

AUCTODAY



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

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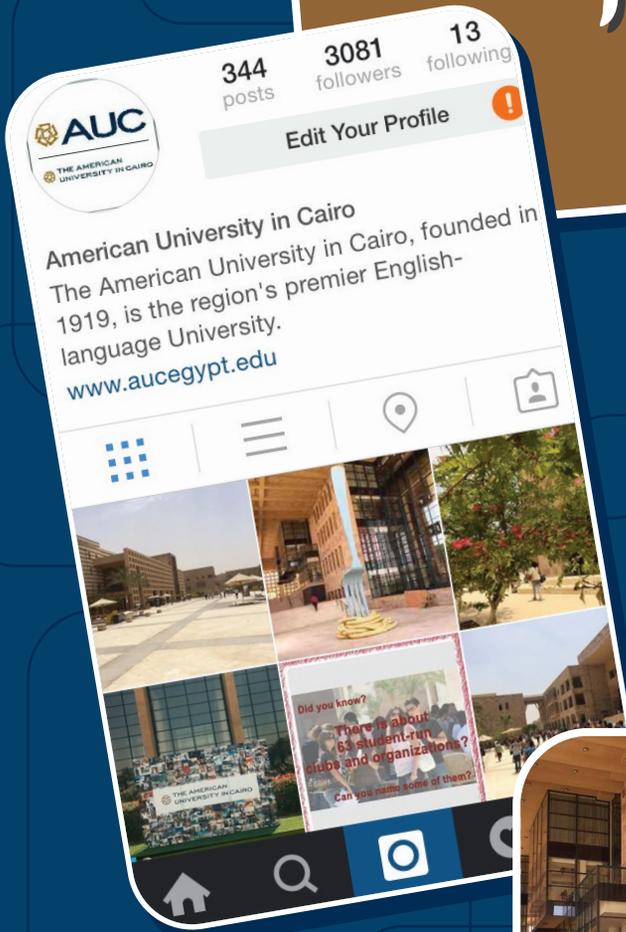
The Science of Stardom

From engineering to the arts,
Asser Yassin '04 follows his
passion for acting, which
began at AUC

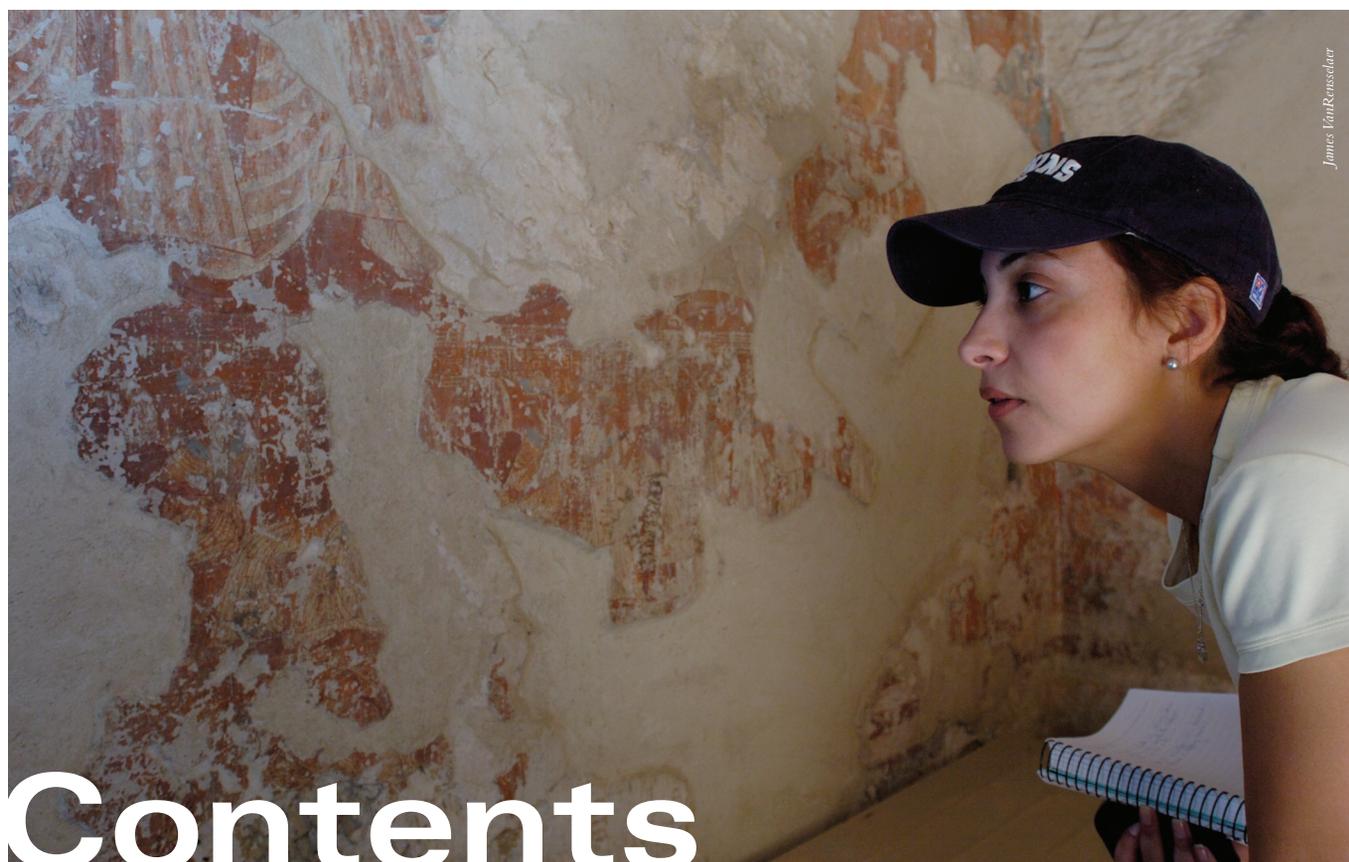
In the Service of the Script • Beyond the Frame • Egyptian Like Me



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Editor's Notes

Picture society without arts and culture — without cinema, theatre, museums, libraries, galleries, music, folklore, literature, poetry, arts and crafts, fashion and journalism. Life would become barren and dull, wouldn't it? Arts and culture touch almost every aspect of our lives. They not only nourish our creative and humanistic sides, but also help us identify who we are.

In this issue, we tackle various aspects of arts and culture. Our cover story, "The Science of Stardom," (page 8) spotlights award-winning Egyptian actor Asser Yassin '04, who, as a mechanical engineering student at AUC, discovered his love for acting and pursued it as a professional career. Another mechanical engineering student and national pianist, AbdelRahman Bahieldin, talks about his love for science and music in "Musically Engineered" (page 34) and how he blends the two disciplines through his double major.

"Egyptian Like Me" (page 28) draws interesting correlations between life in Egypt today and the life of our ancient Egyptian ancestors. You might be surprised to find out that some of the everyday practices and colloquial phrases used in modern-day Egypt date back thousands of years. In "Bringing Ancient Egypt to the Digital World" (page 16), Yasmin El Shazly '98 talks about the invigorating changes she is making in Egyptian museums.

Of course, an issue on arts and culture would not be complete without highlighting theatre (Yes, we use "theatre" to refer to the art form and "theater" for the building or venue). "In the Service of the Script" (page 20) presents an argument by Mark Mineart, who has been teaching at AUC for the past four years, that live theatre is actually a form of public service, not art, and unless performers see it this way, it is bound to die. In "Creative Community Catalyst" (page 27), Nada Sabet '05 demonstrates the developmental and social role theatre can play and how the stage can be anything from the street or metro to a community village. "Drawing the Curtain on Myths and Misconceptions" (page 32) brings together theatre alumni from different parts of the world to dispel some of the common mistaken beliefs about the discipline.

Looking "Beyond the Frame" (page 12), Ronnie Close, assistant professor of journalism and mass communication, reflects on the days when photos were processed in a dark room, how digital technology has accelerated the convergence of film and photography, and how images shape our understanding of the world.

"Identity Talks" (page 40), a Q&A with Reem Bassiouney, associate professor of applied linguistics, shows how the language used in Egyptian songs, films, talks shows, newspapers and novels can say a lot about national identity and people's perceptions of who a real Egyptian is. "Hot Off the Press" (page 19) brings to you five AUC Press books that relate to arts and culture.

Students' creative talent is showcased in "AUC Art Scene" (page 38), a display of installations, paintings, costumes and other forms of artwork by graphic design and visual arts majors. And as you flip through the magazine, you'll see samples of some of the unique collections at AUC's Rare Books and Special Collections Library, including a hand-colored photo of the late Egyptian actress Faten Hamama.

We hope you enjoy the issue.



Dalia Al Nimr

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Sherif Sedky Appointed New AUC Provost

Sherif Sedky, professor of physics who has been on leave from AUC to serve as the academic president of Zewail City of Science and Technology, is returning to the University to serve as its provost. Sedky succeeds Provost Mahmoud El-Gamal '83, '85, who is leaving AUC to return to his research at Rice University.

“Sherif Sedky is well-known to the AUC community through his previous work in the physics department, at the Yousef Jameel Science and Technology Research Center, and as associate dean of graduate studies and research at the School of Sciences and Engineering,” said AUC President Lisa Anderson. “Not only is he a skilled and dedicated administrator, he is also an accomplished scholar and scientist, and is familiar with the University’s operations. This knowledge, coupled with his talent, commitment and expertise, will be an asset for us as he assumes his new role as provost.”

Sedky, who served as director of AUC’s Yousef Jameel Science and Technology Research Center, is the recipient of the Excellence in Research and Creative Endeavors Award

from AUC in 2007; the prestigious Egyptian National Award in Advanced Technological Sciences in 2002, offered by the Academy of National Research; as well as the graduate studies award from Cairo University in 1996. Sedky’s biography is listed in *Marquis Who’s Who*.

“I’m delighted to be back at AUC and hope to work closely with students, faculty and staff to maintain the University as a center of excellence and distinction in Egypt, the region and worldwide,” said Sedky. “We all need to work together in a collaborative spirit to effectively advance this mission, and be innovative and forward-looking as we tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.”



AUC Only College Outside North America in *Princeton Review’s Green Guide*

AUC is the only higher education institution outside of North America that has been named to *The Princeton Review’s Guide to 353*

Green Colleges: 2015 Edition, which highlights the “most environmentally responsible ‘green’ colleges.” There are 353 colleges listed: 347 are in the United States, five in Canada and AUC is the only one in Egypt.

Universities listed in the guide have demonstrated, according to *The Princeton Review*, the “most exceptional commitments to sustainability based on their academic offerings and career preparation for students, campus policies, initiatives and activities.” For AUC, the “green facts” listed in the guide include having a free campus shuttle; carpool program, with reduced parking fees for car poolers; sustainability officer; formal sustainability committee; public

greenhouse gas inventory plan; 71 percent of the food budget spent on local or organic food; and a 75 percent waste diversion rate.

“In less than four years, we’ve gone from having no institutional sustainability capacity to speak of, to being listed in the prestigious *Princeton Review’s* green colleges guide. That pretty much speaks for itself,” said Sustainability Director Marc Rauch.

In addition, for the second year in a row, AUC has been ranked in the top third worldwide in the University of Indonesia’s GreenMetric World University Ranking. AUC is also the first higher education institution in the Middle East and North Africa to calculate its own carbon footprint.



Nadia Younes Memorial Lecture Debates UN Relevance Today

“In terms of UN relevance, not a single person isn’t positively affected by anything the UN does in everyday life. ... If we closed it down today, we would have to reinvent it tomorrow,” said Michael Møller, UN under-secretary-general at the 10th anniversary of the Nadia Younes Memorial Lecture series at AUC.

The lecture, which also coincided with the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, was followed by a panel discussion on the United Nations’ relevance in today’s world, featuring Ahmad Fawzi, interim director of the United Nations Information Service in Geneva; Ibrahim Awad, professor of practice and director of AUC’s Center for Migration and Refugee Studies; and Hisham Wahby ’89, assistant professor of political science at the British University in Egypt. To view the lecture and debate, visit www.youtube.com/auc.

The Nadia Younes Memorial Lecture invites renowned international figures in politics, international relations and humanitarian affairs to speak at AUC. The series is part of the Nadia Younes Memorial Fund, established in memory of Nadia Younes, the UN administrator who was tragically killed in the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003.

Anderson Receives Honorary Doctorate from American University of Paris, Elected to American Academy of Arts & Sciences



AUC President Lisa Anderson has recently received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the American University of Paris (AUP) during its 2015 commencement. Anderson was among three honorary degree recipients from the fields of arts and education.

Anderson was awarded for effectively leading AUC during the 2011 revolution and for the University continuing “to serve as a model of commitment to student learning through the tumultuous years that followed,” as Celeste M. Schenck, AUP president, noted during her commencement speech.

“You, Lisa Anderson, barely three weeks into your tenure as president of The American University in Cairo, faced the challenge of leading the University during the biggest

popular uprising in Egypt in nearly a century,” Schenck declared. “Within days of the departure of the country’s president, AUC resumed classes — the only educational establishment to operate in Egypt for nearly six weeks. ... We honor you, Lisa Anderson, for inviting each of the presidential candidates to campus to speak, and for fostering in your students their own political voices, when they used those voices to hold a strike at the University in 2012. You worked with moderate students to establish dialogue with the protesters and to resolve your differences without the intervention of the police. As a result of your leadership, your expertise as a political scientist, and your determination to make the University into a space of democratic dialogue and debate, The American University in Cairo responded to the revolution and its aftermath with powerful teaching, to chaos with an orderly return to daily life and to challenge with compassion.”

Anderson has also been elected among the 2015 members of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, one of the most esteemed honorary societies in the United States and a leading center for independent policy research. Members of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences include Nobel laureates; Pulitzer Prize winners; MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowship recipients; Grammy, Emmy, Oscar and Tony awardees; as well as some of the world’s most accomplished leaders from academia, business, public affairs, the humanities and the arts.

Faculty Merit Awards for Excellence in Research, Service and Teaching

Excellence in Research and Creative Endeavors Award



Tamer Shoeib, associate professor and chair of the chemistry department, researches personalized cancer treatment as an alternative to one-size-fits-all chemotherapy



Nageh Allam, assistant professor of physics, researches the conversion of solar energy to electricity or clean renewable fuels using nanotechnology

Excellence in Academic Service Award



Iman Soliman, executive director of the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA), helped in moving CASA to AUC Tahrir Square in 2010 and effectively managed the program during the 2011 revolution



George Marquis, senior instructor of rhetoric and composition and associate dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, chaired and served on numerous committees at the school and University levels

Excellence in Teaching Award



Michael Reimer, associate professor of history, created new courses and redesigned existing ones to enrich the student experience



Pandeli Glavanis, professor of practice and director of Academic Community Engagement, adopted new approaches and incorporated technology effectively in his classes

Shawki Appointed Secretary-General of Presidential Specialized Councils

Tarek Shawki, dean of AUC's School of Sciences and Engineering, has been appointed secretary-general of all specialized councils affiliated to the Egyptian presidency. Shawki will have ministerial authority in the councils' financial and administrative affairs, as well as in staff appointments to the general secretariat and its subsidiaries.



"Having a general secretariat means that the councils will move from an administrative to a supervisory role, and will also have the authority to execute proposed projects. The councils will now be independent and will have the ability to communicate directly with state institutions," explained Shawki, who was chosen last year as head of the newly formed Specialized Council for Education and Scientific Research, also affiliated to the presidency.

Among the initiatives presented by Egypt's specialized councils are policy planning for children without shelter, renewing the religious discourse, unifying efforts to develop the most underprivileged villages, setting a strategy for education and scientific research, training in information and communication technology for 10,000 teachers, and open access to international scientific content, in addition to reviewing certain laws like the investment law.

AUC President Lisa Anderson highlighted the importance of Shawki's new position for AUC and Egypt at large. "We are very pleased that Dean Tarek Shawki was appointed to such a critical role in service to Egypt and its advancement," she said. "At AUC, we are particularly proud to see distinguished faculty and academic leaders like Dean Shawki who bring their expertise and knowledge to serve not just our students, but also the greater community and the country as a whole."

Distinguished Alumni Recognized for Exceptional Career Achievements

Distinguished alumni who excelled in their professional fields were recognized at the Alumni Awards Ceremony, which was held at AUC New Cairo. AUC alumnus Ahmed Showman was the Master of Ceremonies, and El Masrieen band, as well as Fahd El Gammal '07, provided live entertainment. The event also brought together the Classes of '88, '89 and '90, as well as the Classes of '78, '79 and '80, for their 25th and 35th reunion.



Distinguished Alumni Award



Ambassador Walid Abdelnasser '83, '85, director, Regional Bureau for Arab Countries, World Intellectual Property Organization; Noha Baker '87, '91, assistant to the minister, in charge of economic cooperation with Canada and the Americas, Ministry of International Cooperation; Randa Abdou '88, CEO and chief strategist, Creative Lab Group

Distinguished Alumni Faculty Service Award



Amal Esawi '89, '90, mechanical engineering professor and associate dean of graduate studies and research, School of Sciences and Engineering, AUC

Distinguished Young Alumni Award



Mohamed Rafea '03, '11, co-founder, managing partner and CEO, Bey2ollak.com

Center for Arabic Study Abroad Program Back at AUC

The Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA), the world's premier immersion study-abroad Arabic program that is now based at Harvard University, is returning to AUC in the next academic year, after a temporary, two-year relocation to Jordan due to security concerns. This not only marks the return of a top program that has been part of AUC for nearly 50 years, but is also a positive sign in the return of international students to AUC.

"AUC is an ideal home for CASA," said Nevenka Korica, CASA director at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, which is currently the U.S. host institution for CASA, after being hosted at the University of Texas at Austin for the past eight years. "It is the institution with the longest tradition of teaching Arabic as a

foreign language in the region and is the only institution in the world that has been offering a high-quality master's program in teaching Arabic as a foreign language for decades."

Established in 1967 to offer intensive, advanced Arabic-language training to American scholars, CASA has successfully trained more than 1,400 students and professors specializing in various areas of Middle Eastern studies. "The CASA program at AUC has become the stamp of excellence on the CV of any Arabist or Middle East studies scholar, opening the doors for its alumni to work in institutions of higher education, government posts, business, journalism and NGOs," said Iman Soliman, CASA executive director at AUC.

In Memory of Professor George T. Scanlon



Scanlon among his students and colleagues during the inauguration of the Nadia N. Mostafa Lecture Room in the Rare Books and Special Collections Library in 2010

Professor Emeritus George T. Scanlon, who died in 2014, was fundamental in establishing the University's program and curriculum in Oriental, Arabic and Islamic studies, especially within his field of Islamic art and architecture. Under his guidance, numerous generations of students have graduated and pursued successful careers in various corners of the globe.

"When you think about Islamic archaeology and archaeology in Cairo, you think of George Scanlon," noted Gregory Williams (MA '13), an archaeologist and one of Scanlon's former students.

Commemorating Scanlon's work in the field of Islamic art and architecture, his former students are hoping to establish the George T. Scanlon Graduate Student Award in Arab and Islamic Civilizations, a merit-based award to recognize a distinguished master's thesis produced by a student in the Department of Arab and Islamic Civilizations each academic year.

Scanlon's 50-year teaching career at AUC has made an immense impact on students, scholars, colleagues and researchers. He is remembered by his students as "opinionated, a wonderful teacher and a great scholar who was incredibly generous and genuinely

interested in his students," said Iman R. Abdulfattah (MA '04), a PhD candidate at the University of Bonn and an Islamic art historian at the Ministry of Antiquities.

A prominent American art historian, Scanlon was honored by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities (Ministry of Antiquities today) in 2010 for his excavation work in Nubia and Fustat, and his publications related to these projects. Scanlon is the first non-Egyptian, medieval archaeologist to receive such recognition. In 2008, Scanlon donated his personal papers, correspondences and the diaries that he had kept over the years to AUC's Rare Books and Special Collections Library.

To learn more about how to contribute to the memorial prize in Scanlon's honor, email givingthanks@aucegypt.edu or call 20.2.2615.2481.



Islam Yassin '05

THE SCIENCE OF STARDOM

From engineering to the arts, Asser Yassin '04 follows his passion for acting, which began at AUC

By Dalia Al Nimr

For Asser Yassin '04, the decision to major in mechanical engineering made perfect sense. He got high scores in mechanics, math and science; was able to declare engineering upon admission to AUC; and his parents are both engineers.

“Engineering for me was a way of thinking, a way of life,” he said. “I loved mechanical engineering, in particular, and was interested in industrial and design studies.”

Little did he know that a few years down the line, serendipity would change his destiny forever.

“They thought I was insane because to them, I was taking a huge risk and leaving behind a promising career in engineering. To me, I was pursuing my newly found dream.”



“It all started at AUC,” Yassin recalled. “During my sophomore year, I attended theatre productions at the University, performed by some of the most brilliant students I’ve seen, but never thought of participating. Until one day, a friend of mine asked me to audition for an Arabic play to replace a student actor who left. I still remember the name of the play: *Ya Salam Sallim, El Heita Bititkallim* (*Well, What Do You Know? The Wall is Speaking*). I learned my lines well, had to improvise sometimes and got into the act fairly quickly. It was an amazing and truly life-changing experience for me. The energy I got from the audience was so stimulating and refreshing I decided to take a theatre course and participate in more productions. One year before graduation, my mind was set: I was going to become an actor. I was addicted.”

After graduation, Yassin worked as a teaching assistant at the University to be able to participate in more and more plays. As he began to seriously pursue an acting career, he was faced with criticism from friends and family. “They thought I was insane because to them, I was taking a huge risk and leaving behind a promising career in engineering,” he said. “To me, I was pursuing my newly found dream. My parents and my brother Islam, who is actually an engineer, supported me all the way, and I owe it all to them.”

The road was not easy for Yassin. He began as an extra, or background actor, then played supporting roles in *Yacoubian Building*, *Haleem*, *Ala Ganb Yasta* (*Pull Up, Driver*) and *Zay El Naharda* (*Like Today*). He gradually rose to become an Egyptian star with leading roles in films such as *Farsh wi Ghata* (*Rags and Tatters*) (2013) and *Al Waad* (*The Promise*) (2008). Yassin won the Best Actor award at the 2010 Carthage Film Festival for his role in *Rasayel El Bahr* (*Messages from the Sea*), and he received the same award at the 2015 Tétouan International Mediterranean Film Festival for his role in *Aswar al-Qamar* (*Walls of the Moon*), starring with Egyptian actress Mona Zaki. He also received an award at the 2010 Alexandria Film Festival for Mediterranean Countries. “As long as you believe in what you’re doing, you’ll get there,” affirmed Yassin. “There are still many things I want to accomplish, and I’m happy I’ve taken this path.”

At AUC, Yassin’s experience was multifaceted; it was not just about theatre. He was head of the Student Judicial Board, a member of the rowing and tae kwon do sports teams, an organizing committee member in the Model United Nations and Model Arab League, as well as a talk show zoom operator. This is in addition to his study of engineering, which had him and his classmates spending long days, and nights, at the lab.

“I learned a lot from my study of the sciences and continue to use what I’ve learned to this day,” said Yassin. “Planning, setting strategies, examining cost-efficiency — These are all valuable lessons that come in handy when you’re working in filmmaking and production. Also, the digital logic method that I’ve learned as an engineering student, where you use a weighted average to select a certain option, is very useful for me in choosing my films. As an AUC student, it doesn’t matter what you major in because your learning experiences go far beyond your major.”

And this is the advice Yassin gives to current students. “Use your time at AUC to discover yourself. It’s not all about the GPA,” he said. “Think of your college years as the foundation period, for you’ll never regain those years again. Don’t always go by the book and lose sight of the incredible opportunities you have. This is the beauty of a liberal arts education, where a course in philosophy will help you think wisely about what you want to do in life, and a course in Arabic literature will make you appreciate the beauty of poetry and drama, and extracurricular activities will let you push yourself beyond your limits. In the end, everything is laid out for you, but you have to work hard — and have faith — to make it happen.” □



Starring in Rasayel El Bahr (Messages from the Sea), for which Yassin won the Best Actor award at the 2010 Carthage Film Festival

“As an AUC student, it doesn’t matter what you major in because your learning experiences go far beyond your major.”

Starring in El Gezira (The Island) (2007)



A close-up, low-key photograph of a man's face, focusing on his eye and the texture of his skin. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and highlights that emphasize the contours of his face. The background is dark and out of focus.

BEYOND THE FRAME



**The convergence of film
and photography has
become inevitable in
today's digital age**

By Tessa Litecky

When Ronnie Close, assistant professor of journalism and mass communication, began photography in his youth, he recalls the sense of uncertainty, and trust, that went into every photograph he took.

“You couldn’t visualize or previsualize,” recalled Close. “So you took these images, but you couldn’t see what they looked like. You had to believe in them.”

Unlike the instant gratification of today's digital photography, Close's initial experience with image making depended on the time and dedication required of the tactile art form, but he also relished in the intimacy of slowly bringing an image to life. "You have that amazing moment when you print a photograph," he explained. "You

and photography have retained certain qualities unique to each medium. "Photographs," Close observed, "tend to have a kind of frozen stasis quality to them. A still image is static and perhaps lifeless, but on the other side, memorializes, or fixes, history."

On the other hand, Close pointed out that in film, "that movement tends

fictional film he created for his PhD thesis in his native Ireland. He interviewed participants in the 1981 Irish hunger strike, a protest by Irish Republican prisoners against the involvement of the British government in Irish politics. Listening to these men recall their highly emotional and formative experiences sparked an



watch this image, within the red light of the dark room, emerge mysteriously on the white paper. I think that's an amazing moment for anyone — a kind of physical relationship to image production that, in a lot of ways, we've probably lost to a certain degree. So I began with that sort of simple fascination to photograph, document and look at the world around me."

While many art photographers today continue to use the predigital processes that involve the artist's hand to a greater degree, Close pointed out that digital technology has accelerated the convergence of film and photography. "They have different histories and qualities, but there have been points where they have connected, where interests were common," he said.

Now, whether producing a film or taking a photograph, light is translated directly onto a digital chip that can be converted into either medium. "On a technological level, it is the same process; we're just capturing light," explained Close.

However, he acknowledged that while the processes are identical, film

to give us a sense of life or of time evolving or happening. We're primed to be receptive to movement, so a moving image will always pull our attention."

As Close developed his artistic style, he found film to be the more compelling of the two mediums to achieve his artistic goals. "The culture of film allows you, through editing, to do so much more and to affect and hold people much more than photography," said Close. "My interest in film lies in the ability to montage, the ability to include other elements within the image process."

Close explored the possibilities inherent in the medium with a short

interest in Close that led him to investigate how we create memories. In his film, *Night-Time Room*, Close transcribed the interviews with the men into a film script that was performed by an actor. By presenting the interviews in the form of a fictional film, Close points directly to the fickle nature of memory and how people construct their own unique narrative of events — each with his or her own reality of the past.

Close's most recent projects have employed film as a medium to discuss politics, society, culture and soccer. Close utilizes his ability to montage with film and incorporates text in the

"I don't make any assumptions that what I produce brings us any closer to some kind of truth or revelation of authenticity."

form of large white block letters to “create a sort of tension on the image surface and create a tension for the viewer between reading and looking, which are essentially two different things, two different mental processes,” he explained.

In one of his most recent projects, *Serious Games*, Close juxtaposes scenes of the empty, lifeless grounds of the World Cup, with children playing soccer in the streets of Brazil’s favelas. He sets scenes of top players in professional soccer games against protesters running from police on horseback. All the while, text flashes across the screen with words describing being beaten and exposed to teargas by the police for protesting the presence of FIFA and its exploitation of a country struggling with crime, poverty and overpopulation. The film addresses the disconnectedness of the billion-dollar spectacle of the World Cup and the reality of life on the streets of Brazil.

However, it is not until the very end of the film that the viewer is abruptly confronted with the shaken protester, who is the source of the text throughout the film. “The Brazil film is a singular filming position,” said Close. “The way the film is structured is that you watch it, read it and perceive it in a certain way, and those kinds of ideas are changed at the end.”

The films that Close produces are not built around the aim of unbiased storytelling or revealing facts. “I don’t make any assumptions that what I produce brings us any closer to some kind of truth or revelation of authenticity,” explained Close. “My interest is in how we can make the means of production visible within the production itself, so audience members become aware of the fact that they are watching something constructed.”

It’s this idea of examining how we receive information that informs Close’s instruction at AUC, where he



Left: Serious Games discusses the disconnectedness of the billion-dollar spectacle of the World Cup and the reality of life in Brazil’s slums; top: Close hopes to teach his students a deep appreciation of photography

teaches courses such as Foundations in Photography, Photojournalism and Documentary Practices, and Beyond the Frame. “The students come out of the classes that I teach with skills that allow them to actually understand what happens outside of an image,” said Close. “I hope they get to have a deeper, more sophisticated understanding of how images circulate, influence and shape our understanding of what the world is.”

Since digital cameras reached the mainstream market in the mid-1990s, the speed at which we interact with images has increased exponentially. We create, view, judge and delete

photographs in seconds. “Because of the pervasiveness of mobile phone technology in particular and its accessibility to the Internet, there is a traffic of images where we don’t really stop and think about these images too deeply because they are in this continual movement,” Close said.

By taking the time to dissect and examine all the factors that go into producing, consuming and spreading images, Close hopes to “teach an appreciation or understanding of images on a slightly deeper level,” he noted. “Often, it can be a simple thing of just stopping and freezing this endless production and consumption. □

“Photographs tend to have a kind of frozen stasis quality to them. A still image is static and perhaps lifeless, but on the other side, memorializes, or fixes, history.”

Bringing *Ancient Egypt* to the Digital World

Yasmin El Shazly '98 is working to revitalize museums in Egypt

It was in Denmark that Yasmin El Shazly '98, assistant to the minister for museum affairs, identified her love for Egyptology. "My family lived in Denmark because my father worked as a diplomat, and due to his work with the Egyptian government, I met a lot of Egyptologists," she said. "I was considering the study of Egyptology, but Dr. Zahi Hawass [Egypt's former minister of antiquities] is the one who convinced me when I met him in Denmark during a lecture he gave at the Egyptian embassy."

The fires of inspiration were stoked in Denmark, but the groundwork for her success was built at AUC, where she majored in Egyptology. El Shazly believes her undergraduate experience provided a foundation for her achievements, particularly when she traveled to the United States to pursue her master's and PhD in Egyptian art and archaeology from Johns Hopkins University. "I had the best professors at AUC, and when I went to Johns Hopkins, it was a difficult program, but I was well-prepared for it," she affirmed.

In 2009, after finishing her PhD, she started working for the ministry as head of documentation at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. "I was directly involved, through a project by the American Research Center in Egypt, in creating the first

El Shazly in Theban Tomb 10 of Penbuy and Kasa in Deir el-Medina, as part of her PhD dissertation, "Royal Ancestor Worship in Deir el-Medina During the New Kingdom," photo courtesy of James VanRensselaer

full-fledged registration department for the Egyptian Museum,” she recalled. “The museum just had a database, not an actual department. Ours is the first registration and collections management department in Egypt that uses state-of-the-art software designed specifically for museums.”

There has been a great deal of change at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo to bring it into the 21st century. Since joining the museum in 2009, El Shazly has been in the midst of many of these changes, most important of which is that everything has been digitized. “The register books have been digitized and linked to the

new every day from cataloging these objects,” El Shazly pointed out.

Today, in her current position as assistant to the minister for museum affairs, El Shazly is in charge of following up with all of the ministry’s projects related to museums. One of the more important projects she is involved in is the creation of a digital database for every museum under the ministry’s authority. “We are currently establishing a unified database for the entire ministry, a centralized catalog,” she explained.

El Shazly is looking forward to help creatively solve the myriad of challenges facing the ministry,

we have a problem with is sustainability, so my priority is to help the minister find creative solutions,” she noted.

A recent undertaking involves the creation of a user-friendly procedure to allow civil society to assist the museum. “Procedures and laws are currently so difficult that people lose interest and stop helping, so I am trying to find solutions that make it easier for businessmen and civil society to help,” said El Shazly, who also co-founded a nonprofit group, The Patrons of the Egyptian Museum. While not directly affiliated with the ministry, the group aims to attract civil society assistance for the museum.



El Shazly with Chris Naunton, director of the Egypt Exploration Society, in the documentary, Secrets of the Dead: Ultimate Tut, photo courtesy of Blink Films

records in the database, and we are working on getting all of the objects photographed,” El Shazly indicated.

The new system allows the museum to track the collections more effectively. If any items are moved, transferred or loaned out, they can be carefully followed via the digital database. While the process of creating a new digitized database has been painstaking, it has also been rewarding. “I learn something

particularly funding. “We don’t have a budget from the government because we’re a self-funding ministry,” she said, adding that the widely reported precipitous drop in tourism in Egypt since 2011 means the ministerial budget has suffered greatly. In order to offset this lack of capital, El Shazly is focused on creating a more sustainable economic environment within the Egyptian Museum’s system. “One thing

“Civil society could play a very important role in improving things at the Egyptian Museum,” El Shazly explained. “Museums abroad have functioning friends groups that really help, since no museum can sustain itself wholly from the tickets sold or the income it makes. Museums rely on fundraising and friends groups to help them.” □

By Frank E. Bartscheck II

From the Archives



EGYPTIAN ACTRESS FATEN HAMAMA

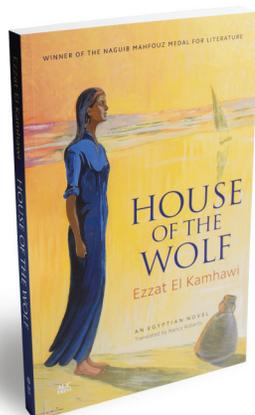
Hand-colored photo, Van-Leo and Angelo Boyadjian
Photographic Collection

Courtesy of AUC's Rare Books and Special Collections Library

Books

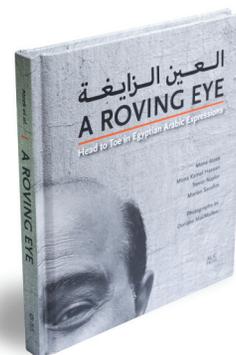
HOT OFF THE PRESS

Arts and culture books published by AUC Press



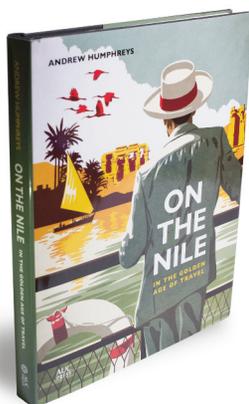
House of the Wolf Ezzat El Kamhawi

Translated by Nancy Roberts
Winner of the 2012 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature, this novel is set in a calm Egyptian village from the time it was discovered by Muhammad Ali's mission in the early 19th century to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Intertwining events on the world scene with the life dramas of its protagonists, the story opens with Mubarka al-Fuli, now a grandmother and matriarch, wanting to dictate a letter to God for her grandson to send to the Almighty by email.



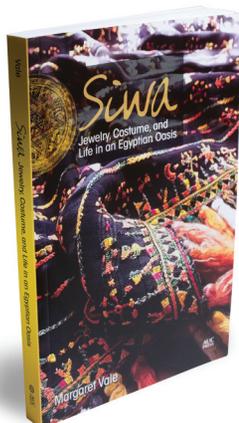
A Roving Eye: Head to Toe in Egyptian Arabic Expressions Mona Ateek, Mona Kamel Hassan, Trevor Naylor and Marian Sarofim **Photos by Doriana MacMullen**

Co-authored by AUC faculty members, *A Roving Eye* explores phrases and sayings in Egyptian Arabic, including around 100 popular phrases and proverbs, all linked to body parts and facial features. Each phrase or saying is accompanied by a photo, the original Arabic expression, its transliteration, and its literal and proverbial equivalent in English.



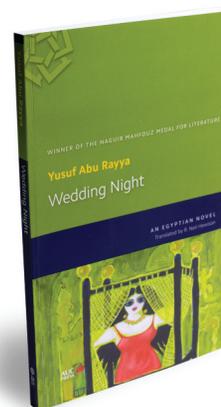
On the Nile in the Golden Age of Travel

Andrew Humphreys
Using period photography, colorful vintage posters and advertising material, this book tells the story of the people, places and boats on the Nile River, from pioneering Nile travelers like Amelia Edwards and Lucie Duff Gordon, through to famed later passengers, such as Rudyard Kipling, Arthur Conan Doyle and, of course, Agatha Christie, whose staging of a death on the Nile only added to the allure.



Siwa: Jewelry, Costume, and Life in an Egyptian Oasis

Margaret Vale
Based on conversations with women and men in Siwa and with reference to old texts, this book describes how jewelry, costumes and embroidery were used in ceremonies and everyday life in Siwa. It also examines how the oasis was exposed to the styles and fashions of the outside world in the second half of the 20th century, and how traditional silver ornaments were gradually replaced by gold.



Wedding Night Yusuf Abu Rayya

Translated by R. Neil Hewison
When it is reported that Houda, the deaf and mute butcher's apprentice, has violated the sanctity of his employer's own house, the whole Nile Delta town where he lives rises to avenge itself and publicly humiliate and ridicule Houda. The elaborate ruse planned by the butcher and Shaykh Saadoun, the pretending Sufi, is foolproof. However, while Houda may be a dreamer, he is certainly no fool.



IN THE SERVICE OF THE

Script

By Franklin Huntington



www.maketheatf.com

For live theatre to survive, it must be seen as a form of public service, not art

Drama is considered an art form throughout the world, on par with visual arts, music, dance and literature. At AUC, theatre courses are housed in the Department of the Arts, a categorization that aligns with this interpretation. But theatre's roots are, in fact, not artistic.

In civilizations across the globe, theatre originated in ceremonies that

were typically religious or sacred in nature. Theatre was so important to the ancient Greeks that during play festivals, the government would shut down, farmers would leave their fields in the middle of harvest and prisoners would be brought from jails to hear the plays.

"Theatre was a necessity, not a diversion," explained Mark Mineart,

associate professor of practice of theatre performance at AUC. "People went to the theatre then for the same reasons we go to a church, temple or mosque today — to connect with something larger, to experience spiritual intimacy, whether that intimacy be with a higher power or a community of fellows. We, as humans, seek connection and community, and that's what theatre



Top left and middle: Little Shop of Horrors was the first musical performed at AUC in years; right: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest used an understudy company for the first time at AUC; photographs by Mark Mineart

from its origins as a religious activity makes available for an audience.”

According to Mineart, modern-day theatre has lost sight of this noble cause and is now largely seen as an expensive, and mostly obsolete, form of entertainment and diversion, or “worse yet, a cultural museum piece that is supposed to be educational,” as he described it.

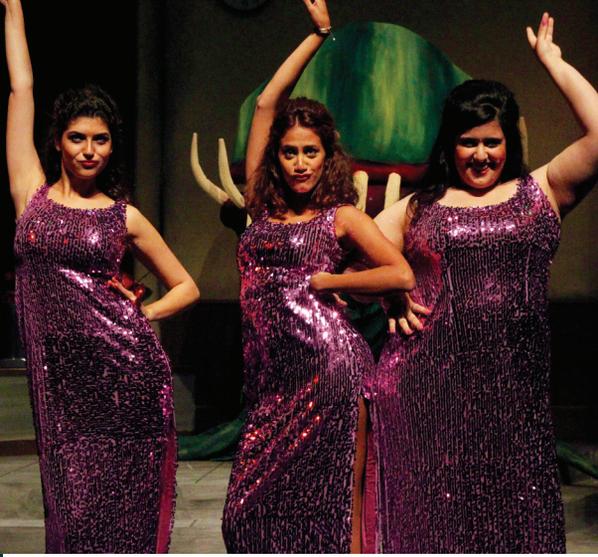
“In 1602,” he explained, “a peasant could see the original production of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* for a penny. Today, we pay between \$200 – \$450 per ticket to see *Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark*. Live theatre is dying. If it is to survive,

the way theatre is taught and performed must be re-envisioned to focus on service.”

Mineart disputes the notion that calling theatre a public service somehow demeans it. “In the United States, as well as in a country like Egypt, where there are large disparities between socioeconomic classes, it can become easy to look down on the idea of service or those who serve as menial,” he said. “But service is our greatest gift, and from teaching to being a doctor or carpenter, we’re best at our jobs when we’re used well, when our skills are utilized for the benefits of

others. Great stories can be both enjoyable and life-altering, and people working in theatre succeed by practicing their craft in the service of those stories. Looking from the outside, if we do what we do well and generously, audiences may call it art. But that is up to them, not to us.”

Capitalizing on the notion that live theatre is in critical condition, Mineart noted that every year an ever-shrinking number of professional companies produce fewer plays for smaller audiences. “Higher ticket prices, almost 90 percent out-of-work actors, fewer jobs, and audiences that are literally



dying off and not being replaced — This is not an index of success and long-term health. Somewhere, we lost our way,” Mineart said of theatre-makers. “Somewhere, we forgot that theatre can have a profound and lasting effect upon people’s lives. We stopped treating the stage as a sacred space, stopped bringing ourselves to the work with an aim to serve. Somewhere, we started self-serving and became focused on getting good reviews and making art or ‘feeling it’ or being ‘believable’ as the character. Somewhere, we became very selfish and simply stopped doing our jobs.”

Mineart came to this realization after working as a theatre professional for more than a quarter-century. He has appeared in feature films and television programs, and walked the boards of Broadway doing Shakespeare with Denzel Washington. He has played leading and supporting characters and directed plays on stages both in the United States and abroad.

Working toward a solution, Mineart began teaching with the philosophy of theatre as a public service defining his instruction. “My teaching is not theory-based,” he said. “I teach through experiential learning, through doing. Our actions as members of a production or a class must always be guided by the best interests of the play and the audience, and to serve



www.makmineart.com



Acting I students practicing speech and vocal exercises



Stage Combat students practicing attacks and parries with rapiers



Mineart demonstrating techniques of physical dialogue for an Acting I student

those interests, we have to be able to do. The work of making theatre isn't about what you can memorize and recite; it is about what you learn in your bones from firsthand experience and can reliably execute. That's why my classes require the participation of the whole student: the body, the brain and the heart."

Three main pillars define Mineart's teaching of the discipline: being seen, heard and understood. "Every aspect of the story must be perceivable to the audience," he said. "It's not enough for an actor or actress to feel what his or her character is going through. In fact, it's absolutely unnecessary and very often gets in the way. The audience doesn't care about the actors' feelings. They only know what is communicated to them, what message they receive, what the performance makes them feel."

Training actors to put storytelling before character is fundamental to the idea of theatre as a public service, but this perspective can be initially unpopular with actors, Mineart contended. His approach challenges certain popular acting styles, particularly the Method, wherein actors try to create in themselves the feelings and thoughts of their characters, often utilizing their own memories and experiences for inspiration. "There are schools of



Giving articulation and voice notes with Acting I students

"We stopped treating the stage as a sacred space, stopped bringing ourselves to the work with an aim to serve."



A notes session with members of the Midsummer acting company; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed at AUC in Spring 2013



thought that say you should try to embody the character, to go beyond the script and even create aspects of the character for yourself that didn't exist before," said Mineart. "I teach my students instead to look to the script for information and inspiration, to bring focus back to the story, to respect the play as it stands, to peer into the heart of the thing."

Bringing the words on the page to life and learning the three fundamentals is a process of trial and error for Mineart and his students. "We prepare monologues, for example, and critique the performances: Was the actress seen and heard? Was she understood?" Mineart said. "In terms of grappling with the text, we break down speeches, looking for their key parts, asking ourselves what the play is trying to say, how to best communicate that to the audience, and how to enact this communication from that particular character so as to move the story forward in the most powerful way for the audience."

Mineart also believes that actors become better performers by getting more deeply in touch with both the text and their own bodies, so all of his students are required to exercise several times a week, whether by lifting in the gym, doing yoga or playing a sport.

One of Mineart's most notable productions at AUC was Shakespeare's

A Midsummer Night's Dream, which he directed in Spring 2013. According to the AUC Theatre box office, audience turnout for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was one of the largest in recent years.

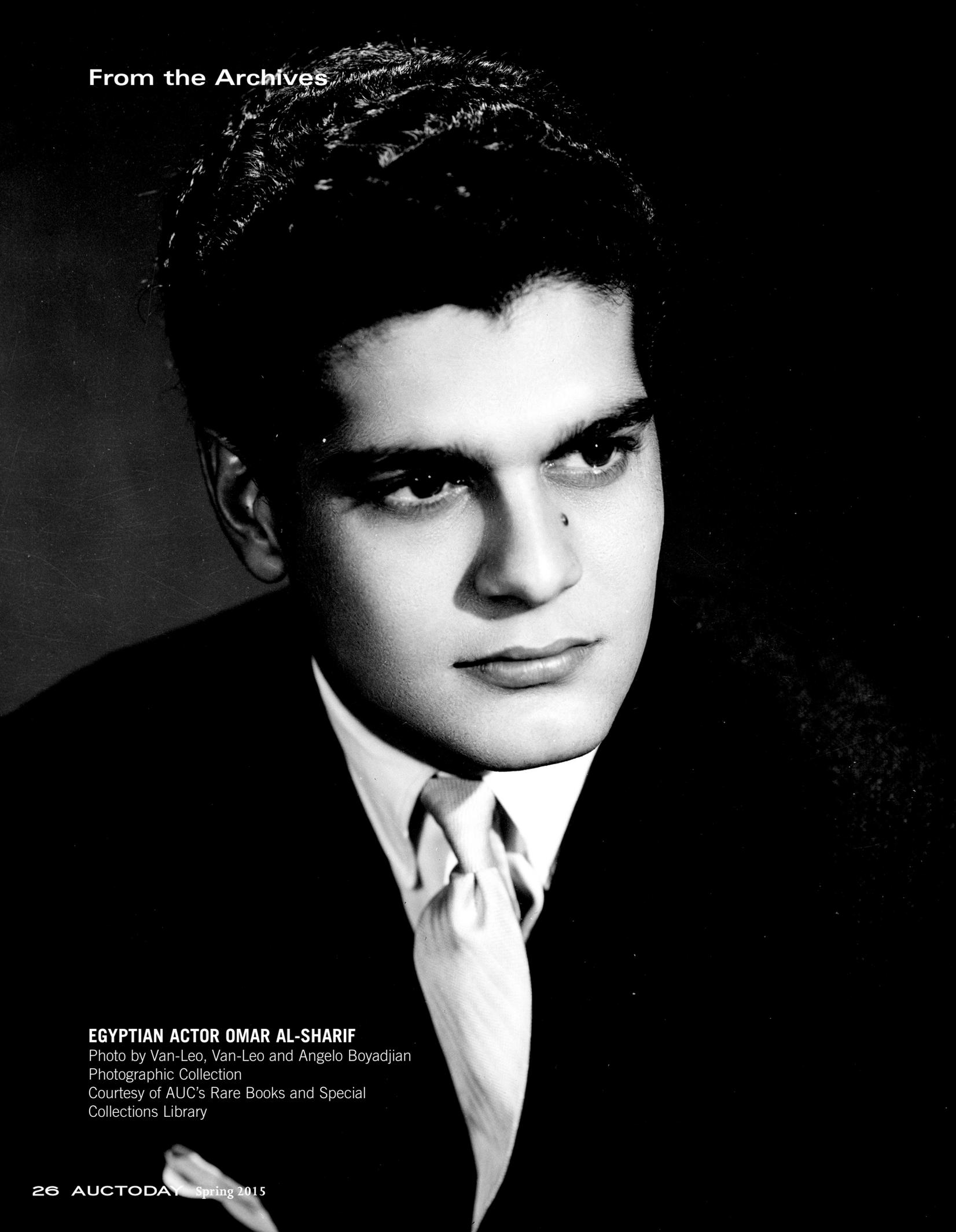
"Shakespeare's work wasn't meant to be read," Mineart argued. "The plays weren't even published until years after the playwright's death. It's in performance that what's timeless about those plays comes out. We don't turn to Shakespeare because we care about the lives of kings and queens in 16th-century England, but to find out how his writing 400 years ago still resonates with us. We seek commonalities across time."

Mineart's most recent, and final, AUC production was the musical, *Little Shop of Horrors*. "Little Shop was the direct result of a conversation I had with the very first theatre student I met when I started at AUC in 2011," Mineart recalled. "The first thing out of her mouth was, 'You're directing? Can we do a musical?' I got asked this question a lot over the next four years from many, many students. Professor John Baboukis from AUC's music department was very keen to do a musical as well, so we decided to collaborate. To say the students were excited would be an understatement."

For Mineart, who is moving back to the United States at the end of Spring 2015, the challenges he faced

directing *Little Shop of Horrors* and other AUC productions are what drive him forward and help him develop novel ideas. "In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, we had an understudy company, where additional performers learn the lines of actors in a play and are ready to step in and take over any role in case of illness or emergencies. This had never been done at AUC," Mineart reflected. "Midsummer was all about doing Shakespeare successfully with non-native English speakers for non-native English speakers, without compromising the beauty of Shakespeare's miraculous language or the ability of the audience to receive the full beauty and joy of the play. In *Little Shop*, we had actors who had never sung before playing major singing roles, and we had singers who had never been in a play before in key acting parts. Add to that the fact that one of the major characters in the show was a giant, carnivorous, man-eating space plant that required two actors to portray and had to be custom-built. There were plenty of challenges to go around for everyone. It was tough, but many of the performers exceeded all expectations in how they developed as singers and actors. It was a great way to say goodbye to AUC students and audiences." □

From the Archives



EGYPTIAN ACTOR OMAR AL-SHARIF

Photo by Van-Leo, Van-Leo and Angelo Boyadjian
Photographic Collection
Courtesy of AUC's Rare Books and Special
Collections Library

Creative Community Catalyst

Performing arts can be
an effective tool for
development and social change

Magic. That's the word Nada Sabet '05, co-founder and artistic director of Noon Creative Enterprise, used to describe the transformative experience of performing arts.

"It's absolutely magical when you connect with the arts, whether through music, a book or a performance," said Sabet, who graduated from AUC with a double major in psychology and theatre.

Sabet chooses to connect with the arts through live theatre. Her company, Noon, uses performing arts as a tool for education and development. Sabet and her team work in conjunction with NGOs, schools, universities and other organizations, traveling in Cairo and other Egyptian governorates to raise awareness of issues such as disability inclusion, genital mutilation and sexual harassment. "Using art does a number of things that are hard to accomplish if you're just giving a lecture or if you're talking about certain issues," explained Sabet. "I find that, with the performances we do, we can push a lot further than organizations that commission or host our performances feel they can."

Through her master's in creative and cultural entrepreneurship from Goldsmiths, University of London, Sabet learned how to establish a business entity without losing the value of creative practices. Her graduation project focused on drawing up a business plan for an artistic company and when she returned to Egypt, she put the plan into action and co-founded Noon with Sally Samy, '02, a political science graduate.

"We chose the name Noon because it stands for *noon al-jama'a*, an Arabic letter that connotes togetherness, and that's the spirit we uphold as a team," she said.

As the artistic director of Noon, Sabet is interested in trying out different formats and breaking set norms for performances. The stage for her and her team can be anything from the street, metro or public bus to a village or small town. Audiences are also sometimes encouraged to take roles in the performances. "Through participatory theatre, we are trying to reach audiences that don't see the world like we do," she noted.

Sabet's team also holds summer theatre workshops in schools, helping educators use performative elements in teaching subjects such as English, Arabic and social studies. Previously, they took part in community projects with NGOs working with street children and with Darb 1718 Egyptian Contemporary Art and Culture Center, whereby youth in the Old Cairo district came up with their own scripts and performed them. In one of the plays, students performed to teachers why they don't want to go to school. Noon also worked with the United Nations Children's Fund to develop self-expressive theatre workshops for youth.

"We work with a wide range of artists, including aspiring actors, puppeteers and musicians," said Sabet. "Our aim is to push people to listen to alternative views, reassess societal issues and find new ways of doing things. That's what theatre for development is all about." □

By Dalia Al Nimr



EGYPTIAN LIKE ME

An Egyptology literature class draws connections between ancient and modern Egypt

Part of the funerary procession of Vizier Ramose, as depicted on his tomb at Thebes in Luxor, 18th Dynasty, New Kingdom, courtesy of AUC's Rare Books and Special Collections Library

“[Ancient Egyptians] had very well-written, well-conceived literature written by professionals.”



Sailors dragging a tomb, Fifth Dynasty, Old Kingdom, Saqqara; modern sailors dragging a boat, photos from L’Egypte: face à face (Lausanne, 1954)

By Tessa Litecky

Ancient Egyptian literature not only paints a picture of life at the time, but can also tell us a great deal about ourselves. From funerals, agriculture and weaving to storytelling and colloquial expressions, many practices in modern-day Egypt can be traced back to our ancient Egyptian ancestors.

“That’s how enduring the tradition is and how consistent human nature can be,” said Fayza Haikal, professor of Egyptology who was recently honored on International Women’s Day by the British-based Egypt Exploration Society and the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities for her success as a leading female Egyptologist.

The striking thing about ancient Egyptian literature, Haikal noted, is the transmission of culture — what the ancient Egyptians left to us, which is the crux of Haikal’s teaching at AUC in her Ancient Egyptian Literature as Cultural Expression class. As the title suggests, Haikal and her students don’t just look at the history and translation of ancient literature, but what the texts reveal, through content and form, about the nature of ancient Egyptians.

Haikal contradicts the misconception about the prevalence of oral literature in ancient Egypt. “They had very well-written, well-conceived literature written by professionals,” she said. “You can see from the construction of the stories that they were well-thought-out and well-planned.”

As literary culture developed in ancient Egypt, distinct types of stories arose, serving different purposes. What’s interesting, Haikal pointed out, is that the same scope of genres seen in contemporary literature was present in ancient Egypt, and these genres were used in much the same way we do today. There is poetry that waxes about love, fictional tales of adventure for entertainment, and myths and fables that give warnings or teach lessons. This is especially true during the Middle Kingdom (2000 BC to 1700 BC), when the variety and number of texts surged as the language of the ancient Egyptians evolved greatly. “The Middle Kingdom had everything; you encounter every genre we have today,” said Haikal.

One of the best-known texts from ancient Egypt is *The Story of Sinuhe*, a man who flees Egypt after news of

“Egyptian Egyptologists have a big responsibility. They know their own modern culture, and they have the knowledge of an Egyptologist. It is a privileged position.”

Scene of the shadoof tool, used in ancient Egyptian irrigation, from the tomb of Ipuy, 19th Dynasty, New Kingdom, Thebes, Luxor; modern shadoof, photos courtesy of AUC’s Rare Books and Special Collections Library



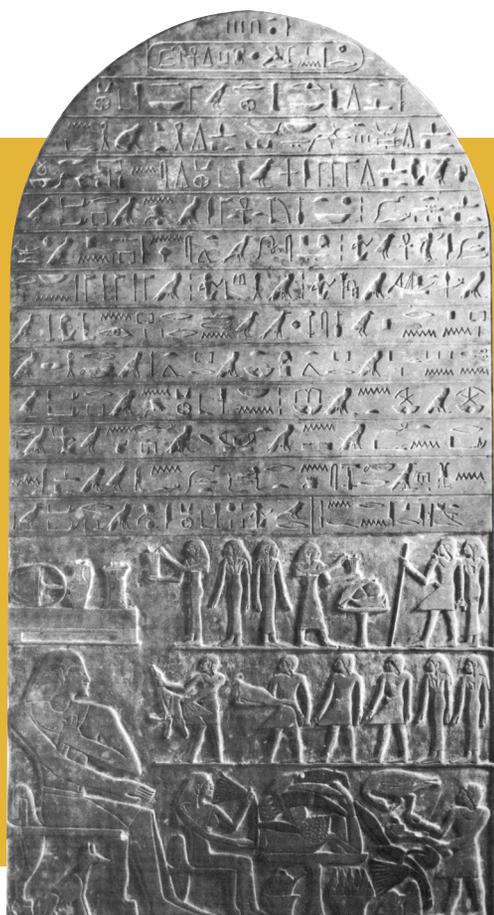
the king's death and embeds himself with Bedouin tribes. The story, in which Sinuhe himself is the narrator, incorporates several genres: narrative prose, biography, poetry, propaganda for the king and religious writing.

More than an example of the mature use of a range of genres, *The Story of Sinuhe* is a comprehensive window into

ancient Egyptian life. "If you read the lines and between the lines, you can have a very graphic view of ancient Egyptian culture and society at the time it was written," Haikal noted. "It sheds light not only on ancient Egypt, but also the neighbors. There are comparisons of society, traditions and behaviors. Texts like *The Story of*

Sinuhe, when examined with an astute eye, can paint a complete picture of ancient Egyptian life in a way that the study of other artifacts fails to do."

It is through such texts that Haikal's students have come to appreciate and recognize the fact that many practices in modern-day Egypt have roots in ancient times.



*O those who live on earth,
who shall pass by this tomb,
in traveling to the south or to the north,
being scribe (or) lector priests (or)
any god's servant of this temple.*

*It is my good name that you should remember,
at the temple of Osiris.
May you extend your arm to me during the first procession,
(or) in the great procession, at the festival of fire,
at the monthly and mid-monthly festivals,
and at all the festivals of Abydos,
for the revered steward Dedu.*

*Stela of Dedu, 12th Dynasty, Middle Kingdom, Abydos city,
photo courtesy of AUC's Rare Books and Special Collections Library*

As an example, Haikal pointed to funerary practices, in which the influence of ancient Egypt can be seen in both the traditions and language. "A lot of things we do in Egypt in our funerary tradition are not related to religion at all," noted Haikal. "In fact, some of these traditions have been passed on to the West."

In burial ceremonies, she explained, ancient Egyptians would offer food to the deceased as sustenance to support them in the next life. Texts also indicate that they engaged in the familiar tradition of offering flowers and vegetation,

a symbol of the continuing cycle of life and eternity. In fact, in 1996, a sarcophagus excavated at the Valley of the Kings contained the physical remnants of garlands of flowers used in royal burials. Today, the use of flowers in funerals is practiced all over the world and exists across cultures and religions.

Haikal also pointed to the Egyptian word for offering to the dead, *rahma*. "It is not the word offering in Arabic, but the specific word for offering to the dead, *rahma*, that is an exact translation of the ancient Egyptian," she explained.

“It is very interesting to see that human beings have not changed. ... Human emotion is exactly the same.”

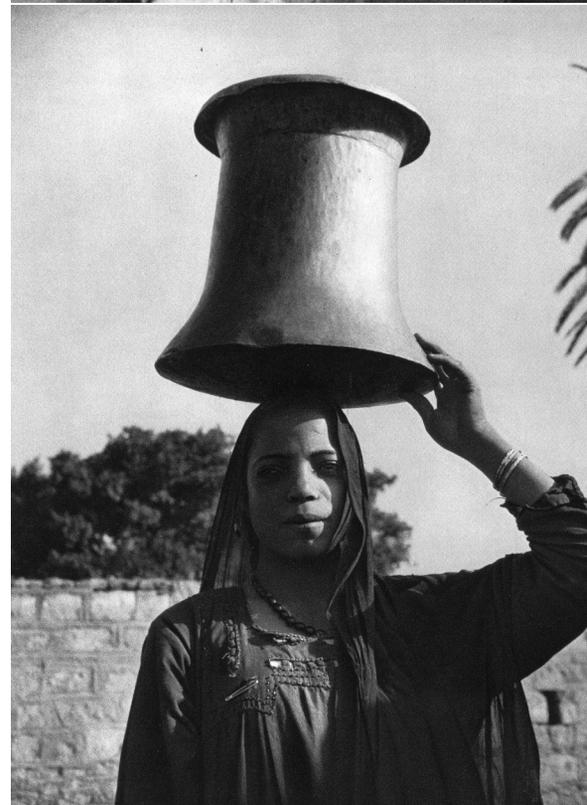
In addition, in the language of ancient Egyptians, there is a specific verb used to indicate visiting the dead, literally going up and into the cemeteries: *tal'aa*. Today, Egyptians use this same specific phrase, but translated into Arabic. “Phrases like this are another indication of our continuity with the past,” Haikal observed. “We have translated their way of thinking.”

Haikal recalled an ancient text in which the writer uses the phrase: They went together like honey and fat [butter]. “For us Egyptians, it’s obvious, but if you are a foreign Egyptologist, you might not understand this phrase,” noted Haikal. “I always love metaphors because the expressions are usually taken from the environment you are living in. They are typically local.”

There is also a common phrase used in Egypt today that having an education is like a boat on a river, meaning that it will take you far. This phrase specifically references the long-standing influence of the Nile and its association with travel and speed. “Students are usually attentive and can find these connections by themselves,” said Haikal. “They remember, ‘That is what my mother or father says to me,’ and they recognize the link. It makes the class more alive.”

However, Haikal pointed out that it is difficult to draw these connections without a thorough knowledge of modern Egyptian colloquial culture. “Egyptian Egyptologists have a big responsibility,” she declared. “They know their own modern culture, and they have the knowledge of an Egyptologist. It is a privileged position.”

In her 40-year career, Haikal has made use of her unique position within the country and her field to demonstrate the link we have with ancient cultures, and this is what she hopes to pass on to her students. “It is very interesting to see that human beings have not changed — the emotions, fears, aspirations, love and hate. Human emotion is exactly the same,” she said. “What has changed is the use of technology, but the human being hasn’t, and probably never will.” □



Top: Wooden model of a servant carrying a basket, First Intermediate Period;
bottom: Modern Egyptian carrying water, photos from *L’Egypte: face à face*
(Lausanne, 1954)

Drawing the Curtain on

Alumni shatter mistaken beliefs about the study of theatre



Sarah Youssef '07
Lecturer of Theatre and
Performance Studies, Director
and Dramaturge, University of
Cologne, Germany;
Editorial assistant,
Gender Forum



Sara Shaarawi '11
Freelance Playwright
Scotland



Ahmed El-Alfy '03
Artistic Director,
El-Alfy Theatre Company
England



Luke Lehner '05
Actor, Acting Coach
and Writer
Egypt

Myth #1

I WILL MOST LIKELY NOT FIND
A JOB AFTER GRADUATION.



If you don't major in what you are interested in, don't engage with the people around you or explore new fields, and don't have a willingness to adapt, then you will most certainly not find a job in any field. College is about making choices, and the first step is to discover what you find interesting. Graduating in theatre will not make it any more difficult than other degrees.



Securing a job in any industry, not just theatre, is indeed tough. It not only takes hard work and talent, but requires persistence, as it is massively competitive.

Myth #2

I WILL NOT LEARN SKILLS THAT WILL
HELP ME IF I DECIDE TO WORK IN ANY
OTHER FIELD.



Whether you are a student actor or stage manager, you gain skills in management and administration. You learn how to present and communicate in an efficient and clear way. You learn how to work in a big team and stick to a strict schedule. You gain skills in marketing because you need to think about how to market your show. Creatively, you learn how to write, direct, design, improvise, as well as think about representation and narrative. You also gain skills in critical thinking and text analysis, which are useful for a career in academia.



Most theatre graduates are skilled multitaskers whom companies employ to do almost anything. They are creative hard workers with great people skills, leadership and discipline. These skills will take you a long way in the world of work.



Proper education teaches important interpersonal skills that anyone will find extremely valuable, regardless of the field they end up working in. In fact, if your job involves speaking to, dealing with or managing other people, then acting tools and techniques will give you a great advantage over others. You learn how to observe, listen and sense what is going on in others.

Myth #3

IT IS ALL ABOUT ACTING,
SO WHAT'S THE BENEFIT?



Acting trains your ability to stimulate body and mind, or to be in sync. This is a skill you need in any part of your life. You need to learn your body and to read others. You need to physically mirror what your mind is communicating. Speech and body training: That is essentially what acting is about and what is needed in any profession.

Myths and Misconceptions

Myth #4

THIS IS NOT A “SERIOUS”
MAJOR. IT IS EASY, AND THERE
IS NOTHING TO STUDY.



Try majoring in theatre and you will find that you need to be incredibly hard working and passionate to get the degree.



There is hardly a major that is as serious as theatre. You train theatre, and you study drama. This is one of the few majors where you not only learn crafts, but are also intellectually stimulated by learning about politics, history, society, culture, philosophy and other areas. Your studies will be a reflection of your growth, as you will never read a play the same way twice.



Whether a major is serious or not depends solely on how the student treats it.

Myth #5

IF I TAKE PART IN THEATRE
PRODUCTIONS, MY
GRADES WILL SUFFER.



It is true that rehearsals for a theatrical production take time, but that is because it is a serious endeavor and not something done in a couple of hours. Just as one must spend time developing a computer program outside of class or preparing a PowerPoint presentation for a mock ad campaign, a production needs time to be done well. Taking part in a theatrical production forces you as a student to learn how to manage your time.

Myth #6

I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO BUILD A
SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL CAREER.



No degree can guarantee you any career. If you are willing to work, grow, adapt and take a chance on yourself and the possibilities you are offered, you will be successful no matter what. Personal success is the key to professional success; it is all in your mind.



Having a successful professional career depends on your ability to work hard and persevere, not on your degree. A degree can give you a strong foundation in whatever career you choose to take on.

Musically Engineered

By Veronika Edwards, as told by
AbdelRahman Bahieldin

AUC student merges a love of music and science



AbdelRahman Bahieldin, an AUC junior pursuing a double major in music performance and mechanical engineering, recently won first place in the prestigious Chopin piano competition in Egypt at the Cairo Conservatoire for the above 18 age group. Bahieldin recounts his passion for two fields that may seem divergent to many.

Even though music is not a product of science, the two fields have direct relations. I connect to engineering in such a specific way, and I use the same approaches to a problem in music as I do for an engineering problem.

Concentrating simultaneously on music and mechanical engineering has been a dream of mine for a long time. I was not aware that a university offering a degree in engineering might also offer a degree in music, so I'm happy I am able to pursue my dream at AUC.

“The piano means harmony. A whole symphony played by a full orchestra can be transposed to be played just on one piano. It is this passion for harmony that keeps me playing.”

Passion for Harmony

The piano has been a part of my childhood since I was 5 years old. The exam board of the Royal Schools of Music has a multi-leveled system of grades and exams indicating levels of musicianship, from one to eight (eight being the highest). I finished level eight when I was 14, during my first year of high school. This is equivalent to completing an undergraduate degree in piano.

Music is a great thing. It teaches discipline, dedication and hard work; can express any feeling; and uses both sides of the brain. The piano means harmony. A whole symphony played by a full orchestra can be transposed to be played just on one piano. It is this passion for harmony that keeps me playing.

My aim is to design musical instruments in the future. The piano is a very complex mechanical system,



Bahieldin at the Chopin competition awards ceremony, courtesy of Ati Metwaly

and because I understand the physics and structure of a piano, I believe it would be wise for me to use my skills to become a designer. This would combine all of my skills in one job. It's like double majoring in work.

The wearing down of a piano has to be understood in the context of the physics behind its mechanisms. The strings of a piano need to be tight for hundreds of years. The motion of the inner structure of a piano is, plainly, mechanical engineering.

With handmade pianos, the story is different. Not all pianos are handmade, but handmade pianos — which are the best pianos around — produce different timbres and sounds. This often leads pianos to produce timbres that are not precisely what a musician needs. Every type of music requires a certain type of piano. For example, Bach would need a different piano timbre than Chopin, who would need a different piano timbre than Chick Corea. Developed machinery would be able to achieve these minute specifications.

The mechanized manufacturing of pianos is a developed field, but there is a lot of new technology to be integrated, which I feel would lead to great leaps in the industry. Piano

making has been a practice for centuries now, yet there is much work to be done beyond the scope of handmade pianos.

Chopin Competition

Being invited to the Chopin Competition held each year at the Cairo Conservatoire was a great honor; winning first prize was an even greater privilege. I am excited about traveling to Poland in Summer 2015, as part of the award, to take master's classes for one week at the Academy of Music in Krakow.

I owe my success in the competition to my parents and my piano instructor at AUC, Elena Dzamashvili, as well as to Professor John Baboukis [associate professor of music and chair of AUC's Department of the Arts]. Professor Elena is one of the best teachers in Egypt. I appreciate very much her brilliance, the great number of hours she spent to coach me on my program, and her dedication and integrity outside of teaching piano. I would like to dedicate my first place award to her, Professor Baboukis and my parents. □



To watch a video about
AbdelRahman Bahieldin
www.youtube.com/auc
Student Voices
Passion for Harmony



From the Archives

ARCADES AT NEW GOURNA VILLAGE

Photo by Dimitri, Hassan Fathy Photographic Collection
Courtesy of AUC's Rare Books and Special
Collections Library

AUC Art Scene

Students exhibit their
artistic talent on campus

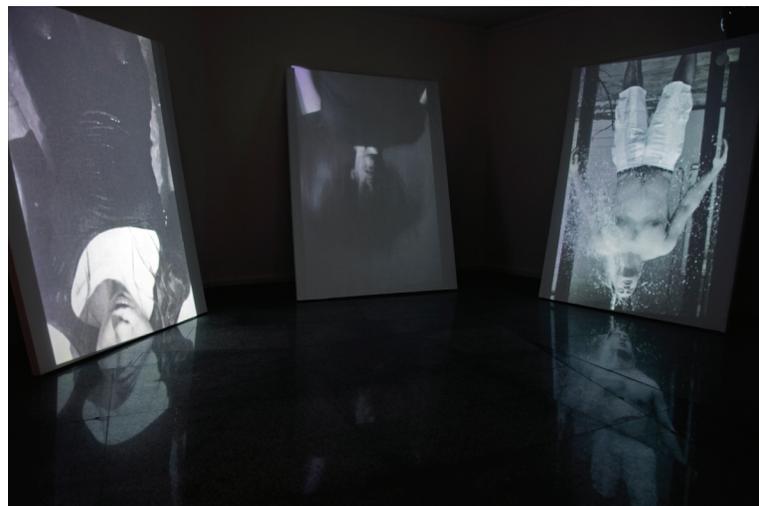
Photos by Alaa Dajani, Reffiq
Elmansy and Shady El Noshokaty



The Other Person's Pain Brought Me
Sara AbouElWafa



Juvenile
Zeynab Zidane



The Ceremony
Rawaa Sherif

Students in the Department of the Arts get a taste of their practical life as artists by exhibiting their work on campus. This spring, several exhibitions showcased student talent. *Tracing Our Dragon's Smell* was the 2015 senior project exhibit by the visual arts major, displaying 15 student projects, including paintings, installations and video art. The exhibit was the product of a yearlong process that began with research and culminated with the student artwork. *Heyya Fawda* was part of a series of curated exhibitions by the graphic design major, aiming to raise awareness of cultural heritage through student studio projects dedicated to celebrate the lives and works of Egyptian and pan-Arab cultural figures. The *Heyya Fawda* campus-wide exhibition, which included installations and costume displays, celebrated the life of the late Egyptian filmmaker Youssef Chahine.



Conflict of Contradictions
Passant Ibrahim



Portrait of Egyptian actress Henda Rostom, inspired by Chahine's film, *My One and Only Love*
Lobna Kamel, Carina Khoury, Hania Hindy, Nihal Asran and Nourhan Hassan ElSayed



The Mystery Spot
Cendrella Wael William



Costume design inspired by
Chahine's film, *The Land*
Nora Abu Shady



Environmental typographic installation inspired by
Chahine's film, *The Land*
Farah Emam and Mariam Dayhoum

Identity Talks



Reem Bassiouney, associate professor of applied linguistics at AUC, is the author of *Language and Identity in Modern Egypt*. In her book, she uses sociolinguistic theory and a variety of sources such as patriotic songs, films, blogs, TV talk shows, newspaper articles and novels, from the 20th century until 2013, to examine language and identity in modern Egypt.

How does language relate to identity?

Language is at the core of who we are. It could be a classifying category for defining us, such as describing Egyptians as people who speak Arabic. But language can also be a way of expressing who we are. In Egyptian public discourse, language is used to create a particular collective identity, essentially labeling who is an “authentic Egyptian” and who is not.

How does that happen?

The main aim of constructing a distinct identity is to decide who is included and who is excluded from this large community called Egyptians. Variables like language, ethnicity, locality, character traits and moral dispositions are criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Individuals use social variables, including language, in what I term an “exclusion-inclusion pattern of display,” in which individuals show their stance of belonging or not belonging to a community, and also show their stance toward other individuals as belonging or not belonging to a community or nation.

What’s an example of this dichotomy of authentic vs. non-authentic Egyptians?

During the January 25 Revolution, some loyalists tried to make the claim that the protestors in Tahrir Square were not real Egyptians because many spoke in English and were, thus, deemed as “not representative of real Egyptians.” This rationale is steeped in social attitudes toward the English language. While Egyptians rush to master English and teach it to their children, when someone is depicted as speaking English, his or her Egyptian identity is contested. The revolutionaries, in turn, claimed that they were authentically Egyptian because of their command of the Arabic language, again showing how language expresses identity.

So Arabic is the only language associated with authenticity in Egypt?

Yes. Standard Arabic is oftentimes associated with the Quran, Islamic jurisprudence and civil law, so it connotes legitimacy. This is because language contains certain indexes, or connotations. Given certain contexts, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic is used to index authenticity, while an Egyptian speaking in English may connote respect or suspicion.

What is one of the most interesting findings you came across as you worked on your book?

It is how this concept of authenticity applies to even small details, like the type of grammar used. For example, in several patriotic songs, the singers often use the third person pronoun (he, she, it or they), instead of the second person pronoun (you), to refer to a colonizer or an aggressive outsider. This was the case in *Misr Tatahadath 'An Nafsiha (Egypt Speaks About Itself)* by Umm Kulthum, when Egypt refers to colonizers in the third person plural, or in the case of the song *Habibti Ya Masr (Egypt, My Love)* by Shadia, in which the person who does not understand Egyptians is referred to in the third person singular. I believe this manipulation of pronouns is intentional and intends to undermine the aggressive, unfriendly outsider, while appealing to the insider or sympathetic outsider. In that sense, even the use of certain grammatical constructs expresses who the real Egyptian is and who the “other” is.

What is the main aim of this research?

My aim is to provide non-Egyptians with a deeper understanding of the perspectives and actions of Egyptians. It’s important for outsiders to know about public discourse in Egypt because sometimes for an outsider, you can sound aggressive or snobbish if you don’t understand the context of a discourse of any country. When you do, you are then able to understand why people are behaving the way they do. It becomes easier to deal with people. In a broader sense, I hope this research would facilitate communication between people from different cultures. It’s important for Egyptians to think about how they learn everything. You know who you are, but it’s good to know the mechanism about how you reached “who you are.” □

FALL 2015 MARK YOUR CALENDAR



**Graduate Studies:
Conquer the Application Process**
Wednesday, September 16 • 5 – 7 pm
Conference and Visitor Center, Room P022



Graduate Study Fair
Saturday, October 3 • 11 am - 4 pm
Conference and Visitor Center



**Your Personality and Career:
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**
Wednesday, October 21 • 4 – 7 pm
Career Center



Fall Employment Fair
Saturday, November 7 • 11 am - 6 pm
ARTOC Sports Court



**Your Interests and Career:
Strong Interest Inventory**
Tuesday, November 17 • 4 – 7 pm
Career Center

**Register
Now**

RSVP on CareerWEB
careerweb.caps.aucegypt.edu
Events Section | Workshops Tab

Career Center | Campus Center | First Floor | Room 1020
tel 20.2.2615.3515 caps@aucegypt.edu



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO



One of the main highlights of the 2015 Community Day was the naming of AUC's eagle mascot, following an online poll of alumni, students, faculty and staff. At the event, AUC welcomed its newest community member, Horus, which received its ID from the University, photographed by Dana Smillie

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