

2 JANUARY 20 FEBRUARY 2010

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Once again, our annual meeting is renewed at the 15th round of Aswan International Sculpture Symposium. In fact, the symposium is becoming a cultural phenomenon that was first launched by the culture ministry, in cooperation with Aswan governorate in 1996.

Year after year, the experience is more deepened so that Aswan became a place of interest for the concerned artistic domains in a lot of countries worldwide specifically after the emergence of the symposium through the so called “Land Art” and the interaction between the architect and the sculptor.

Adam Henein 2010

PARTICIPANT ARTISTS

AHMED ABDEL-FATTAH EGYPT

AKRAM EL MAGDOUB EGYPT

AMIR EL LITHI EGYPT

BEATA ROSTAS HUNGARY

JOHN GOGABERISHVILI GEORGIA

MICHEL SPROGIS CANADA

NICOLAE FLEISSIG FRANCE

ROLAND MAYER GERMANY

YOSHIN OGATA JAPAN

ZHAO LI CHINA

THE WORKSHOP

HANY EL-SAYED EGYPT

MOHAMED ABBAS EGYPT

MOHAMED EL-LABBAN EGYPT

WALID FATHY EGYPT

ZEINAB SALAMA EGYPT

Ahmed Abdel Fattah (Egypt)

He is now able to exercise control over time and became more familiar with the big size of the piece of granite

Red letter

This is his second participation at the AISS, last year he was a partaker in the symposium's workshop but this year he was among the principal sculptors. "Facing granite for the second time is no more challenging like the past year", he pointed. He added that he is now able to exercise control over time and became more familiar with the big size of the piece and more confident while carving his work. For this year, he worked on a vertical piece of granite through which he repeated last year's work which was two L letters interwoven together in one piece, however, this time the two L letters are separated and were attached together to form one piece. Impressed by the ravishingly beauty of the

greenery on the banks of Aswan Nile, he decided to decorate his sculpted piece of granite with green plants. The plants will be placed on the work in a vertical way not horizontally as the plants usually grow and it will be artificial not natural. He hopes that if his work will be shown at the Open-Air Museum, it will be eye catching as the only green element in the mountain. The piece is carved in red granite because it is Aswan's most famous type of stones that enhances the beauty of the green plants decorating the work as it is close to earth colour and the work measures 2 x 1,50 metres. Some parts of the work are rough and other parts are smooth. He loves to use metals but he is not using it in the L letter.

Akram El-Magdoub (Egypt)

Once again El-Magdoub is continuing the installation he started last year at the Open-Air Museum

The Land Art

For the fourth consecutive year, architect Akram El-Magdoub resumes the idea of an installation which gathers this year works of other artists specifically miniatures; he introduces new materials not only granite but wood and glass too. He chose this location in particular providing it with utilities to become the entrance of the actual Open-Air Museum scheduled to be opened for the public soon. According to him, it is an architectural work that is designed in a way that allows benefiting from the surrounding nature. This installation is considered a linking point between mere art and the usage of the place as an Open-Air Museum. The installation will be a sort of a permanent gallery that showcases a number of selected miniatures that were produced during the past rounds of Aswan International

Sculpture Symposium (AISS). The installation will gather a group of artworks that form together one piece of art; these miniatures are very small so they cannot stand by themselves and standing side by side will enhance their aesthetic values. The planned area which is located on a high mountain and is around 50 or 60 metres will be the entrance to the Open-Air Museum. On asking him about his plans for the inauguration of the Open-Air Museum, he answered that the plan is meant to be implemented step by step not once as a whole project with a deadline; each stage has to take its time so that to be harmonious with the place and preserves its spirit. For this year, an open-air theatre, stairs and the work of installation are scheduled to be accomplished.

Amir El-Lithi (Egypt)

Beata Rostas (Hungary)

In his second participation at the AISS, the portrait is El-Leithy's new challenge

Face off

He participated in the symposium for the second consecutive year but last year he was one of the workshop's partakers. On asking him about how he found the difference between both experiences, he explained that there is no big difference because he is carving the same material which is the tough granite and the size is still big as last year.

In the past year, he was infatuated by the idea of the human body, however, this time it is the idea of the human portrait that crossed his mind. He carved a portrait that can be seen from 4 different sides. It brilliantly reflects the different facial expressions such as happiness, sorrow, surprise, shock...etc.

He created a relation between the sun rays and his portrait so when the rays move in a certain way, we feel he is happy and during the time of the sunset the granite portrait starts to lose light and look sad or grim. The artwork is placed in the landscape so when it is dark at night, it feels dead metaphorically speaking. El-Leithy carved a long piece of rose granite to suit the idea of the portrait and the surface this year is smoother than last year. The complexion of the face is glazed to reflect the impressions on the face, however, other sides of the portrait were left rough because the portrait can be for a man, a woman, a baby, a boy ...etc. One side of his abstract styled portrait depicts the eye with a ball that symbolizes the tear standing on the base of the sculpted work. The work dimensions are 3,5metresx1.20 metres. It is scheduled to be shown at the Open-Air Museum.



Bringing her own culture and mixing it with Aswan heritage leaving a piece of sculpture, was the message delivered by Rostas in the symposium

A fruit of granite

This is her first participation at AISS which she knew about through the gifted Egyptian sculptor Naguie Farid whom she met at Antalya sculpture symposium, Turkey. She pointed that the AISS is listed on top of the most important international symposiums and added that it is even the best and she always exchange information about it with other European sculptors.

In her first visit to Egypt, she was mesmerized by Aswan's nature, culture and long history with granite. She was very interested in interacting with the people of Aswan, taste their food, appreciate their culture to the extent that she has been to a Mosque in Friday to witness the Friday prayer and feel the spiritual atmosphere of the place. About her experience with the AISS, she said that she learnt new techniques in carving, interacted with a number of highly professional Egyptian and foreign sculptors. She also praised the group of assistants whom she believes are very helpful and professional.

She named her piece of sculpture "Impressions", it is a human figure in the form of a fruit with two legs, shoulders and a small head on top of it and she carved on the front of the stone a lot of people who left impressions on her during her stay in Aswan. The dimensions of the work are 2,40 x 1,50 x 1,00 metres. She used red granite

because it is a very warm and active colour and she used it in previous works. She used to carve marble as she finds it a delicate material for a sculptress but she sees granite as a tough yet lasting forever material. She also used limestone, a material she doesn't prefer while she likes to use terracotta in winter to create small pieces. She had an epitome of the work before coming from Hungary, however, on arriving to Aswan she made some changes. She doesn't mind whether the work will be shown at the Open-Air museum or in the landscape because for her it is created for people to enjoy it. Interestingly enough, she is a singer too and she believes that the relationship between singing and sculpture is very strong. She explained that there is a rhythm in both singing and sculpturing she even sings during carving the piece of granite, she has too much energy inside her so she chose sculpturing to make a conversation with the stone. On stage, she feels like a lady while during sculpturing she feels like a man dealing with a tough material so this relationship achieves balance inside her. She concentrates on the theme of the human figure but in a symbolic way. Rostas tries to reflect the human disasters in her works and also reflect the culture of her own country such as the European house that was depicted in some of her works.

John Gogaberishvili (Georgia)

Unless he was infatuated by the ravishing beauty of Aswan, his work could have been only a horse head



Unfinished story

This is his first participation ever at the AISS and he knew about it from emerging Egyptian sculptor Ahmed Qaraaly whom he saw in the USA sculpture symposium. The Georgian sculptor was impressed by the role played by the assistants in the AISS, a phenomenon he missed in the European symposiums as he used to do all the work by himself. He liked the fact that the symposium lasts for around two months which is an adequate time to contemplate and work relaxingly. The theme of his work is the head of a horse, however, he is planning to finish the rest of the horse's body next year because it is a gigantic piece of sculpture. He wishes to continue it at the Open-Air Museum which he considers as an international museum. He likes the idea of using the ancient tools in sculpturing that were used by the Ancient Egyptians. The head is 6,80 metres, it is a vertical head with hair in the front and the back. When asked about the idea behind the head of the horse, he pointed that he loves the horse because it has many levels in his body.

Going through Gogagerishvili's entire oeuvre, it is noticed that he prefers the huge blocks and has many sculptures that reach 11 and 15 metres such as the one he carved in Korea. He feels that the huge pieces of stone are more beautiful and lofty than the small pieces which he used to carve in the past but not anymore. Do you like the abstract style that has got an architectural touch? He answered that he loves the figurative style, sometimes the modern and sometimes modern with some improvisations inspired by the ancient history, "I even found at the Karnak temple that the Ancient Egyptians adopted the modern style ages ago", he pointed.

He tried to create a dialogue between the sculpture in the Pharaonic civilization which he watched at the temples and museums and the modern piece he created at the 15th round of the AISS. He also added little pieces of bronze on the head of the horse which is composed of four blocks. Generally, he likes to mix bronze with wood and sometimes bronze with stone. Back to the work, the four blocks are white granite, pink granite, black basalt and the last stone has got three colours: black, pink and grey with white spots while the base is a black basalt.

Michel Sprogis (Canada)

Infatuated by the Pharaonic civilization, he tried to prove through his artwork that Eiffel Tower was built inspired by the pyramid and obelisk

The Pharaonic Eiffel Tower



It is his first time to participate at the AISS which he knew about from the symposium curator and veteran sculptor Adam Henein 12 years ago in Paris. Then he was invited by Henein to join the symposium's rounds in 2001 and 2002, however, he was too busy then. Last July, he met sculptor Armen Agob in Italy who invited him to take part in the symposium's 15th round. As a Canadian artist, he studied fine arts in Canada then moved to Paris to settle and resume his art studies. "The Origin of the Eiffel Tower" is the name he chose for his sculpture that is based on his strong belief that the architecture of Eiffel Tower is inspired by the pyramid and the obelisk. Another example that proves his infatuation by the Pharaonic civilization is that one of his past works that he created from black granite was designed after a sarcophagus. He explained that with the beginning of civilizations man wanted to build huge buildings

especially the Ancient Egyptians who constructed monumental buildings such as temples with architectural touch. This is Sprogis's first encounter with a huge piece of granite that is composed of several parts as he usually works on one huge piece. For him, granite is a material full of density; it has to

be simply designed to reflect its beauty and glory. He is also impressed by the Ancient Egyptian abstract style in carving granite.

"The figurative statues of the ancient Egyptians are very simple in style and full of power and glory and these elements can never be reflected on any other material," he pointed.

He chose a black granite for his piece of sculpture because black is a neutral colour that absorbs light. The dimensions of the small parts in the work are very limited and are gathered in a way that allows light to pass through all his vertical work. It measures 3,35 x 1,48 metres

Nicolae Fleissig (France)

Once again Fleissig awes his audience carving a door for the bedroom he created last year

In pursuit
of Intimacy



For the second consecutive year, veteran French sculptor Nicolae Fleissig Participated at AISS. On asking him why he decided to continue the artwork he started last year, he answered that it is logic because last year the theme of his work was to furnish a space with a bed and a chair creating a secret relation between them; in the bed you sleep or lay down while on the chair you sit and when the person stands up leaving the bed and then sits on the chair he did a double action. "The distance between the bed and the chair is indicated in the moment when I can create a certain intimacy and a secret dialogue between both objects," he explained. Last year, he paved the way for this work and created a space for it at the Open-Air Museum, which he described last year as 'unprecedented'. He carved both the bed and the chair on rose granite because they are placed in the same area. He carved tiny cubes in the two blocks and colored them using the red iron oxide mixed with the Arabic gum. The bed is 2.40 x 1.80 x 1 metres and the chair is 1.30 x 80 cm x 60 cm. He carved the door to close the bedroom and so the audience can pass through this door to enter a new place. The door has also got colored cubes; he polished strongly one side of the door to look like a mirror which is placed in the direction of the room. The door moves around itself, a difficult technique that he managed to accomplish brilliantly through centering the door on two axes. He created the door from rose granite while the mirror installed inside it is made of black granite, the door measures 2,50x4metresx60 or 80cm. His granite installation is composed of several parts such as the base, two pillars, the door as well as two sofas or pinches placed outside the bedroom so that visitors can sit down whether before entering the room or after getting out of it. According to him, the installation creates an intimate relationship between the bed, the chair, the mirror in the door and between the audience. Fleissig desired to create his own unique space at the Open-Air Museum through painting parts of the stones located in the area surrounding his installation in sacre blue, "It is more interesting for the sculptor to create a space not only to carve a statue and leave it," he ended.

Roland Mayer (Germany)

It is through Mayer's artwork, that the concept of Globalization is deprived of its complicated economic and political aspects to become a mere state of art



A global touch

It is his first participation in the 15th AISS and he knew about it from sculptor Ahmed Qaraaly whom he met in the USA. Mayer, who participated in 45 international symposiums, points that what really distinguished the AISS from other symposiums worldwide is the assistant who helps the sculptor because he has been doing this for a very long time and very professionally so he mastered his work. For eight years, he has been preoccupied by the figurative sculptures as he used to work as an assistant to a veteran sculptor in churches, however, after many years of work, he became more interested in abstract and geometric forms. He disclosed that he always has an idea behind the shape and he doesn't only gather a number of cubes, triangles and circles over each other.

"I prefer the gigantic pieces of sculpture because I love to show them in the landscape so I want the audience to notice my work." Most of Mayer's sculpted works whether stainless steel, granite or marble can be seen from all sides because they don't have a front or back.

In the same work, he prefers to use one material only because each type of stone has its own character so he even uses one colour of stone in the work not many colours as some sculptors do.

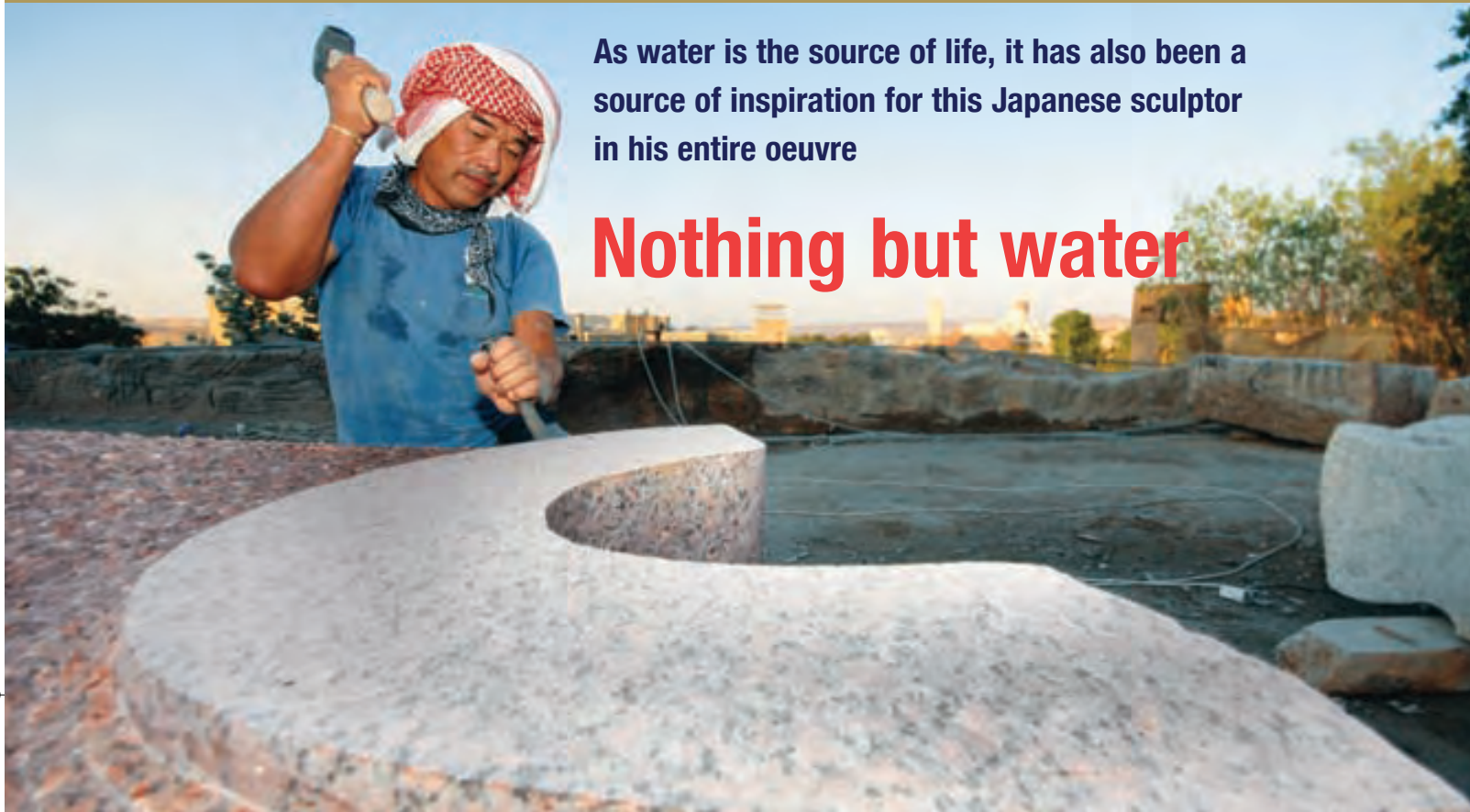
He managed brilliantly to convey the theme of Globalization through his piece. It is a geometric work, a reduced form with a simple design away from any complications. He carved two blocks, however, they look as if they are many pieces. It is 5 x 1,20 x 1,20metres. He used red granite which he described as a nice stone that is hard to carve because it is tough and requires long time to finish while dealing with steel or marble is easier and faster in carving. Back to his thrilling theme of "Globalization", he pointed that he never used this theme before but his visit to Aswan inspired him by this idea that turned the whole world into a small village. He wishes that his piece of sculpture that may be shown at the Open-Air Museum will provoke the audience to rethink about the concept of "Globalization" with its positive and negative aspects.

Yoshin Ogata (Japan)

Zhao Li (China)

As water is the source of life, it has also been a source of inspiration for this Japanese sculptor in his entire oeuvre

Nothing but water



Li's flying carpet brilliantly symbolizes the freedom of man

Flying carpet



In 1969, he held his first sculpture exhibition in Japan and from 1971 to 1975, he studied sculpture at the National Fine Art Academy in Milan, Florence, Rome and Carrara, Italy. He knew about the AISS when he met sculptor Armen Agob in Italy and Nagueie Farid in Albania where he was invited to participate in the 15th round of the symposium.

It was not before 1976 when he paid a short visit to Egypt and the second time was 14 years ago where he enjoyed a Nile cruise from Cairo to Aswan. In this round, he continued the theme of the drop of water which is considered a recurrent theme in most of his sculptures.

He is very much influenced by this theme because he has several experiences with water since he was a little child. As a three years old, the fire

broke into the restaurant of the family and almost destroyed it and he saw people putting off the fire with water; in this very special moment he felt that water is his saviour. He also used to accompany fishermen when he was just six years.

Back to the theme of his piece, he was under the magic spell of the River Nile and the theme of water is represented by the Nile which is the source of life and the core of the Ancient Egyptian civilization.

He tried in his work to show the quality of water in the solid material of the granite. His dark red granite is carved in a vertical shape where in the middle there is a circle of water, it is 3 x 1,50 metres while the base is 2,20 metres. It is composed of two parts that are stuck together with a hole in the middle that gives the impression to the audience that a drop of water falls out of it.

Watching Li with her tiny figure dressing in white and standing over her piece of granite bare footed using an electronic machine while water is flowing over the stone was very inspiring. She knew about the AISS from Egyptian sculptor Vivian El-Batanouny when she met her in Australia sculpture symposium. She also pointed that it is a highly-talked about symposium among international sculptors. She was thrilled to come to Aswan, the land of granite, a material she prefers than marble and stainless steel that are more spread in Europe while most of her sculpted works in China are carved from the Chinese black granite. Li has been talking with her husband, who is also a sculptor, about Egypt and its great civilization. Coming to Aswan as a partaker in the AISS was a dream came true. Going through the catalogue that contains her entire oeuvre, it is noticed that she has a big interest in using stainless steel inside the heart

of granite to reflect the sense of the mirror. She also carves artworks that are composed of two separated pieces of stone placed in front of each other to create a dialogue between them. She plays on the idea of contrasts between the weak and strong, black and white, a man and a woman. She tries to enhance this idea of contrasts through smoothing parts of the stone and leaving other parts rough. She was inspired by the ravishing landscape of Aswan and specifically the Open-Air Museum to the extent that she changed her rose piece of granite and replaced it with a black one. She created a horizontal flying carpet and carved many small stones from black granite too to be placed around the carpet. The flying carpet stands for the freedom of man to fly anywhere. Finally, she confirmed the crucial role played by the assistant whom she believes is very professional. "Now I realized why sculptors in Europe consider AISS the best," she concluded.



Hany El-Sayed (Egypt)



He loves the simplicity of
the form and the beauty of
the granite

Carving Innocence

He is another partaker at the workshop that was resumed last year after three years of absence. He was nominated to participate in the symposium's 15th round through artist Ahmed El-Setouhy, who is a committee member. He participated in Emirates Heights Symposium in the North Coast, Egypt and carved a piece of Egyptian marble while in Madinty Sculpture Symposium he used carrara marble and both artworks measure 1,50 x 1,20 metres x 70cm approximately. He took part also in a workshop titled "Sculpture with No Walls" that lasted for three weeks at Bibliotheca Alexandrina where he created an iron sculpture and at Alexandria International Sculpture Symposium. For Aswan symposium, he carved a portrait of a little girl in an abstract style, it is 2x1,50x1,50 meters and the base measures 1,20 x 1,20 x 1 metres. He used red granite which he described as a tough material that needs the sculptor to be cautious in dealing with. "With aluminum and other materials, I love simplicity of the form that is devoid of any details, I feel that the material imposes

its own character. I shaped iron in geometrical forms but in granite I love the beauty of the piece in the sense that there is a balance between the base and the shape, dimensions are balanced, however, I prefer the piece to remain ambiguous. El-Sayed has a good background in dealing with iron, steel, aluminum and basalt. He gained more experience at the workshop due to his interaction with a bevy of foreign and Egyptian sculptors which resulted in his coping with the state-of-the-art methods in sculpturing granite such as cutting the stone using fire. He also gained experience from the assistant who used to help him finding solutions when he faces problems concerning carving specific parts of the stone. He pointed that the AISS has produced a young generation of sculptors so he wished for the workshop to continue forever. He expressed his wish to have his work displayed at the Open-Air Museum but if not he likes it be shown at any of Egypt's various governorates such as Aswan, Cairo or Alexandria.

The Workshop

Mohamed Abbas (Egypt)



He believes that if the sculptor wants to highlight his work he should use granite as its beauty outweighs his toughness

Facing the truth

How did you participate in the symposium's workshop? I heard that the selection of sculptors is through nomination so I submitted my resume as well as epitomes and pictures of my works. Then the symposium's committee contacted him to join the AISS. He is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Helwan University. He took part in three symposiums before including Mahmoud Mukhtar Sculpture Forum where he carved a small piece of limestone and Madinty Sculpture Symposium. This is his first encounter with granite as a tough material and the big size of stone as he is used to work only on limestone, polyester and marble. The noble materials such as marble, bronze and granite are so dear to him and he believes that if the sculptor wants to highlight his work he should use granite as its beauty outweighs his toughness.

In this year's work, he tried to present a relationship between two parts in a very simple way through an abstract geometric shape, it is 1,15 x 1,50 metres x 64cm. It is composed of two pieces fixed together forming a circle that gives a continuous sense of movement. Inside each piece there is a space that allows the work to respire and also provokes the audience to think of the idea behind the work. Abbas gained more experience at the workshop due to his interaction with a galaxy of foreign and Egyptian sculptors who represent various cultures, styles and techniques. As an academic, he benefited a lot from this rich experience that will help him to teach his students at the sculpture department in the faculty a new piece of information.

The Workshop

Mohamed El-Labban (Egypt)

Walid Fathi (Egypt)

He always creates a dialogue with the block of granite and respects its strong character



The beauty of contrasts

He is a very good example of persistence because he has been trying for ten consecutive years to participate at the AISS and he finally succeeded to join this round. In 2005, He received the award of sculpture in the 17th Youth Salon for his granite and iron piece that played on balance and the penetration of light into the stone. During the period of the symposium that lasted for a month and a half, he enjoyed the nice atmosphere of friendship and competition among the budding sculptors and he also benefited a lot from the group of veteran sculptors who updated him about the new techniques of carving granite and the state-of-the-art tools and machines used nowadays in this medium of art. His first encounter with the granite was when he was in the 3rd secondary school but he masters dealing with limestone. Before starting his work, he wanted to create a dialogue with the block of granite as he realized that it is a tough and wise

stone that has got a very strong character. He feels that his work is lofty; it is a geometric shape where he created a contrast in the body through polishing some parts leaving it very smooth including the top and leaving other parts very rough as light contains the piece of granite instead of penetrating it. This contrast added beauty to the piece. He carved a rose granite, it is 2,40 x 2,10 metres x 30cm. I am very content with my piece as it was planned to be laying but afterwards I changed my mind and placed it in a standing position. He was so eager to point that he was visually intoxicated by the God carved pieces on the banks of Aswan Nile, "The creation of God in nature is much more beautiful than any man made creation," he added. He also observed through his tour in the Pharaonic temples such as Wadi Al-Melouk and Karnak that the Ancient Egyptians were the first to use the abstract style in sculpture.

He pointed that it is a very tempting experience for any emerging sculptor to participate at the AISS



The stone bird

It is his first participation in this big annual event as he is a 2006 graduate at the Faculty of Fine Arts. He submitted his CV and photos of his past works and filled the application at the CDF then the committee of the symposium contacted him to be among the other four sculptors at the workshop.

His past experience with sculpturing granite and basalt miniatures was shown in the solo exhibition he held at Cairo Atelier in 2007. He pointed that it is a very tempting experience for any emerging sculptor to participate at the AISS and carve granite, a material known for its toughness. He expressed his happiness to be part of this big gathering of tycoon granite sculptors such as Fleissig, Mayer and Ogata who are really professionals and took part in around 50 international symposiums. He also confirmed that the assistant plays a vital role in allowing the artwork to see daylight. The theme of the symposium's work has been done before on basalt, however, when he did an epitome of the work to implement on granite

he did many changes. It is an ultra modern form depicting a flying bird, it is 1 x 1 x 1,50 metres. He used grey granite to highlight a very specific moment when the bird is taking off from earth like the aircraft. Most of his previous works reflect this sense of taking off or readiness to move and after visiting Aswan he became infatuated by the scene of the sailing boat in the Nile and expressed his desire to carve a piece of stone that depict this scene. He was impressed by Aswan and was enchanted by its mesmerizing landscape and awesome of its temples and Pharaonic monuments to the extent that he wished to stay in this beautiful city forever. On asking him if he visited the Open-Air Museum, he answered, "Yes of course and for me it stands for eternity; all the masterpieces of granite currently on show at the museum guarantee eternity to all sculptors who created it". I would love to have my piece displayed inside the water, for instance, on an island in the middle of the Nile.

Zeinab Salama (Egypt)

For her, dealing with the tough material of granite is very challenging

Love at first sight

She is graduated in 2008 at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Alexandria University. She was nominated by her professor at the faculty veteran sculptor Said Badr to participate at the AISS. Her specialization in the faculty since the second year was sculpturing stone and since then she realized it is the stone to carve. She believes that sculpturing now is much easier than before as a result of using the state-of-the-art tools and machines that introduced new designs and concepts in sculpture such as the outer and inner vacancies inside the stone. She carved an abstract piece of granite that is about creating a space inside the block. She used a red piece of granite that measures 1,80x1,50x1,40metres.

For her, dealing with the tough material of granite is very challenging and to achieve good results with it makes her feel very satisfied. She has a previous experience with granite but the piece was small in size and she realized in the symposium that carving granite doesn't only require muscular strength but a deep philosophy and wide imagination. Impressed by the Open-Air Museum, she expressed that it connects all generations, "Every year there are new works added to the museum to perpetuate the names of several granite icons and I will be so honoured to have my piece displayed side by side with the works of those veteran sculptors."


The Workshop





A visit to the Open-Air Museum





Have you ever been to the Open-Air Museum? Did you have the chance to see this big gathering of granite sculptures on display in one place? These are repeated questions by everybody involved in the Aswan International Sculpture Symposium whether artists, assistants even the people of Aswan. The museum is located over a hill in the way to the Shallal road overlooking the old lake, which exists between Aswan reservoir and the High Dam in the south-east of Aswan. In your way to this legendary place, which is extended to 33 acres, the first thing you will see is a banner saying,

"to the sculpture symposium museum". Once you enter the place, you will be awed by the number of contemporary abstract granite sculptures that are scattered everywhere creating a ravishing view with the mesmerizing landscape of Aswan in the background. The visually intoxicating panorama that emerges from the heart of the mountain features granite statues with different themes produced by a plethora of foreign and Egyptian artists during the past 14 rounds of the symposium. More than 150 artworks stand side by side with the naturally carved pieces of granite in the mountain.

It was not before 1997 that the land was allocated for the museum after obtaining the approval of Aswan governorate. Every year, there is a new touch that is being added to the place such as paving new spaces as showrooms and re-coordinating the show places in an artistic manner and dealing with the tough nature of the mountain according to the vision of the symposium founder and curator sculptor Adam Henein and member of its supreme committee artist Salah Maraay.

At the entrance of the museum, you will notice a group of vertical and monumental statues sculpted in geometric forms that highlight the power of granite and its colors: rose, red, black and grey. This unique experience was enriched when the symposium introduced architects and each one presented a work that is considered an installation where the vision of the artist was merged with nature in the so-called "The Land Art".

Today, this interaction is more and more realized through the project of artist and architect Akram El-Magdoub; he chose to complete the missing elements in the museum such as utilities that can make it ready to welcome visitors and tourists. He made a very good use of the area at the entrance of the museum creating a gallery that showcases miniature granite sculptures. He is also working on constructing stone stairs that lead to an open-air theatre. It is the actual beginning of having a complete sculpture museum.

May Selim

