

Some from Cairo, Some from Florence:

Hany Rashed

By Dominique Ellis

The recent exhibition, *Some from Cairo, Some from Florence*, displayed an impressive collection of 97 black and white monoprints. The graphic works of Hany Rashed immediately commanded one's attention upon entering the space at Mashrabia Gallery, in Cairo, Egypt. This talented Egyptian artist is introspective and original in his detailed mark-making. He is artistically versatile in medium, yet his monoprints stand out and demonstrate artistic maturity.

Proportions that are distorted, figures in awkward stance, and void of color, the viewer is placed face to face with the images, as people play a central role in his prints. According to Stefania Angarano, the director of Mashrabia Gallery, a previous monoprint exhibition of Hany Rashed used insects to convey his exploration of Egyptian society. Compared with the insect themed body of work, this new series highlights the everyday in a way that pushes the viewer to ponder the relationship between accentuated actions and their context.

The artworks were separated within the gallery into two sections, Florentine and Cairene imagery, with noticeably different content between the two. The Egypt-based prints are at times raw, yet insightful as they explore the intricate layers of Egyptian society as depictions of daily life. However, works created in Florence display a new source of influence incorporating aspects of Renaissance paintings discovered during his two month residency in Florence, Italy in 2009. Integrating Italian visual reference of the Renaissance with Rashed's personal narrative, these prints are a fusion of the historical and the contemporary.

Both localities shown in this series of prints left a lasting impression through a distinct visual perspective. Seeing through the artistic lens of Hany Rashed, it is evident that he is emerging as a strong voice in the community through unique figurative renderings and vivid depictions of society within his monoprints.



Hany Rashed. *Untitled*, 2009. Monoprint (Cairo)
Image Courtesy of Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo



Hany Rashed. *Untitled*, 2009. Monoprint (Florence)
Image Courtesy of Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo



Hany Rashed. *Untitled*, 2009. Monoprint (Cairo)
Image Courtesy of Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo