



Mohieddin Ellabbad

Celebrated Egyptian author and illustrator Mohieddin Ellabbad was born in 1940 in Cairo. At 7 years old, he announced that he would like to be an artist. This was a shock to his father who, as Ellabbad conveys, “had hoped that I would be the first person in the family to wear trousers and have a respectable, middle-class job.” After first starting in the Faculty of Medicine in 1957 to appease his father, he quickly switched to painting in the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo, in the workshop of renowned illustrator Hussein Bikar, where he worked until 1962. While at the Faculty of Fine Arts, he published his first of several children’s books with Dar al-Maarif publishers in Cairo, *Malikat al-Jazar* (“Queen of the Carrots”), in 1961. Under the tutelage of Bikar, work on children’s publications continued to be his focus as he published pieces in Bikar’s popular weekly children’s magazine *Sindbad*.

He has since taken many leadership roles in the industry of children’s publications in the Arab world. In 1963, he was co-founder and managing editor of a children’s weekly magazine, *Karawan*; in 1974, he became co-founder and art director of the PanArab Publishing House, specializing in children’s books; in 1977, he was art director and editor of “The Art Workshop for Children’s Books” in Cairo. In 1983, he created the editorial concept and master design of a monthly magazine for children, *Al-Arabi Assaghir*, published in Kuwait, a role he took on again for the monthly Arabic literary supplement *Kitaab fi Jarida* (Book in a Newspaper), a PanArab UNESCO project, from 1995 to 2000. He was art director for the “Children’s Books Project” in the culture department of the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1989.

Ellabbad has left his mark all over the world. In addition to writing and illustrating numerous fiction and non-fiction books for children (which have been translated into English, French, German, Dutch, Japanese, Italian, and Persian), he has shared his vision as art director, art consultant, and senior graphic designer for Arab and international publishing houses. He has presented several individual expositions abroad, curated exhibitions of Arab illustrators at book fairs in Bologna, Cairo, Utrecht, and most recently, Paris, as well as served as a member of the jury for Arab and international exhibitions and awards.

Ellabbad is the recipient of many awards himself: “The Most Beautiful Arab Book” at the Arabic Book Fair in Beirut, 1975, 1979, and 1992; Mention of Honor, Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), 1975; silver medal at the Leipzig International Book Fair, 1985; the Golden Apple award, BIB, 1989; “Octogone de Chêne” prize from Centre International d’Etudes en Littératures de Jeunesse, Paris, 1994; “Monatsbuchs” prize from *Eselsohr* magazine, Germany, 2002; “Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis,” Frankfurt, 2002; and “Die Blau Brillenschlange” prize, Switzerland, 2004.

A selection of his published works as author-illustrator (in Arabic) includes the following titles: *Lugha Biduun Kalimaat* (Language Without Words); *Mulaahazaat* (Observations); *T-Shirt*; *Hikaayat al-Kitaab* (Story of the Book); *Thalaathiina Su’aalan* (Thirty Questions); and *Nazar* (Vision, or Perception), 4 editions. *The Illustrator’s Notebook*, his most recent book and the first to come to North America, was published in its English version in 2006, and currently exists in translation in German and French as well. It is the recipient of numerous awards: Middle East Outreach Council Youth Non-Fiction Award, 2006; New York Public Library’s Books for the Teen Age award, 2007; International Reading Association’s Book Award Notables selection, 2007;

Children's Literature Assembly Notable Children's Books in the Language Arts selection from the National Council of Teachers of English, 2007; and Children's Africana Book Award, 2007.

Sources:

*Information for this essay was obtained from the author and from "Mohieddin Ellabbad: Starting an International Career from Cairo" by Jürgen Stryjak (translation from German by Aingeal Flanagan), 2004, available at:

http://www.qantara.info/webcom/show_article.php/c-564/

*photo obtained from above web site

Appendix contents (PDF files)

Arabic Alphabet grid (filled in)

Arabic Alphabet grid (blank)

Large renditions of assalamu `alaykum, marhaba, and ahlan wa sahan

Arabic (Indian) numbers 1-12 for clock activity

Postage stamp template (from Smithsonian National Postal Museum web site)

Glossary

acronym—a word formed by the first letters of words in a phrase, as in MADD
(Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

ahlan wa sahan—Arabic expression for “welcome”

assalaamu alaykum—Arabic expression for “peace be with you”

the Basmala—shortened expression for the Muslim Arabic phrase which states
“In the name of God, compassionate and merciful”

calligraphy—the art of writing beautifully

cartographer—a person who makes maps

compass rose—a symbol on a compass or map that is circular with graded points
for the directions

Crusades—a series of wars fought from the late 11th through the 13th centuries, in
which European kings and warriors set out to gain control of the lands in
which Jesus lived, known as the Holy Land; at that time, these areas were
held largely by Muslims

currency—something that is used as a medium of exchange, such as money

delta—a roughly triangular area of land formed at the mouth of a river which
reaches the sea in two or more branches

epic—a long narrative poem telling of a hero's adventures and accomplishments

equivalent—equal in value, measure, force, effort, significance, etc.

evoke—to produce or suggest

flourish—to be successful; prosper; thrive

henna—a reddish brown dye obtained from the leaves of the henna plant and
used especially on hair and skin

inherit—to receive by genetic transmission; for example, one might say, “I
inherited my good eyesight from my mother”; one can also inherit land or
money from relatives who have died

kaatib—Arabic word for “the writer”

kashkuul—Arabic word for “notebook, scrapbook, or album”

loom—a machine for weaving thread or yarn into cloth

marhaba—Arabic word for “hello” or “hi”

masjid – Arabic word for “mosque” (see below)

Mediterranean Sea – an inland sea surrounded by Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and northern Africa. It connects with the Atlantic Ocean through the Strait of Gibraltar; with the Black Sea through the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus; and with the Red Sea through the Suez Canal

mosque – a Muslim place of worship

numeral – a symbol or mark used to represent a number

orient – to align or position with respect to a point or system of reference (for example, a compass is oriented to the North)

ornamental – decorative

Ottoman Empire – a former Turkish empire that was founded about 1300 and reached its greatest territorial extent in the 16th century; it collapsed after World War I

perspective – a mental view or outlook

pigment – a substance, such as chlorophyll or melanin, that produces a color in plant or animal tissue

preliminary – coming before, and preparing for, something

printing press – a machine that transfers letters or images through ink on paper

rassaam – Arabic word for “the illustrator, artist, one who draws”

salaam – Arabic word for peace

scribe – a professional copyist of manuscripts and documents

script – the characters or letters used in writing by hand; any system of writing

souvenir – a reminder of something you have done or a place you have visited

streetcar – a public vehicle for transporting people in a city, like a trolley car or trolley bus

sub-Saharan – the region of Africa to the south of the Sahara Desert

sultan – a ruler of a Muslim country, especially of the former Ottoman Empire

sura – a chapter of the Qur’an, the holy book of Islam

style – the way in which something is said, done, expressed, or performed; a quality of imagination and individuality expressed in one’s actions and tastes

tapestry – a heavy cloth woven with rich, often multicolored designs or scenes, usually hung on walls for decoration and sometimes used to cover furniture

triumph – success

tughra – Arabic word for “signature”

values – the ideas, customs, principles, etc. of a society

wa – Arabic word for “and”

Note: many of these definitions are adapted from www.dictionary.com

APPENDIX

THE ARABIC ALPHABET

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THE ARABIC ALPHABET

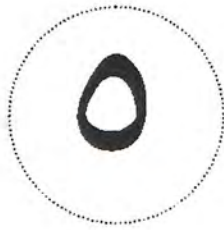
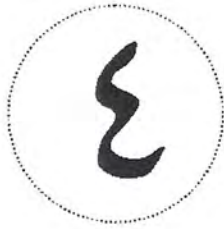
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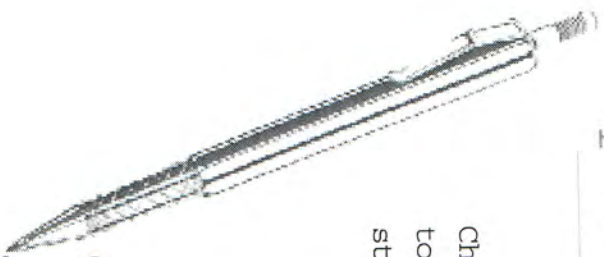




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places
events
important issues
games
plants
artists

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