

Egypt: The Eternal Spirit of Egypt and Its People

A photographic exhibition
by Jack Jonathan

a review by Bruce Bradley,
former Librarian and curator at the Linda Hall Library in Kansas City

In Brief

This exhibition of original photographs of scenes from Egypt was first shown in Cairo in 1952, at the time of the first Egyptian revolution. A lifetime of events has occurred since then, and yet these images remain vibrant and revealing of the eternal qualities of Egypt's history and people. Prints for the original exhibition were made from black and white negatives. For the current exhibition, the prints were digitized for reproduction with high quality inkjet printers, enhancing the shadows and tonal effects produced by the brilliant sun of the Egyptian sky. A total of 90 black and white enlarged images are included in the exhibition, all taken in the late 1940s and early 1950s. An exhibition catalogue has been prepared and is ready for printing, and a short introductory video introducing the exhibition and the photographer is available.

Exhibition summary

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, photographer Jack Jonathan documented the beauty of the Egyptian world in which he lived and worked. His unique images, products of their own historical time and place, manage to capture an almost timeless quality of the Egyptian world, its people, places, and landscapes. Feluccas, the traditional Egyptian boats, sailing on the Nile and silhouetted by the great Pyramids in the background, offer an Egyptian scene familiar in any historical period. Yet an image of this scene can still be unique to a particular time in the mid-20th century.

The faces of Egypt are a special focus of the exhibition, which highlights people as varied as a peasant woman beaming a broad smile in the morning sunshine and a Vogue model posing in the doorway of an ancient ruin. Serene Egyptian youth, gazing into the distant desert or returning from the fields after a day's work that began at sunrise, embody the potential strength and hope for the future. A fisherman on the Nile has the same wish as his ancestors, that his nets will be full. The symbols of Egypt's antiquity, be it the face of the

Sphinx or a bas-relief of the goddess Mout greeting King Amenophis II, serve as ancient reminders of the region's rich cultural past and prosperity.

Through these striking images in black and white, this exhibition documents the eternal spirit of the Egyptian people. It is a spirit of warm tolerance toward others, of hope for the future, and strength in the present. It couples with the sublime beauty of the timeless historical artifacts of Egyptian culture. Jack Jonathan's riveting photographs give us a glimpse of Egypt that is as fresh and revealing today as it was more than half a century ago.

The exhibition is scheduled to open in Cairo in January 2016, in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the new Library of Alexandria. A venue for the exhibition in the United States, preferably in the Kansas City area, is currently being sought.

Other Reviews of the 2016 Exhibition in Alexandria, Egypt

Gamal Hosni, Director of the Exhibitions and Art Collections at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt

"The uniqueness of these photographs is their originality because Mr. Jonathan was an initiated amateur who had a huge passion for photography and a passion for Egypt. In his eyes the subject took on a depth, a taste of its own. He saw Egypt in a different light."

Marc Segan, Inventor, Art Publisher, Businessman, New York

"Jack Jonathan's generous eye offers us gorgeous images of a place both long gone and yet still with us. His remarkable collection resonates today in its reminder that Egypt remains even now much more than headlines would suggest."

Mark Ormond, Curator, Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, FL

"Mr. Jonathan's personal story and his images, together produce an amazing narrative and are a time capsule of a moment in our global history."

Judy Farley, MD Kansas City, MO

"Such great composition, value, contrast, and content all in individual images. A real record of history as well as art".

Mary Eisenhower, Advisory Board member, People to People, Kansas City, MO

"Your eye truly catches the inner spirit of Egypt".

Spero Criezis, Houston, TX

"It is lovely. It has such a tender, loving remembrance of your time there. The photos are easy to feel connected to"....

