



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Egyptian Women in Street Art and Graffiti

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EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ Following the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, locally known as the January 25 Revolution, a growing number of Egyptian women joined the burgeoning street artist movement that protests military rule, corruption, gender disparity, and sexual harassment.¹
- ❖ According to a 2013 UN Women report, 99.3 percent of Egyptian women say they have been the victim of sexual harassment; the majority of famous street art symbols directly highlight this issue.²
- ❖ Inspired by the street art movement during the January 25 revolution, Mia Grondahl, a Swedish street art documentarian, and Angie Balata, an Egyptian artist, established the Cairo-based Women on Walls (WOW) in the early spring of 2013. WOW is a public art project that works to empower women through the use of street art by illustrating strong Egyptian female figures in street art and encouraging female street artists to participate in the political space of graffiti.³
- ❖ Created through the joint collaboration between WOW and the Al Balad Theater in Amman, WOWBaladk was the first regional street art festival in the Middle East. It took place from October 4th-11th, 2014. Half of the featured 25 graffiti artists were female. Annually holding its festivals in Amman, Jordan, WOW selects themes that are related to violence, sexual harassment, empowerment, and female icons.⁴
- ❖ One year after the 2011 revolution, a group of young men and women formed NooNeswa, a campaign that seeks to change attitudes toward women in Egypt. NooNeswa's first project, "Graffiti Harimi" ("Female Graffiti"), focuses on breaking social taboos through graffiti.⁵
- ❖ Since June 2011, SuzeeIntheCity (also known as Soraya Morayef), an Egyptian freelance journalist and blogger, created a blog titled "Art on the streets of Cairo" which documents the street art movement that flourished during the January 25th revolution in Egypt.⁶
- ❖ Released in 2015, the documentary Nefertiti's Daughters, showcases the role of Egyptian women street artists that are fighting for political and social change. The documentary sheds light on how Queen Nefertiti has been used a symbol for advancing women's rights and freedom in Egypt.⁷

¹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/04/egypts-graffiti-artists-make-their-mark-20144178384439962.html>

² http://harassmap.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/287_Summaryreport_eng_low-1.pdf

³ <http://womenonwalls.org/about/>

⁴ <https://womenonwalls.wordpress.com/jordan/>

⁵ <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/graffiti-campaign-brings-strong-female-voices-streets>

⁶ <http://muslima.globalfundforwomen.org/content/wipe-it-and-i-will-paint-again>

⁷ <http://www.neferitidisdaughters.com/film/>