

80 YEARS OF ART EDUCATION IN EGYPT



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I am naturally proud and happy to receive the Sir Herbert Read Award 2017, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank the InSEA Awards Selection Committee for this honor, with special thanks to the president of the InSEA, Dr. Teresa Eca, and our representative from Egypt, Dr. Samia El Sheikh. I would also like to thank all the Amesea members that I am thrilled to represent, for their cooperation and enthusiasm to accomplish this important goal, and the many colleagues and students who have sent letters of recommendation with great appreciation and love.

Yet I would like to congratulate all of them because their support unhands further achievement, beyond honoring my career in art and art education. It also honors the academic, research and art educational practices in Egypt and many Arab countries such as Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, Palestine and Libya), as well as in British and American universities (including State University of New York at Buffalo, San Jose University California and Cambridge University in the UK, which I worked with).

Winning this important award gave me and the Amesea group the opportunity to open immediate and future horizons to enhance the role of art education and disseminate the values and objectives of art culture and art education in the 21st century. In broader and more receptive circles, institutions, universities, ministries and governorates, associations and individuals working in the field and supporters of it, and adopted projects, conferences, seminars, workshops, exhibitions and celebrations

related to art education as well as enhancing the interest of the press and media through our (Amesea) the InSEA African and Middle East office.

AMESEA

An active office of the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) founded in 1946 by Sir Herbert Read. The Amesea society founded in 2014 with the vision of an enlightened, active and experts of art educators in Africa and the Middle East.

The first activity started with launching its website (amesea.org) under the supervision of Dr. Ahmad Hatem. In the first 6 months of its launching, the number of visitors was 5000, the biggest number of visitors were from, Egypt, USA, and Saudi Arabia.

The second activity was launching the Amesea Egyptian scientific journal under the supervision of Dr. Amal Mostafa in 2014. The first issue published in January 2015 and continued in its quarterly publications until the present day. It published scientific and educational research in the field of arts and art education in Arabic and English from all over the Arab world. The Journal is presented in paper and electronic with 2 electronic publishers Ebesco and Al mAmzoma. The Journal received a score of ten out of ten by the Supreme Council of Universities, which is the highest degree awarded to specialized scientific journals for their importance, excellence and seriousness in research, information and support of researchers and scholars.

The third activity The Amesea held its first international conference with great success in cooperation with the University of Sixth of October in March 2015 and achieved a great appreciation in the artistic and academic circles. The conference held many events of creative workshops and exhibitions and honor of Major Mahmoud El Bassiouni, as well as parallel talks for delegates of the international and the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman to activate communication to achieve the objectives of Arts education.

The third activity was the adoption of Arts Education Week 22-28/5/2017 under the supervision of Dr. Dina Adel. This year, the publicity of receiving the Sir Herbert Read Award made it possible to encourage several universities and organizations to support us including two Ministries and National Councils, eight universities, seven museums and palaces of culture, 18 Libraries and art centers and 4 NGOs.

The fourth activity because of the publicity of receiving the Sir Herbert Read Award made it possible for the ministry of education to select a group from the Amesea; Sidky, Hatem and Ade,l to represent Egypt in the second NEPAD Regional Conference on Arts Education in Africa for the Northern and Eastern Africa. The conference aimed to develop an advocacy position that informs a policy framework for the formulation, strengthening and harmonizing of Arts Education and Training policies in Africa. The Amesea aims to bring together specialists from the Arab and African worlds to develop strategies and plans to support art education objectives.

Amesea considers itself as the third vital link in the art education process in Egypt and the Arab and African world and its interaction with specialized departments and international conferences.

THE THREE STEPS OF PROMOTING ART EDUCATION IN EGYPT

The first step dates to 1932 when three of the pioneers of Egyptian art education participated in the first Paris International Conference for teaching art to represent the Union of Art Teachers in Egypt led by Habib Georgi (1891-1962) and professors Mohamed Abdel Hadi and Hussein El Gharbali. The aim was to adopt the contemporary trends in art education.

Upon their return from Paris, they established the term art education instead of teaching drawing and handicrafts. The activities transformed from skill training to a vital role in the education and development of children. Art education became an independent field in the educational system.

Habib Georgi and his colleagues founded the International Union Journal of Art Teachers to publish pioneering experiments in art and art education in Egypt and the world, and the recommendations of the annual international conferences they participated in.

The second step: attended by a great pioneer of art education, Dr. Mahmoud al-Bassouni, who was an active member of the InSEA, and published his research at its annual conferences. More importantly, he adopted the results and recommendations of these conferences and held seminars and lectures in Arabic. Furthermore, he invited visiting professors, creating a new generation of teachers characterized by seriousness and ambition.

In the first half of the sixties, Al-Bassiouni founded the InSEA in Egypt, the Egyptian Society of Art Education and organized the International InSEA Conference sponsored by the UNESCO in November 1988 in Cairo where Elute Eisner was a key speaker. Al-Bassiouni became one of the pioneers of the InSEA society itself.

His activity expanded contemporary concepts to several Arab countries. Al-Bassiouni met Sir Herbert Read in 1962 in London, held a lengthy dialogue with him about his views, achievements and philosophy in the field of art education, and then published it in one of his books.

The writings of Sir Herbert Read had a creative influence on the field of art education in Egypt and through his publications such as *Education through Art* (1943), *A Concise History of Modern Painting* (1959), *Art & Society* and *The Meaning of Art*.

Sir Herbert Read also celebrated the paintings of the art and life group founded by Hamed Said in 1936, when it exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 1940 and considered it represented and characterized honesty, independence and the expression of a highly reflective sense of nature. Paul Landrofsky, Oscar Kokoshka, Erik Newton, and Julian Hugsly participated in a lengthy BBC program on the high values of Georgi's experience with his children.

The third step: at the beginning of the 21st century, a group of art education scholars joined by their common illuminated cultural thoughts and depth of culture lead and participated in teaching in local, Arab and international conferences and seminars. They participated in one of the most important international art conferences of the United Nations held in Seoul in July 2010 called *The road to art education* (these scholars were Saria Sidky and Dina Adel and Moshira Metaoua). They participated and continued their research on the skills of the 21st century and habits of the mind and postmodern theories, which added a new dimension to the field of art education.

A team composed of Sidky, Metaoua, Elshak, Hatem, Khalil and Ahmed Refat participated in the Budapest Conference in 2011, where they began to prepare for the establishment of the Amesea to represent Africa and the Arab world. To enhance the communication and promotion of artistic and educational ideas between the Arab and African worlds and the Western world, in collaboration with colleagues in their countries and relevant institutions.

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Dr. Saria Sidky is a recognized authority in art education in Egypt and the Arab world, a recipient of several awards including the Cairo University's Special Award for her contribution to Art Education in Egypt (2002) and the Governorate of Fayoum's Award for her exceptional achievement in promoting the art and culture of schoolchildren. She has received her doctorate from the State University of New York in Buffalo in 1979.

Sidky is a professor of curricula and teaching methodology in Helwan University's Faculty of Art Education, where she has taught for the past forty years. She has also taught at several universities, including the Cairo, Alexandria, Ain Shams, and Asyut Universities, the International Academy for Media and Science, the Arab University, the State University College in Buffalo and San Jose College in Silicon Valley. Her publications include a number of research papers on art appreciation, arts education, art history, museum education and traditional and contemporary crafts. She has presented her work in academic conferences in Egypt and abroad. Her published works include a number of teaching guides for schoolteachers including "Art Education for Primary School Students" (1984) and "Art Appreciation and Art History for Preparatory School Students" (1986) and various teachers' guides for the Egyptian Ministry of Education. She has also led several training workshops for primary, secondary and high school teachers.

In Egypt, she has established the concept of museum education and art rehabilitation for the elderly. She has been a pioneer in establishing the art rehabilitation program for the young patients at the Cancer Institute in Cairo. During her time as head of the Department of Art Culture and Art Education Training at Helwan University, she has created numerous art

programs in various hospitals, colleges, clubs and libraries, for both abled and disabled youth. Moreover, she has supervised individual and group research, practices and activities in Nubia and Cairo to support popular arts in collaboration with the UNESCO regional office in Cairo and the Egyptian Society of Folk Art, as well as with the Visual Art Sector of the Ministry of Culture.

Sidky has also introduced several concepts and theories to the field of arts education in Egypt and the Arab world such as visual literacy, visual communication, discipline-based arts education (DBAE), the power of art and the development of the mind, 21st century skills as a new approach to art education and postmodern art education. During her long career, she has been a consultant and developer for a vast number of undergraduate and postgraduate art education curricula students, not only in Egypt but also in other Arab countries. She was the recipient of several awards from Cairo and Helwan Universities, for supervising the best PhD dissertation in art education. She has also established several scholarships to enable students to study abroad and jointly supervise their theses with the foreign universities.

Sidky has trained an active team of researchers that worked with her in most of her projects, such as the revival of the Islamic spa tradition (el hammam), reviving some of the traditional popular crafts, creating a dialogue between cultures, bridging the gap between ancient, Greco Roman, Old and New Testaments, Islamic, modern and contemporary traditions, by applying some of the international new theories such as Harford Project Zero (Artful Thinking). She has also arranged several international workshops with Elute Eisner, Brent Wilson, Stanly Medea, Ell Harrouds and a group of professors from San Jose University Faculty of Fine Art and Art Education to train Egyptian staff in technology and museum education under her supervision and planning.

As an artist in her own right, Sidky is a sculptor, a printmaker and a painter. She has exhibited in Egyptian, American, Danish, Swedish and Chinese art galleries and museums. Her work is in private collections in the United States, Europe and the Middle East, and on permanent display at the Egyptian Museum of Modern Art, the Cairo Opera House, and the Cairo International Conference Center. She has received the Egyptian Art Appreciation Society Sculpture Award in 1969 and the Drawing Award in 1984 respectively.

In addition to her academic posts, Sidky has held a number of prestigious effective positions. She was the president of the National Center for Child Culture (1993-1994) and recipient of a Fulbright grant to improve museum education in Egypt (2000-2001). She has coordinated several important national projects, including one between Helwan University and the California State University in San Jose, one for the Bibliotheca Alexandrina to promote art literacy for schoolchildren and a major project of the history of writing and its cultural context held during the International Artist Book Biennale in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in 2004, and a UNESCO project in 2007 to classify endangered Egyptian handicrafts and folk arts in Nubia and Cairo.

Sidky is a courageous and compassionate woman who is concerned with the fragmentation of human thought, and the separation we create within ourselves and as well as with others, in the universe we live in. She appreciates the value of effective communication with others, creativity and physical and psychological health of human beings, as well as social justice. Her main interests are the interactions between culture and tradition. Sidky pays great attention to culture and tradition's role in a global society to elevate the importance of human rights and dignity. She views education as a national duty, believing that in order to be a good teacher, she has to be a good learner first. Her objective is not to teach the content of the curriculum, her priority is to reveal the beauty within each individual and within herself. Her responsibility is to facilitate the sense of peace and enhance the quality of life. She is part of an international network who is in charge of supporting the role of art for developmental,

communicative and cooperative purposes, through contemporary thoughts utilizing creative teaching methods to bring joy to the class in order to create a module that students can connect through the world.

Sidky's role as a social activist shows clearly in the teaching environment she creates between her students. She promotes dynamism in the face of stagnation, liberating the changing power of critical pedagogy. She believes in the artistic expressive and democratic quality of art as a powerful aspect in supporting the new generation and applies teaching strategies to change societal hierarchy to build a healthy quality that encourages open exchange of thoughts in the classroom. Sidky adds contemporary art to experimental teaching that not only makes education attractive but also achieves positive reproductive experiences within the educational environment. She is not just concerned with building working skills for the future, but also to achieve self-awareness and interactions between herself, her students and her colleagues.

Sidky's work has always maintained the same excellent qualities, and has always attempted to interrogate and test the following questions: what is the role of freedom in art programs? Where are freedom and democracy of opinion and creativity? Where do students' thoughts and opinions stand (the generation that will build the future of our country)? What is the dual interaction between the youth and the community? And finally, what is our role and responsibility in preparing this generation for life and work?

MY LIFE WITH ART AND ART EDUCATION

My relationship with art and art education dates to my childhood in elementary school. My mother, one of the pioneers of art education, visited my school, the American College in Cairo, and asked them to change the teaching program of art because their curriculum was old fashioned and would eventually harm my artistic talent. When they refused, she transferred me to a religious school run by nuns, where the program did not include art classes, and my mother started teaching me art during that period.

I remember when I was 4 years I made a small painting. Some of my mother's friends told me that the artwork was not good, "because the tree I painted was not green." My reaction was that this is my tree and I choose the color I see fit. My mother was impressed by my response, placed the small painting in a neat frame, and hung it in our house with the family collection of famous artists' work. An artist friend saw this drawing and gave me a very large coloring box, as a reward that came as a beautiful dream for me.

When my family directed me to join the Higher Institute of Art Education in Cairo in 1964, I said that I would never work as a teacher after graduation. Yet when I graduated, the American College's director surprised me. Asking me to develop their art program reminded me of my mother's previous criticism of the art program. At that time, I was appointed as an assistant teacher in their Higher Institute of Art Education and since that time, teaching has become my career.

THE ARTISTIC FAMILY

My mother Adalat Kamal was a professor at the Institute of Art Education. She was interested in focusing on the study and teaching of folk art. She was a pioneer in this field and worked with Kamala Davy Chateau Bay, the folk-art pioneer in India.

My father was Dr. Abdel Razzak Sidky Minister of Agriculture in Egypt, and he was also an artist and befriended many artists. He was a member of the artistic group "Publicity for Art" with Habib Georgi, who founded in 1968 the Egyptian Society for Folklore in Cairo.

When I was working at the Institute of Art Education as a teaching assistant and researcher, I met many famous art education professors, including Mahmoud Al-Bassiouni, who became the second-wave engine in the road map of art education in Egypt.

I am married to artist Mostafa El Razzaz, who shared with me the interest of art, folklore and art education teaching. We have two daughters, Dina, a graphic artist and Hala, an expert in art therapy and an assistant professor of ceramics at the Faculty of Specific Education at Cairo University.