

Abdulhalim Radwi

Originally from Makkah, Abdulhalim Radwi (1939-2006) was a painter, poet and sculptor in Jeddah and a pioneer of contemporary arts in Saudi Arabia. He was one of the first Saudis to go abroad for an art education and held a BA degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome (1964).

Radwi started his career as a teacher of fine arts in Makkah but became involved with the arts on a governmental level. From 1968-1974 he was director of the Jeddah Centre for Fine Arts and later (1980-1992) Director-General of the Culture and Arts of the City of Jeddah. In 1973 Radwi spent time in Madrid where he was Action Director of the Association of Arab Artists. In 1979 Radwi graduated from the Royal Arts Academy in Madrid.

He was awarded many art prizes and honors while he spent much time abroad organizing as many as 105 exhibitions. His family maintain a website of his work, which can also be seen in museums of modern art in Jordan, Brazil, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia.

In 2008, Riyadh's Hewan Gallery offered for sale watercolors and an oil painting. On October 30, 2008, Christie's auctioned Still Life (1956). Radwi signed this work twice: in Latin script on the lower left and in arabic on the lower right.

Radwi's paintings dealt mostly with Saudi lifestyle and he is said to have believed that Saudi artists must always keep an eye on their national identity. His two personal favorite paintings were The Recitation of Qur'an, which won a prize at the 1988 Biennale in Spain, and Old Buildings in Makkah, which he refused to sell

for half a million Saudi riyals and kept in his personal museum in Jeddah.