

# Alwan for Arts highlights Egypt in New York City

Farah Montasser, Monday 8 Aug 2011

Alwan for Arts and the Queens Museum of Arts in New York City feature Egypt starting Friday 12 August, with a live performance and screening of the film Heliopolis



Two arts organisations in New York City dedicate a week to Egypt. “We are proud to present Target Passport Fridays: Egypt on 12 August at 6:30pm in Flushing Meadows Corona Park.”

The event in the Big Apple will feature dance and music performances by Zikrayat and a screening of Ahmed Abdalla’s film, Heliopolis.

Alwan for the Arts and the Queens Museum of Art sponsor the programme on Egypt. Liz Behrend, acting director of Alwan for Arts said about her organisation to Ahram Online: “Alwan for the Arts proudly brings New York events on Middle Eastern arts, culture and politics.”

This event is part of the Target Passport Fridays 2011 and the Queens Museum of Art’s 7th international film, dance and music series. “This week we celebrate Egypt!” exclaimed Behrend.

The Zikrayat troupe will kick off the programme, presenting the classical traditions of Egypt and the greater Arab world through song and dance. “Alternating between vocal and instrumental pieces, the group is inspired by the golden age of Egyptian musical cinema from the 1940s to 1960s,” Behrend says.

The live performance will be followed by the screening of Ahmed Abdallah's movie, Heliopolis, which received much recognition throughout major film festivals around the world when released in 2009. "Heliopolis discusses the lives of a number of Cairo residents and portrays their unfulfilled dreams and frustrating details of life in the overpopulated metropolis," she comments.

This week is not the first time the centre celebrates Egypt. Among its recent Egypt-related events are the 90th birthday celebration for Egyptian composer, Halim El-Dabh; a storytelling event called Great Conversations: Revolution-Telling the Tale with Ahdaf Soueif; a benefit concert for Egypt, with proceeds donated to Resala and Fat'het Kheir, as well as other events.

"The Egyptian Revolution created particular interest within the New York cultural and political scene for arts and journalism reflecting the changes in Egypt," Behrend told Ahram Online.

"This interest has bolstered attendance at Alwan's Egyptian events, as well as political discussions on the Arab Spring," she says. It is worth mentioning that all cultural activities and events at Alwan for Arts are totally free of charge.

Alwan for Arts serves the Arab community and aims to educate the broader public by showcasing a range of cultural events, thereby enriching cross-cultural and artistic encounters. "Alwan is committed to maintaining a space for reflection, dialogue and growth in the arts and cultures of the peoples of the Middle East, North Africa, and the diaspora," says Behrend.

"Since 1998, Alwan for the Arts has been playing a leading role in promoting the diverse cultures of the Arab countries in New York City," Behrend told Ahram Online. Alwan for Arts organises film festivals and screenings, book and poetry readings and signings, lectures and conferences, art exhibits, musical and theatrical performances and language and literature classes. In 2003, Alwan for Arts established a centre in lower Manhattan, which provides a physical base for its diverse cultural activities.

Alwan for Arts  
Flushing Meadows Corona Park  
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