

Ibrahim El Dessouki

"Synchronizing light and shadow"

written by Aya Alireza & Raneem Farsi

Hafez Gallery is proud to present Egyptian artist Ibrahim El Dessouki's first solo exhibition in Saudi Arabia. The exhibition will be showing a range of works from across the artist's most seminal series. A trailblazer in the world of Egyptian contemporary painting, El Dessouki is renowned for his personal and unique style using the time-honored medium of oil painting, a style that together with his distinctive choice of subject, consummately encapsulates the spirit of modern day Egypt, but also, draws from the echoes of its rich cultural past. El Dessouki successfully treads that precarious thin line, neither completely conforming to tradition, nor completely rebelling against it.

By far El Dessouki's favourite and most prolific subject is the female figure. His paintings summon the archetypal Egyptian woman, with a well-rounded figure and Pharonic features. With their gossamer-like robes that neither reveal nor conceal, they resemble deities in their statue form, for their eyes remain impenetrably blank, staring sphinx-like into the unseen, alluding to the mysteries beyond.

El Dessouki delves even further into the sacred visual landscape of ancient Egypt with his paintings of the columns and temples of the ancient city of Luxor. However, far from being ordinary architectural representations, El Dessouki's columns hum with a mystical energy. The columns cast shadows that place the site firmly across the threshold of two worlds, one set in darkness the other in light. The structures appear monumental and awe-inspiring, making the viewer feel tiny in comparison, although the paintings are in reality no larger than human-size.