosses the one sided environment influence to many of the contemporary practical visual details.

Then the huge space of the intercommunication (the output of the mainstream digital society), this exchange precisely establishing and preparing at the same time a new suitable space for humanistic, emotional, pragmatic, and equal future partnership that the human society hopes for.

Ali Najjar

Sweden on the 18th of April 2006



Moustafa AL-Yassin

LAST DROP

The hope canticle inside the rejection icon

There is a reaction for every action, that's a very well known physical fact, and here I do not want to be some present-day Einstein, especially in the physics of the bureaucrats, who are wearing all the disappearing masks, if it was sandals in the feet or among the files on the known offices.

Bureaucrats have always some masks as I see, because they show what they do not do, and vice-versa, some times I see them laughing, some times for a reason and some other times without.

But, as some people say, there is always a space for hope, and without it we cannot live, isn't it so? But what kind of space of hope should be? To find yourself very close to a family, which receives you, embraces you although you have all difficulties.

As a matter of fact, that what happened when we had our meeting at the Ministry of Culture last April, that meeting with the officials, who know how to deal and handle work of the offices, with those people who are responsible directly for the cultural policy of Finland.

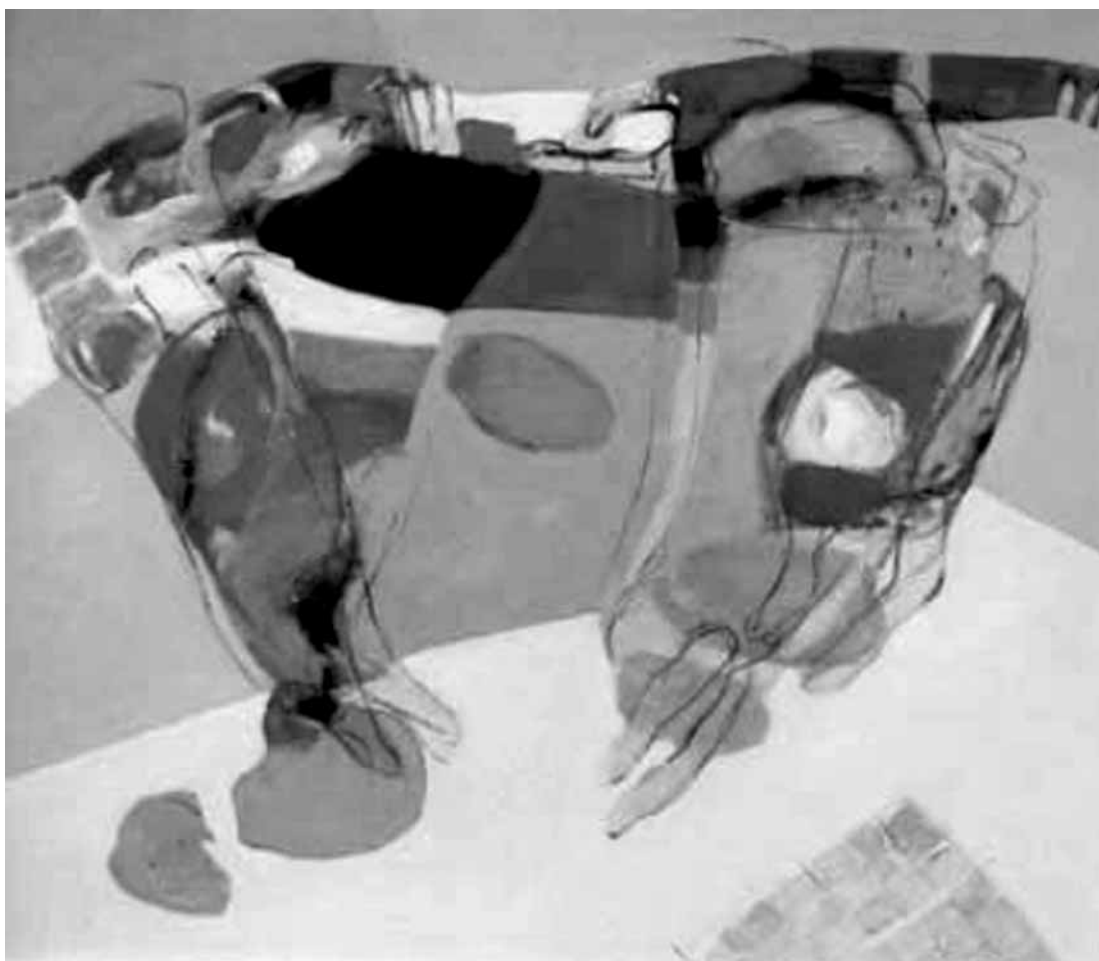
I hope I can put it in a sandwich which was and still ready to be presented on the dining tables of a lot of bureaucrats, but unfortunately it does not have the taste and the sweet smell, which might invite them to research of the unready meal in the large sense.

That was the reaction; well it is still a very good attention that there is somebody, who sees the old lipstick on the lips older than a bottle of wine, which cannot be discovered until that moment.

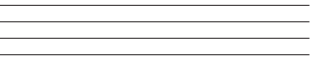
Here, I wish to say if there are fruits for this kiss, that some wedding will happen between the both parties, or does it show that, I wonder? I would like to say that I am very happy to put between your hands this beautiful icon, insisting that the event happened and the rejection icon turned to a canticle I can through this window play to you some of its music, and that is the hope

Moustafa AL Yassin
Maker of the last drop

Yassin Atia



Yassin is one of those artists who is very distinguished in the map of the coloring artist. He is respected on many levels, just because his search is continuing since he started painting the early 80th of the last century.



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