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| Rassam, Abdul Qadir al- (1882-1952) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Abdul Qadir al-Rassam was part of the first generation of modern Iraqi painters, and was among a group of soldier-artists who introduced easel painting to Iraq at the turn of the century. Al-Rassam’s education began in 1904 Istanbul, where he studied military science and art. As part of his education in Istanbul, al-Rassam and his classmates were required to produce paintings or drawings for military use, which adhered to a strict European academic style. Eager to cultivate their new skill, al-Rassam and others sought private art training. Al-Rassam himself studied under a number of prominent painters living in Istanbul working with contemporary French styles. Although well known as an oil painter, al-Rassam experimented with watercolours when representing Istanbul’s crowded markets. While al-Rassam demonstrated a conscientious eye and deft skill early in his career, his ambitions were halted after the onset of the First World War. Following the war, al-Rassam and other soldier-artists returned to Iraq, where he once again took up easel painting. Al-Rassam and his colleagues focused on landscapes, military scenes, and archaeological sites. |
| Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Abdul Qadir al-Rassam was part of the first generation of modern Iraqi painters, and was among a group of soldier-artists who introduced easel painting to Iraq at the turn of the century. Al-Rassam’s education began in 1904 Istanbul, where he studied military science and art. As part of his education in Istanbul, al-Rassam and his classmates were required to produce paintings or drawings for military use, which adhered to a strict European academic style. Eager to cultivate their new skill, al-Rassam and others sought private art training. Al-Rassam himself studied under a number of prominent painters living in Istanbul working with contemporary French styles. Although well known as an oil painter, al-Rassam experimented with watercolours when representing Istanbul’s crowded markets. While al-Rassam demonstrated a conscientious eye and deft skill early in his career, his ambitions were halted after the onset of the First World War. Following the war, al-Rassam and other soldier-artists returned to Iraq, where he once again took up easel painting. Al-Rassam and his colleagues focused on landscapes, military scenes, and archaeological sites.  Image: RiverScene.jpg  Figure 1 Abdul Qadir al-Rassam  *River Scene on the banks of the Tigris*, 1920  Oil on canvas  63.1 x 93.2 cm  Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art  [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/43/Abdul\_Qadir\_al-Rassam\_-\_River\_Scene\_on\_the\_Banks\_of\_the\_Tigris\_-\_Google\_Art\_Project.jpg]  The artists of al-Rassam’s generation sought to stimulate awareness and appreciation of the arts among the Iraqi population. Al-Rassam taught painting lessons out of his studio in Baghdad and encouraged young artists to continue their art training abroad. Many artists who studied under al-Rassam became important members of the Iraqi modern art movement. Al-Rassam later became an honorary member of the Society of the Friends of Art: a group that attempted at once to cultivate public interest in art making while also enhancing their own skill through interaction.  Image: notitle.jpg  Figure 2 Abdul Qadir al-Rassam  Title Not Known, n.d.  Modern Art Iraq Archive, MAIA (artiraq.org) (Nada Shabout has copyright for this)  http://artiraq.org/maia/archive/fullsize/abdul-qader-al-rassam--1\_1eff870ec5.jpg  Using the same academic style as his early colleagues, al-Rassam realistically captured vistas of the Iraqi countryside (scenes of the Tigris and its surroundings, in particular). Also known as a portraitist, one of Al-Rassan’s best known portraits features Mohamed Darouich al Allousi (1924). Al-Rassan created a mural for the entrance of the Royal Cinema movie theatre in Baghdad — the first large-scale work of art to be displayed on a public building. Later in his life, the artist travelled to Italy, France, Germany, and England to further expand his knowledge of art. A highly influential and prolific painter in the history of Modern Iraqi art, a collection of al-Rassam’s works is now held at the Pioneers Museum in Baghdad. |
| Further reading:  (Ali)  (Jabra)  (The Modern Art Iraq Archive)  (Mudaffar)  (Saad) |