Nada Shabout

537 words

**Nasiri, Rafa al (1940-2013)**

Born in Tikrit, Iraq, Rafa al-Nasiri earned a bachelor’s degree in printmaking from the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 1959. From 1959 to 1963, he pursued further studies at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, where he studied printmaking with Huang Yu Yi. In 1967, he received a scholarship from The Gulbenkian Foundation to study at the Gravura in Lisbon, between 1967 and 1969. After returning to Baghdad, he headed the graphics department at the Institute of Fine Arts. He was a founding member of the New Vision Group (Jama’t al-Ru’yya al-Jadidah) in Baghdad, along with artists Dia Azzawi, Mohammed Muhriddin, Ismail Fattah, Hachem al-Samarchi, and Saleh al-Jumaie. After leaving Baghdad, al-Nasiri taught at the University of Yarmouk, Jordan, and at the University of Bahrain for several years before settling in Amman, Jordan. He is the author of a number of essays and books on Iraqi graphic art and Iraqi modern art. His experiments in printmaking have influenced the subsequent generations and played an instrumental role in the development of a strong tradition of Iraqi printmaking.

While in Amman he produced a body of work that engaged with the poetry of a number of Arab poets, including al-Mutanabbi, al-Jawahiri, Mahmoud Darwish, Etel Adnan and May Muzaffar. His work is widely exhibited throughout the Middle East, Europe and Asia, including solo exhibitions at ITU Gallery, Hong Kong, 1963; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman, 1981; Galerie Faris, Paris, 1983; Sharjah Museum, Sharjah, 1997, and Green Art Gallery, Dubai, 2008. His group exhibitions include *Word into Art*, British Museum, London, 2006 and *Modernism and Iraq*, Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, 2009, and *Art in Iraq Today* (with fellow New Vision members Dia Azzawi and Ali Talib), Meem Gallery, Dubai, 2011. His work is held in various collections, including Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, and Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman.

On the 11th of November 2013, under the patronage of Princess Wijdan al-Hashemi, the Royal Society of Fine Arts inaugurated the retrospective exhibition *Rafa Nasiri 50 years of Painting and Print Making* at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts in Amman, Jordan. The exhibition included earlier works that had been trapped in Baghdad. Few weeks after, Al-Nasiri died on the 7th of December.

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