

The Ceramic Collection of Mohamed Taha Hussein in the Modern Egyptian Art Museum, Cairo

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Abstract

Mohammed Taha Hussein (1929-2018) is one of the most important artists of Egyptian Contemporary Art. His work reflects essential political and social developments of Egyptian history. Moreover, it is characterized by an intercultural dialogue between art forms of his native Egyptian and Arabic culture and ideas and techniques of Modern Western Art. M. Taha Hussein is a creative artist of painting, graphics, textiles and carpets. However, ceramics have a special role in his art collection. The subject of this paper deals with the Ceramic Collection of M. Taha Hussein (Fig.1-Fig.11) which has been stored uninscribed or labeled in the magazine of the Modern Egyptian Art, Cairo. The Collection (Fig.1-Fig.11), from the stone ware type, shows how he managed to upgrade ceramic forms in terms of both size and function and the development of new techniques. This paper describes the stone ware Collection (Fig.1-Fig.11) in the Modern Egyptian Art Museum, Cairo to emphasize the importance of this Collection for the Contemporary Egyptian Art.

Key words:

M. Taha Hussein's stone ware Ceramic Collection, contemporary Art, The Modern Egyptian Art Museum Cairo.

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1. Introduction

Until the fifties of the last century, the Egyptian art movement had devoted itself to the past, but since the sixties, it has opened up to new areas rejecting national clichés in the name of preserving heritage, objectivity and the aestheticism of the creative experience⁽¹⁾

Mohamed Taha Hussein (1929-2018) is a leading personality of modern art in Egypt⁽²⁾. He bridged the boundaries of materials and techniques so the outcome of his paintings, graphics, textiles and carpets have numberless of common features⁽³⁾. After a figurative phase in the 1950s, he studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Düsseldorf in Germany, and became personally acquainted with the artists of the 'Zero' group, including Gotthard Graubner and Heinz Mack. He immediately understood that it is not useful for him as an Egyptian merely to follow his German colleagues, but he needed rather to find a similar objective or universal informal painting through his own cultural background. In the 1980s Hussein found his path while creating strong idiosyncratic paintings, founded in his profound understanding of Sufism. His inspiration at this time came from nature, from structures of stones, water and plants. His artwork reflects essential cultural and social developments of modern Egyptian history⁽⁴⁾. Same while the intercultural dialogue between

⁽¹⁾ Ismail, Fatma, *29 Artists in the Museum of Egyptian Modern Art, Cairo*, 1989, p.11.

⁽²⁾ Dr. Mohamed Taha Hussein Winner of Mubarak prize of Arts for the year 2009 and the State Merite Prize for the year 2000, Prof. of History of Arts and Ceramic Design till 2017. Dean of the Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University 1978-81. Head of the industrial design dept. 1982. Head of the Public Cultural Sector, Ministry of Culture, Egypt.1986. Diploma from the Royal Faculty of Applied Arts, Giza (Decoration- Pottery), 1951. Diploma from the High Institute of Art-Education for tutors Cairo, 1953. Diploma from Krefeld School for Design-Pottery Branch Germany, 1955. Diploma from Werk Seminar School for Educational Handcrafts, Düsseldorf, 1960. Diploma of Graphics from the academy of Fine arts, Düsseldorf, Germany, 1961, (with permission to teach arteducation). Ph.D. faculty of Philosophy, Art History and Archeology, Cologne University. First Certificate in this branch in the Faculties of Arts in Egypt, 1963.

⁽³⁾ Manuel Villa Seniare, in: Egyptian Ministry of Culture (Ed): *Visuals of Taha Hussein*, 2001, p.5.

⁽⁴⁾ Dagmer Thesing, *Mohamed Taha Hussein Ein Künstlerischer Dialog zwischen Orient und Okzident*, 2003, p.3.

East and West often Egyptian and Arabic forms inspired from his own culture mixed with modern western ideas and techniques.

The Modern Egyptian Museum was designed to house works by Egyptian artists who have contributed to the modern Egyptian art movement since the early part of the century. With its extensive collection covering Egypt's most influential artists from the early pioneers to the present generation, the museum serves as an archival centre to an open air sculpture display in front of the premises. The Modern Egyptian Museum in Cairo has no digital archive till now and not all the objects are even registered. While M. Taha Hussein's paintings (Fig. 12 – Fig. 24) are in display in the Museum along with artworks of influential artists from the 1960s, e.g. Sayed Abdulrasoul, Gazibia Sirry, and others, his Ceramic Collection (Fig.1-Fig.11) remains stored and is not described in the Museum's Magazine⁽⁵⁾. The aim of this paper is to describe the Collection (Fig.1-Fig.11) and enclose the images of the collection in the digitized archive of the future Mohamed Taha Hussein's Museum.

⁽⁵⁾We would like to thank Dr. Khaled Serur, Director of the Modern Egyptian Museum in Cairo, for the permission of photographing the Collection (Fig.1-11), we are also grateful to Prof. Dr. Hazem Taha Hussein for photographing and preparing the digitized archive for the collection(Fig.1-11).

2. Description



**Fig. (1) Horse,1958, Stoneware with engobe and glaze, H. 25 x W. 13.5 cm,
Museum of Modern Egyptian Art, (no.6175)
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-POT-3-006B 6175**



Fig.2. Cat,1958, Stoneware ceramic, H. 41 x w. 25 cm, Museum of Modern Art, Cairo (no.5922)

Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-SO-3-007 5922



**Fig. 3. Untitled Vessel, Stoneware Ceramic, H. 20 x W. 31 x Ø. 32 cm, 1965.
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo.
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-UP-4-024A-2 6632**



**Fig. 4. Drinking Pot (Qualla), Black glaze, H. 29 x W. 42 x Ø. 40 cm, 1972.
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-SO-6-014 8373**



**Fig.5. Untitled. Stoneware ceramic, white glaze, 1972. H. 49cm x 24 cm,
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-POT-6-044**



**Fig. 6. Untitled. Stoneware ceramic, H. 43 x W. 33 x Ø. 36 cm, 1980.
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-POT-6-044 Unregistered**



**Fig. 7. Untitled, Stoneware ceramic, H. 50 x w. 45 x Ø. 37 cm, 1980.
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha- POT-6-045 Unregistered**



**Fig. 8. Untitled, Stoneware ceramic, H. 60 x w. 36 x Ø. 41.5 cm,1980.
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-POT-7-001 11233**



Fig. 9. Untitled, Stoneware ceramic, H. 41.5 x W. 24 x Ø. 28 cm,1980.
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-POT-6-046 9419



**Fig. 10. Untitled, Stoneware ceramic, H. 25 x w. 24 x Ø. 23 cm, 1980.
Museum of Modern Art, Cairo
Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-POT-6-048 8374**



Fig. 11. Untitled, White glazed ceramic, H. 50 x w. 42 x Ø. 46 cm, 1985.

Museum of Modern Art, Cairo

Digitized Archive Code: mohamedtaha-POT-6-047 13247



Fig. 12
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Fig. 13
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Fig. 14
@mth



Fig. 15
@mth

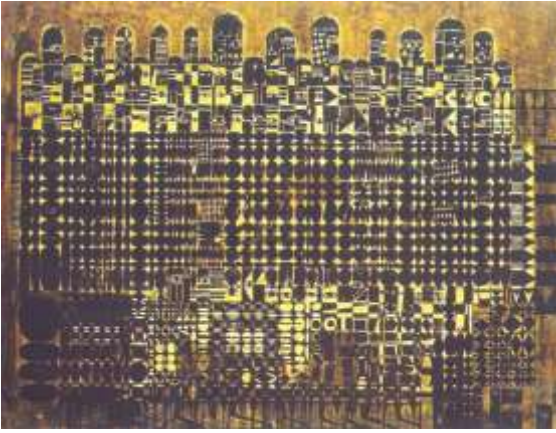


Fig. 16
@mth



Fig. 17
@mth



Fig. 18
@mth



Fig. 19
@mth

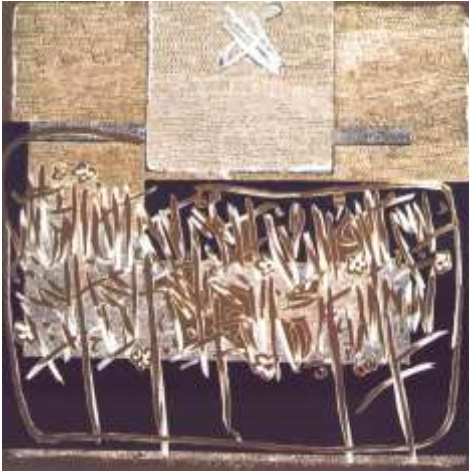


Fig. 20
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Fig. 21
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Fig. 22
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Fig. 23
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Fig. 24
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Comment

The Objects (Fig1-Fig.11) of M. Taha Hussein should be exhibited with a storytelling of the artist as one of the pioneers of the modern ceramic art in the Middle East. Dagmar Thesing highlights in her study the significance of M. Taha Hussein's oeuvre within its cultural-historical framework and its intercultural dimension. In addition, she relates his work to the international development of World Art⁽⁶⁾. The stone ware collection (Fig.1-Fig.11) in the Modern Egyptian Art Museum, Cairo includes different styles and various techniques. It records the artist work during the 1960s to 1981. He managed to upgrade ceramic forms in terms of both size and function⁽⁷⁾. M. Taha Hussein bridged the boundary of materials and techniques so the outcome of his paintings, graphics, textiles and carpets have numberless of common features⁽⁸⁾.

This study of the objects (fig.1-11) shows that, especially in his ceramic objects, he often experiments with the artistic possibilities of the material itself and its surface textures as well as its resulting effects to generate new directions for his art⁽⁹⁾. Documenting and creating a digitized archive for the collection will allow future researchers to compare and analyze his artistic bath.

⁽⁶⁾ Dagmer Thesing, *Mohamed Taha Hussein Ein Künstlerischer Dialog zwischen Orient und Okzident*, 2003, p..

⁽⁷⁾ صالح رضا، *الحركة الخزفية من 1930-2000م، من الموسوعة الفنية التشكيلية المصرية المعاصرة* الجزء الاول، 82-95.

⁽⁸⁾ Mustafa El- Razzaz, : Egyptian Ministry of Culture (Ed): *Visuals of Taha Hussein*, 2001, p.23

⁽⁹⁾ Lilian Karnouk, : Egyptian Ministry of Culture (Ed): *Visuals of Taha Hussein*, 2001, p.26.

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صالح رضا ، الحركة الخزفية من ١٩٣٠-٢٠٠٠م، من الموسوعة الفنية التشكيلية المصرية المعاصرة الجزء الاول.

الأعمال الخزفية لمحمد طه حسين في متحف الفن الحديث بالقاهرة

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د. دجمار تيسينج*

الملخص:

الفنان محمد طه حسين (١٩٢٩-٢٠١٨) رائد فن الخزف المعاصر والذي قاد حركة التطوير الخزفي في مصر والثورة علي القيم القديمة في طرق التدريس و تناول فن الخزف على المستوى العالمي وما طرأ عليه من متغيرات في العالم الحديث. وهو من جيل الريادة الثالث مع الفنان رمزي مصطفى والفنان صالح رضا. ناشد الفنان محمد طه حسين التغيير وخلق أفكار جديدة وهو ما يسمى مفهوم (الحدائث في الفن) في جميع فروعه ولم يقتصر على فن الخزف فقط فهو الخزاف والنحات والمصور والحفار. مما جعل أعماله موضوع رسالة دكتوراه الفلسفة تحت عنوان (محمد طه حسين حوار بين الشرق والغرب) للباحثة الألمانية دجمار تيسينج من جامعة كولونيا ٢٠٠٣. للفنان مقتنيات في متاحف كثيرة أهمها متحف الفن الحديث بالقاهرة. تضمن كتاب المؤرخة فاطمة إسماعيل بعنوان (٢٩ فنان بالمتحف المصري للفن المعاصر) عمل تصويري لمحمد طه حسين. يوجد بمتحف الفن المصري الحديث مجموعة خزفية مهمة للفنان محمد طه حسين (شكل ١- شكل ١١) في مخزن المتحف تمثل مراحل فنية مختلفة جميعها ليست موصوفة. الهدف من البحث هو وصف المجموعة الخزفية. من أهم الأعمال الموجودة بمتحف الفن الحديث القط (الخزفي) شكل ١ الذي يملك في التعبير الحر مما أتاح للفنان أن يغير شكل وملامح القط العادي إلي شكل آخر من أنواع القطط الأسطورية، لما يحمله الفنان طه حسين في خزينته الإريثة نتيجة نشأته في حي (سيدنا الحسين) المليء بكل القيم الشرقية المورثة عن العقيدة. وهذا القط قام بعمله في مدينة كريفلد بألمانيا عام ١٩٥٩. كما تتضمن المجموعة خزفيات

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حجرية منقوش عليها في طبيعة الحجر. فالفنان كان متفردا بالمجموعات المسماة stone ware في شكلها وملمسها، وطريقة تناولها قد تكون أقل حرارة عند حرقها إنها تعطيك الإحساس بالفورم (الشكل) المتكامل للشكل الحجري في الطبيعة، وأيضا الشعور باللامس الخشنة للصخور وملمسها الحادة.

الكلمات الدالة: محمد طه حسين - الأعمال الخزفية - متحف الفن المصري الحديث.