

le crayon khôl

Mahmoud Mokhtar, Contemporary Egyptian Sculpture and Revolutionary Spirit

POSTED ON JULY 3, 2013 BY LECRAYONKHOL

In light of recent events in Egypt, it is perhaps of interest to shine light on an important member of Egypt's modern artistic history. Mahmoud Mokhtar was a sculptor extraordinaire who was born in 1891 in the Nile Delta.



(<https://lecrayonkhol.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/au-bord-du-nil.jpg>)

"Au Bord du Nil" (On the Banks of the Nile)

It was at a young age that he began making statues out of the clay that was easily available to him in this particular region. He and his mother eventually immigrated to Cairo, and he began to attend the Cairo School of Fine arts in 1908, the year the institution opened.

It was from this point on that Mokhtar began to establish himself in his name and signature style, moving to Paris to attend l'École des Beaux Arts in Paris, France in 1911 and studying under the auspices of French sculptor Georges Laplagne.

In 1919, Egyptians revolted against the British domination of Egypt and Sudan, leading to Britain's recognition of Egyptian independence in 1922. Mokhtar was still living in France at the time of the revolution but was nonetheless inspired into creating his most famous work, "*Nahdet Misr*" (The Awakening of Egypt), which is now a major cultural landmark gracing the Giza streets. It was revealed in 1928.



(<https://lecrayonkhol.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/nahdet-masr.jpg>)

"Nahdat Misr" (Egypt's Awakening)

Mokhtar's style was greatly influenced by his surroundings and showcases a blend of traditional European sculpture coupled with a style reminiscent of ancient Egypt.

He prolifically sculpted similarly nationalistic statues of revolutionary figures and symbols up until his death in 1934.

Today his works can be seen at various traffic circles throughout Cairo, as well as at the Mokhtar Museum in the Garden City district. Opened in 1962, this museum holds nearly 100 sculptures made of stone, basalt, bronze, marble, granite and plaster and was designed by another contemporary Egyptian sculptor, Ramses Wissa Wassef.

For more information about the museum, please pay it a visit on your next trip to Cairo by going to 5 El Tahrir St. El Gezirah, Cairo, Egypt. For the most recent article about Mahmoud Mokhtar, published on what would have been his 120th birthday, please click [here](#)