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| The Egyptian School of Fine Arts |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The Egyptian School of Fine Arts (Madrassat al-Funun al-Jamila al-Misriyya) opened its doors on May 13, 1908, a date cited by many art historians as marking the starting point of modern art in Egypt. The ESFA aimed to cultivate ‘Egyptian artists’ while modelling its curriculum on that of the French academy system, with rigorous training in drawing at its core. At the same time, the School claimed to produce graduates capable of turning their skills to professional advantage. A privately funded institution, it was highly influential in molding so-called first- and second-generation artists. The model of arts education adopted by the school and its relevance to the goal of realising an Egyptian artistic renaissance were themes addressed in early debates following the schoool’s establishment. An inaugural exhibition of student work took place between January 13 and 20, 1910 at the Royal Automobile Club in downtown Cairo. Many early graduates would go on to constitute Egypt’s celebrated Pioneer Generation (Jil al-Ruwwad) in the arts. The re-invention of the school as a state-run institution in the late 1920s played an important role in contemporary struggles between competing factions for control of the arts. |
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| Further reading:  (al-Jamila, Iskandar and al-Sharuni)  ('Ayyad)  (Azar)  (Laplagne)  (Naéf)  (File 0069-004463 (Abdin))  (File 0069-004464 (Abdin)) |