

ROSE ISSA PROJECTS

269 KENSINGTON HIGH STREET LONDON W8 6NA T: +44 (0)20 7602 7700 E: INFO@ROSEISSA.COM WWW.ROSEISSA.COM

Fathi Hassan: Signs of our Times

Leighton House Museum, London
12 November–18 December 2010
Private view 16th November 2010, 6.30–8.30 pm

Rose Issa Projects, 269 Kensington High Street, London W8 6NA
12 November–4 December 2010

Signs of our Times is the first major solo show presenting the work of Fathi Hassan over two venues in London, Leighton House Museum and Rose Issa Projects.

Born in Cairo in 1957 to Sudanese and Egyptian parents, Fathi Hassan has lived in Italy since 1984. In his work he successfully mixes his Nubian Arab-African background with current Western concepts and techniques. Writing plays a dominant role in his work. In exploring the ornamental possibilities of the letters, Hassan is careful not to emphasise the meaning of words, for words may restrict his intentions or our imagination.

Hassan takes phonemes and covers most of the paper or canvas with them, turning them into curves, shaping them into waves, and weaving them into a melodic and rhythmic image, transforming the surface into a visual incantation. At other times, he repeatedly paints the phrase Haram Aleikum ("Shame on you"), questioning the wisdom of letting daily humiliations, disrespect and exploitation go unopposed. The Arabic language here serves as a vehicle for reflecting on history, identity, and individual life choices. Scattered here and there are also numbers – Arabic, Indian or Latin – referring to important dates in his personal life or historical events that have shaped the places he has lived in. Fathi Hassan's work emphasises his trans-nationalism and cultural hybridity.

His sources of inspiration are varied, for he often pays homage to other Arab, African, Italian or American artists in his work and openly admits his admiration for them. His technique is equally varied, encompassing paint, sand, textiles, collage, photography and mixed-media on canvas, board, paper, or murals, photographs and performances.

Over the past 30 years Fathi Hassan has participated in numerous solo and group shows in Italy (including the 1988 Venice Biennale), Belgium, Denmark, Egypt and New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Nigger, Palazzo del Duca, Senigallia, Italy (2010) and the group shows Arabicity at the Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool, and the Beirut Exhibition Center, Lebanon (2010).

Fathi Hassan's work is in the permanent collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the British Museum in London, and The Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC.

He has been the subject of many publications, including the monograph Fathi Hassan, edited by Rose Issa and published by Beyond Art Production to accompany this exhibition.

Leighton House Museum, 12 Holland Park Road, London W14 (020 7602 3316)
Open daily 10am to 5.30pm, closed Tuesdays.
Admission £5, to include membership and free access to Leighton House for one year

For details please contact Rose Issa Projects (020 7602 7700; info@roseissa.com; www.roseissa.com)