



Supplied photos

**Abstract and cubist:** Two of the paintings in the Netherlands-Egypt Exhibition, which ends tomorrow.

# Playing with light and colour

**Hagar Saeed**

Three of her small paintings, currently being displayed in an exhibition in Cairo, are like 'fluctuating sands', which take you to a world of your mind's own making.

These paintings and others have been created by Dutch artist Liesbeth Verbeek, who, with the skilful manipulation of colour and light, has injected vigour and movement into them.

Liesbeth's works mesmerise the viewer, with their intense, vibrant colours – especially blue and yellow – which heighten their dynamism and vitality. Her luminous colours fill the viewer with joy and peace.

"I like to play with colours and see the result. My works make people energetic and happy, and this makes me happy, too, as I believe that this is what the world needs. If I can get people to forget their problems for a

few moments, then I've achieved something," the artist told *The Egyptian Gazette*.

"The combination of yellow and blue is so cheerful. Yellow generates joy and optimism, while blue, a heavenly colour, is cooling, restful and peaceful.

Most of Liesbeth's paintings have been inspired by cubism, in which the composition is vague and abstract, because the subject matter has been reduced to cubes or geometric forms, shaped according to the artist's perspective.

These cubist paintings in the exhibition are somehow intriguing, because they depict what the artist sees with her mind's eye.

Her beautiful mix of colours adds integrity and continuity to her compositions.

The recent Egyptian revolution has had an influence on Liesbeth's paintings.

In one of them, a turbaned man in a galabiyah waves the Egyptian flag with one hand, while raising the other high; he's surrounded by lots of Egyptian flags as well. The man is

jubilant, because the Egyptians have regained their dignity and freedom, and he opens his arms to welcome the New Egypt.

In another painting, there's a smiling boy, whose cheeks have been painted with the colours of the Egyptian flag. The painting shows the boy's immense affection and immense love for his country.

In these two paintings, Liesbeth tries to catch the 'heavenly atmosphere' of the Egyptian revolution, which ousted Hosni Mubarak.

"I live opposite Maspero [the State TV building], so, I was able to follow the revolution closely, not only on the news but also from my balcony. I felt the anger and the joy. I celebrated with the Egyptians."

"The atmosphere in Al Tahrir Square was like Heaven. The Egyptians created Heaven on Earth with their peaceful revolution. It was unbelievable! I sincerely hope that they will be able to maintain this

heavenly atmosphere," she said.

Talented Egyptian artist Noha Al-Alayly is participating in the exhibition too. Like Liesbeth, most of her paintings are abstract and cubist.

"Life has many layers. When viewers look at my paintings, I want them to think deeply about life and themselves," says Noha.

Most of her paintings are dark, but she also cleverly manipulates light in her works, as she wants to show the viewer "the contrast between dark and light, lies and truth".

The painters are from different countries, but the paintings of both of them are warm. The difference, according to Noha, is in "how we express these feelings".

*The 'Netherlands-Egypt Exhibition' is being held in Al-Kahila Art Gallery, 15 el-Batal Ahmed Abdel-Aziz St, Mohandiseen, Giza. It's closed today, but it's open tomorrow, the last day of the exhibition, from 11am to 8pm.*