



## ***Interfaith art exhibition***

**“Painted fiberglass interfaith life-size donkeys caravan from Cairo, Egypt to St. Paul’s Cathedral, London”**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 22, 2013**

***CARAVAN* interfaith art exhibition-“In Peace and with Compassion—The Way Forward, Out of Egypt”**

***Premier Egyptian and Western Artists using the Arts as a bridge across creeds and cultures 2-23 September at St. Paul’s Cathedral, London***

As Egypt continues to garner the world’s attention as it seeks to find its path into the future, St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, will be hosting a unique interfaith art exhibition of Egypt’s premier visual artists titled “In Peace and with Compassion—The Way Forward, Out of Egypt” from September 2-23, 2013, sponsored by the Embassy of Switzerland in Egypt, and supported by the British Council.

Ever since Egypt’s revolution in 2011, its people have repeatedly impressed the world by beautifully embodying the spirit of interfaith solidarity. As a result of their ongoing “revolution,” a parallel revolution has place in the minds of many Egyptians about their value to each other...regardless of creed, as an unprecedented coming together of Egyptian Muslims and Christians has been witnessed at the grassroots level as an inter-religious movement of the two faiths work together side by side toward re-shaping their country.

One of the most encouraging symbolic images have been the spontaneous displays of public art among artists around the country, where Christian and Muslim artists paint murals reflecting their sense of oneness as Egyptians. Also, as their “revolution” brought about a new interfaith spirit, thousands of Egyptian Muslims and Christians have painted on public walls the cross and crescent embracing or intertwined, with slogans in Arabic calligraphy such as “The crescent and the cross are one. We are all Egyptians, Muslim and Christian”.

In Egypt, while the outcry from many political and religious groups in condemning sectarian tension has been impressive, Rev. Canon Paul-Gordon Chandler, Founder of the *CARAVAN* interfaith arts movement and Curator of the 2013 exhibition says, “It is critical that ‘creative demonstrations of dialogue’ be created”.

As sponsors of the 2013 Caravan exhibition, The Honorable Dominik Furgler, Ambassador of Switzerland to the United Kingdom (and formerly Swiss’ Ambassador to Egypt), says, “I am particularly delighted to be directly associated to this wonderful initiative, Caravan interfaith art exhibition. In a world and time where sectarian tension, prejudice or ignorance seem to prosper, we must do whatever we can to further dialogue and the mutual knowledge about our religious traditions and convictions. This Caravan exhibition is doing just that, with the Arts uniting us as a language of love and peace.”

In recognition of the many Muslims and Christians who are peacefully together walking the road toward a new Egypt, St. Paul's Cathedral is hosting the 2013 CARAVAN art exhibition with the theme "In Peace and with Compassion...The Way Forward, Out of Egypt" as a creative demonstration of inter-religious dialogue and intercultural exchange.

Believing that the Arts can be one of the most effective mediums of building bridges of understanding, respect and friendship between East and West, their creed and cultures, the exhibition seeks to communicate the important message of tolerance between Christians and Muslims, living together in "peace and with compassion"...a message that comes "out of Egypt" for the rest of the world.

Over 45 premier Egyptian and Western visual artists were invited to participate in this unique international public art-oriented exhibition held first in Cairo in May 2013, which attracted visitors from around the world and generated attention from the international media and art world.

The CARAVAN exhibition follows in the footsteps of an approach to public art that has featured painted animals, yet with an added depth in its symbolism, intention and message. It is with this purpose that the donkey was selected. The donkey symbolizes *peace* in both Christianity and Islam, and is found in both the Bible and in the Qur'an. Examples are numerous, such as both Jesus and Omar Ibn El Khattab, the second caliph, each riding donkeys when they entered Jerusalem. This is why the theme is "In Peace.....". The donkey also represents the poor, as it is an animal of burden, and this is especially the case in Egypt. Hence the full theme of the exhibition is "In Peace and with Compassion".

Through this unique art initiative these Christian and Muslim artists are making a public statement that the way forward for Egypt and the rest of the world, among all faiths, is a whole new kind of movement, one that looks on the other "in peace and with compassion".

Each participating artist painted/decorated a life-size fiberglass donkey that was sculpted specifically for this exhibition by the noted Egyptian artist Reda Abdel Rahman. All the painted fiberglass donkeys were first exhibited at the Anglican Church of St. John the Baptist in Cairo, a center for interfaith dialogue for over 80 years. Then the life-size painted fiberglass donkeys were placed throughout Cairo at strategic public locations (hotel lobbies, art galleries, cultural centers, universities, schools, community associations, etc.).

Following their Cairo public display, 25 of the life-size donkeys were selected to travel to London for a traveling interfaith public-art exhibition at St. Paul's Cathedral, a sacred place known globally for its role in the Arts as well as interfaith relations. Following their exhibition at St. Paul's Cathedral, the donkeys will be auctioned off by Sotheby's in London for charities in Egypt that serve the poorest of the poor regardless of creed.

-----  
**The 25 participating visual artists include:**

### ***Egyptian Artists***

Adel Naseef  
Adel Tharwat  
Ahmed El Kut  
Ahmed Kassim

Ashraf Reda  
Ayman El Smary  
Carelle Homsy  
Farid Fadel  
Gamal Ez  
George Bahgory  
Hayam Abdel Baky  
Hend Adnan  
Ibrahim El Dessouky  
Karim Abd EL Malak  
Khaled Hafiz  
Marwa Adel  
Moataz Nasreldin  
Mohamed Abla  
Mohamed Talaat  
Rania Fouad  
Reda Abd El Rahman  
Sabah Naim  
Sameh Ismail

**Western Artists**

Anne-Francoise Giraud, France  
Claire Marie Pearman, UK

-----  
For more information or to request an interview, please contact Ed Holmes at St. Paul's Cathedral by email: [eholmes@stpaulscathedral.org.uk](mailto:eholmes@stpaulscathedral.org.uk). Photographs available upon request.

**CARAVAN exhibition: "In Peace and with Compassion—the Way Forward, Out of Egypt"**

**Website:** [www.oncaravan.org/exhibitibion5/index.htm](http://www.oncaravan.org/exhibitibion5/index.htm)

**Facebook--CARAVAN:**

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Caravan-Festival-of-the-Arts/156946157687350>

**St Paul's Cathedral, London**

<http://www.stpauls.co.uk>

Sponsored by:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

**Embassy of Switzerland**

Supported by:

