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RAGHEB AYAD

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Recognized as the 'liberator of modern Egyptian art' and widely celebrated for his utterly human and insanely caricature-like pioneering depictions of Souks in Cairo and Cafés in Aswan, Ragheb Ayad (1892-1982) married the Italian-born painter Emma Caly (1897-1989) in 1930. Ragheb was thirty-eight, Emma, thirty-three.

Inseparable ever since, Ragheb Ayad went on establishing himself as one of the most influential artists of the 20th-century, with a six-decade-long career that spanned two kings (Fouad I and Farouk), three presidents (Mohamed Naguib, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Anouar el-Sadat) and two national revolutions (1919 and 1952), while Emma Caly-Ayad affirmed herself as a distinguished and prolific painter in her own way.

BUT, as with many artistic couples, the husband gained more popularity than the wife, and eventually, Emma was lost in the gaps of history.