

MAQ'AD OF SULTAN QAITBEY:

a Place for Art and Culture in the *Desert of the Mamluks* in Cairo

NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2019



The illustrious Sultan al-Ashraf Qaitbey, (reigned 1496 – 1468) was a great patron of arts. His funerary complex in the Desert of the Mamluks in Cairo is a masterpiece of Mamluk architecture. In 15-2014, the Cairo-based consulting firm ARCHINOS Architecture conserved and adapted a sumptuous reception hall within this complex. Now its not—for-profit sister organisation the Sultan Foundation operates it as a hub for art and culture in the neighbourhood. The project is primarily funded by the European Union, with contributions from the Drosos Foundation, Alfanar Founfation and many other donors.

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Dear Friends, Colleagues, Supporters, and Collaborators,

After a long summer in Egypt, temperatures are finally dropping, and winter is on its way. This doesn't mean that we are taking a break. MASQ– the Maq'ad of Sultan Qaitbey in Cairo is buzzing with people working, talking and laughing. We want to share with you the latest news about the Sultan Foundation and activities at the MASQ.



Take a look at our recent events

The summer was marked by three remarkable events in the maq'ad:

In a three-day event in July, the Egyptian musicians al-Dor el-Awwal, and Klaxics, and the Sudanese Asia Madani filled the maq'ad with their sounds – very different in style, but always enthralling. In an exhibition that accompanied the event, various Egyptian artists displayed their work reflecting in visual terms on the world of musical sound.



In August, we screened winning documentaries from MegaCities-ShortDocs, a Citizen Film Festival that highlights inspiring local initiatives which bring solutions to problems of megacities around the world. It included “Cold Dissent” that won Taher ‘Abd al-Ghani and Ahmad “Zizo” ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, both ARCHiNOS’ long-time collaborators, the Best Short Film prize at the Biennale Spazio Pubblico festival in Rome. It was a very informative evening accompanied by Taher’s talk *Film: A Tool for Social Change*.



In October, the two-day Nordic Nights event featured opening of the exhibition of Swedish artist Fabian Edelstam, a concert of the Swedish musical trio “Jidder” presenting folk music of from Scania, and a performance of the Icelandic group “Marble Crowd” that combined dance, theatre, and visual arts. Even the unusual rain (yes, sometimes it happens in Cairo, too!) could not diminish the event’s appeal.



Summer Workshops at MASQ

This summer, the maq'ad was busy with many creative and educational workshops.

- The Women Workshop that started recently is a place for women of the Qaitbey neighbourhood to exchange ideas, help us in our projects and events and let us know about issues that they believe need to be addressed.
- Our wonderful cooperation with Cairo Runners has been going on for a whole year now. In a fitting end-of-season event, the children of the Qaitbey area went for an exciting trip to the Fagnoon Arts and Crafts Centre, where both the children and the instructors enjoyed a day full of creativity. We are looking forward to many more seasons and thank the team of Cairo Runners for an amazing experience!
- The Nahda Arts School for Social Theatre (affiliated to the Jesuit School in Cairo) is taking the children of the Qaitbey neighbourhood on a theatrical journey during their workshops. We are excited with the prospect of watching the performance that will result from the workshops and see what the children have learnt.



- Zomba is how we call an aerobic exercise to the sound of Latin American rhythms that has now arrived in the Maq'ad of Sultan Qaitbey. Under the guidance of our wonderful instructor Zeinab the ladies of the area can enjoy their time of physical exercise in a friendly environment.
- The Poppy Dance team offers to the youngsters what Zeinab does to the women: dedicating space and time to physical exercise. Poppy Dance as well involves a lot of body control. Would you come and attend one of the classes?
- Our literacy courses address a serious problem of the area. Our students are eager to learn and sometimes even take quite a trip to attend the classes. Those who successfully complete the course are issued a certificate by the Egyptian General Authority for Adult Education.



- MISHKĀ is a brand of extraordinary leather products that are made by the women of the area who have been trained by our project. This summer we extended the programme and organised a workshop with the inspiring instructor Heba teaching the secrets of brass jewellery making. Join our next 'Sultan Fair', see the beautiful pieces, meet the women who create them, and perhaps take some purchases home.



Call for Volunteers

We are introducing weekly English courses for young people and adults in the area. We are therefore looking for motivated and reliable English instructors. If you have some background of classroom-based, proactive and student-centered teaching, then apply for an internship at the Sultan Foundation in the Maq'ad of Sultan Qaitbey.

You will acquire high-quality experience in an NGO working environment, gain first-hand knowledge of a fascinating neighbourhood that combines centuries-long history with the mastery of traditional crafts and a vibrant community, and obtain an internship certificate that can benefit your future career plans.

If you're interested, please send your CV and a short motivation letter to carolina@archinos.com.

Our site office address: Darb al-Saqia Street behind Qaitbey Mosque, 'City of the Dead', 11695 Cairo, Egypt.

Coming next...

- On 16 November 2019, a lecture about Max Herz Pasha, whose conservation work made an indelible impact on the monuments of Cairo (including our maq'ad) will be delivered by the leading authority on the subject, Prof István Ormos of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. We dedicate the lecture at MASQ to the memory of Professor George T. Scanlon (2014 – 1925), a great scholar of Islamic art history, an outstanding educator, and a man of larger-than-life personality and a truly generous mind.
- Before the lecture, Jaroslaw Dobrowolski, an experienced conservation architect with genuine passion for Islamic monuments will lead a "Sultan Qaitbey Tour" through the Desert of the Mamluks. It is part of our programme of promoting cultural tourism to the area to allow visitors to enjoy this fascinating, but often overseen part of Historic Cairo, a UNESCO Heritage Site.
- Our annual Christmas market will take place in December and will be the answer to your pressing questions of finding the right Christmas gifts for your loved ones. Check out our Facebook page in time for news!

We wish you an enjoyable winter season and hope that our events will be its highlights.

The Sultan Foundation Team



funded by the European Union

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