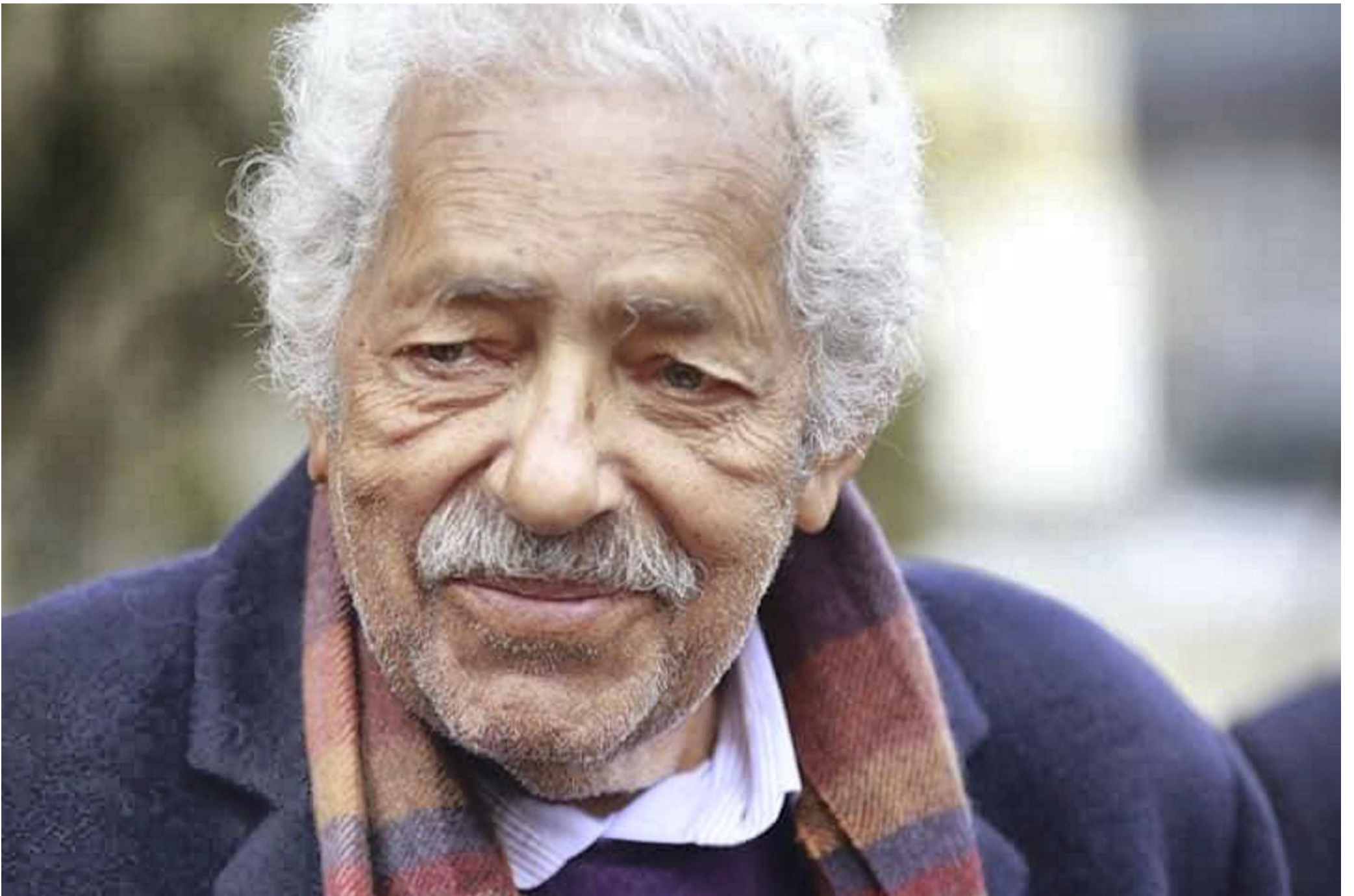


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Celebrated Egyptian Sculptor Adam Henein Has Died at 91

BY **TESSA SOLOMON** May 22, 2020 1:53pm

Artist Adam Henein.
COURTESY FACEBOOK/ADAM HENEIN FOUNDATION

Egyptian artist [Adam Henein \(https://www.artnews.com/t/adam-henein/\)](https://www.artnews.com/t/adam-henein/), whose acclaimed sculptures and paintings united modernist abstraction with pharaonic iconography, died on Friday at 91. Essam Darwish, the deputy director of Henein's foundation, told the Associated Press that the artist died of "age-related complications" at a hospital in Cairo.

Henein counts among the most influential Arab artists of his generation, with a practice that centered Egypt's working-class citizens and their natural surroundings and utilized traditional Egyptian materials such as bronze, granite, and papyrus. Birds in flight were a recurring motif, appearing in geometric sculptures whose scale spanned the intimate to the monumental.

"I used to wake up and run to the windows and watch for a long time the birds," Henein said in a documentary produced by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt. "It transports you to another place, another language, another world."

Adam Henein was born in Cairo in 1929 to a family of metalworkers from Asyut. As he recalled, a childhood trip to Cairo's Egyptian Antiquities Museum proved formative. "Suddenly I had this weird feeling that I was discovering another world, away from the textbooks, physics, and chemistry classes and breakfast with the family," Henein said in an interview in 2011.

In the mid-'50s Henein earned degrees from the School of Fine Arts in Cairo and Munich's Academy of Fine Arts, and by the '60s he had established himself as one of his home country's preeminent sculptors. Work was punctuated by long studies of Egypt's heritage sites and, in 1972, he and his wife, anthropologist Afaf el-Deeb, departed Egypt for further education in Paris. After 25 years they returned to Cairo, where Henein produced some of his most lauded commissions, such as the restoration of the Sphinx of Giza in 1998.

In 1996, Henein established the annual Aswan International Sculpture Symposium in the city of Aswan. In 2014, he converted his home in Giza into an eponymous museum. Among his many accolades are Egypt's State Medal, the Mubarak Award, and the State Merit Award.

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