***The American University in Cairo***

**Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Yehia Shaalan

**Narrator:** Rania El-Hakim

**Dates:** 17/03/14

**Place:** Narrator’s home 12 El Saleh Ayoub St.

Zamalek

**College**: The American University in Cairo

**Prof**.: Dr. Kim Fox

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17 March 2014

Persons present: Yehia Shaalan – I

Rania El-Hakim – S

Shaalan:  Hello, I'm Yehia Shaalan, an undergraduate at AUC studying communication and media arts and a reporter for Dr. Kim Fox's multimedia writing course. With me today is Rania El Hakim and AUC graduate, class of '79, with a bachelor's degree in business administration and who is also my mother. Rania is currently pursuing a career in art and has made a name for herself among the art community in Egypt. Rania, how do you identify yourself?

Hakim: I'm an artist, mother of three, and I live in Cairo. I like to travel a lot.

Shaalan: How was AUC different at that time?

Hakim: AUC was at Tahrir. It was a tiny building compared to now. There was only the main campus and the library...

Shaalan: Do you mean the main building?

Hakim: Yes, and then uhh the facilities of course.. i don't think that they.. they were like now. We had uhhhh.. one.. basket ball.. uhh.. court.. we had one tennis court, and uhh that's it.

Shaalan: What about the professors and the classes you took?

Hakim: Professors they were mainly uhh we didn't have a lot of foreign professors, they were mainly from the states and Egyptians. Uhhh.. the classes ehh they were not so very far apart so it was easy we used to gather in the recreation area, the fountain area, so we used to know each other, we were like a family, a small community, so it was really uhh fun.

Shaalan: Ehhm what did you do when you graduate[d]? Did you actually pursue a career in business?

Hakim: When i graduated I got married uhh we traveled for two years and then when we came back my family was just starting a new business, so i joined in this business.

Shaalan: What kind of business was that?

Hakim: uhh it was a fashion, in the fashion uhh business. They uhh launched a uhh men's wear, and i launched a uhh children's wear.

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Shaalan: Was the business a success?

Hakim: Yes it was a success uhh Concrete and Concrete generation [well known Egyptian clothes store], and we did well.

Shaalan: So they're known in Egypt..

Hakim: Yes.

Shaalan: yes, so what made it a success?

Hakim: At that time, people were ready for a new brand, local made, and it was not a franchise, it was our own new brand. And uhh we targeted the higher class, so uhh we made.. it was.. sport's we-uhh uhh casual wear, but it was really high quality, and our shops were very refined, they were all over the country, and alos we had shops abroad.

Shaalan: So why did you leave the business life and choose a career in art?

Hakim: After working for ten years in the business, we sold part of the uhh the business so things were not.. the same, so I started.. pursuing my passion, which is art.

Shaalan: How did your career in business affect you, versus your career in art?

Hakim: In art, uhh, in business it's different because when you do a business you think money wise, how.. what will you.. what will get more money. So when i did my collection I used to.. know what the fashion was, and I used to see what the people like, how will i con.. how will I make it, the colors, the models, and uhhh I had to make sure that this collection will sell. in art it's different, in art I.. do it with more passion, with more freedom, uuhhm I put a lot of love in my work, and i don't think about selling, but I do a lot of exhibitions, and people if they like, they will buy which is of course uhhh very nice.

Shaalan: When was your first exhibition?

Hakim: Uhh in two thousand and eight.

Shaalan: That's uhh six years ago?

Hakim: Seven years. in the seventh, i am now in the seventh year.

Shaalan: And how has your uhh career in art developed since then?

Hakim: Uhh I did a lot of group exhibition, ehhh I did four solo exhibitions, I did an exhibition in Kuwait, an exhibition in Azerbaijan. So I'mmm pretty well.

Shaalan: What kind of art do you do?

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Hakim: I do abstract art, and uhh I like to depict the energy of the uhh contrasts that exists in Egypt, because Egypt is very uhh has a lot of contrasts, if you walk in one street you will see the Islamic- an Islamic building, a christian building, a pharaonic temple, a very modern.. so it's a lot of uhh energy, so I depict this energy in my paintings.

Shaalan: ummm in these times of instability that our country is facing, why is art important?

Hakim: Art is important because.. technology, if technology is dispersing people and getting- making people go apart, art is the thing that will bond them again together. There is a lot of passion, a lot of ar- uhh a lot of love in art, and art has no language, so people can understand, the art of other countries, and it's very important that people see art of different countries, and they bond together and they discuss together and they feel the energy and love that exists, so this is the thing that will bond people together, so it's really very important that we stress on art and give it importance. Also in business, it's very important that uhh if I will.. uhh hire someone, I would like to hire someone with a creative or with an artistic uhh mind, because he will think out of the box, and he will give me a creative idea uuhh which is not familiar so it's really important, art, also in business, so.. it's really..

Shaalan: Hmmm, well we all hope that Egypt wil overcome the challenges that it's facing nowadays so that the coming generations would have the opportunities to pursue the things that they love. Thank you very much, Rania, for this beautiful interview.

Hakim: Thank you very much, Yehia. It was a pleasure.