Tiffany Floyd

326 words

**Sabri, Atta** **(1912-1988)**

Born in Kirkuk, Iraq, Atta Sabri was among the pioneer generation of Iraqi modern artists with careers peaking in the mid-twentieth century. He was an active exhibitor and participant in several burgeoning art groups. After being educated and employed as a teacher in Baghdad, Sabri joined many of his peers in studying art abroad, first in Rome at the *Accademia di Belle Arti* and then, after World War II, in London at Goldsmith College and the Slade School. During the years of the war, Sabri held a job at the Department of Antiquities in Baghdad. After completing his studies, the artists again took up teaching this time at the Baghdadi Institute of Fine Art. Over the course of his career, Sabri became a founding member of the Society of the Friends of Art and a member of the Society of Iraqi Plastic Arts. His exhibition record includes the seminal Industrial and Agricultural Fair in 1931 and the 1950 First Iraqi Art Show in London. Sabri also exhibited extensively at the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad and in 1979 the museum held a retrospective of the artist’s *oeuvre*.

Sabri’s work can be characterised by the subtleties and serenity the artist found in the Iraqi landscape. His work often blended realist and impressionist qualities creating a swaying movement in his canvases. Sabri’s efforts to capture the essence of the Iraqi environment reflected the sensibilities of his generation as they sought to define what Iraqi modern art was and what it could be.

**Resources and further reading**

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