



Garden Tapestries From
Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Center, Giza, Egypt
At San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas

January 8, 2017 – March 31, 2018

Daily

9 am – 5 pm

Ecke Building

High-resolution images are available for downloading at: <http://www.sdbgarden.org/media.htm>

Please note:

Glenn Weiss' lecture on the Wissa Wassef Tapestries scheduled on January 12 has been CANCELLED.

Back by popular demand... the hand-woven, one-of-a-kind, garden-themed tapestries from the Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre in Egypt will be on display at the San Diego Botanic Garden located in Encinitas once again this year!

The Egyptian artists who create these unique pieces, vividly celebrate the flowers of the desert, villages and Nile River in their work in this new exhibit from Monday, January 8 – Saturday, March 31, 2018 from 9 am – 5 pm in the Ecke Building at the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas.

Last year, these amazing hand-woven tapestries – that can take up to a year or even two for weavers to create – almost completely sold out with most of the proceeds going to the artisans who created them.

Visitors are invited to come early to add one of these original works of art to their collections. All 15 wool and 20 cotton weavings are on sale at the Garden.

These tapestries are the legacy of an “experiment in creativity” begun in 1952 by leading Egyptian architect Ramses Wissa Wassef. He was convinced that everyone is born with artistic gifts but that these develop only through practicing a craft from early childhood.

To test his theory, Wissa Wassef installed looms in a workshop in the village of Harrania, 6 miles from Cairo and invited village children to learn to weave. When they had grasped the basic technique he encouraged them to depict whatever they liked, laying down only three rules: No copying, No preliminary designs, No adult interference or criticism. His experiment rapidly demonstrated that any child is able to create works of staggering beauty and skill, confirming that innate creativity can grow with a child into adolescence and adulthood.

Since Ramses’ death in 1974, his widow Sophie and daughters Suzanne and Yoanna have expanded the experiment. Under their guidance several further generations of children have now mastered weaving. Currently, 30 adult wool and cotton weavers are actively work at the Art Centre in Egypt. This project has a strong impact on the community. It transformed the lives of the villagers, bringing prosperity, education, better health, self-respect and satisfaction to all and high status and equality to the women.

Fifteen wool tapestries and 20 cotton weavings will be on display in the Ecke Building at the San Diego Botanic Garden. Wall signs, books and a short documentary present the making of the tapestries and the aspirations of founder Ramses Wissa Wassef are also part of this educational and artistic display. All the tapestries are unique and woven by individual artists, whom work for up to 4 months on each tapestry. The Egyptian sheep wool is dyed with traditional vegetable dyes that are planted in the gardens of the art centre in Giza.

“The San Diego Botanic Garden has proven to be a perfect venue for the display of art,” said Julian Duval, President and CEO of San Diego

Botanic Garden. “We are extremely pleased to be the first public garden to display these unique plant- and garden-themed tapestries and share them with our visitors from the San Diego region and beyond.”

All of the tapestries on display are for sale and go towards supporting both the artist, the Art Center in Egypt and the Garden. Visitors can purchase a tapestry at the Garden’s Administrative Office Monday - Friday from 9 am – 5 pm during the duration of the show.

To view some of the tapestries on display, please visit www.sdbgarden.org/tapestries.htm.

Cost: Free with paid Garden admission or membership.

About San Diego Botanic Garden

Named as one of the “Top 10 North American Gardens Worth Traveling For” (in 2017) by the American Gardens Association, San Diego Botanic Garden is a beautiful urban retreat nestled on 37-acres in the midst of Encinitas. Visitors enjoy restful vistas, flowering trees, majestic palms, and the nation’s largest bamboo collection. Thanks to our mild Southern California climate, plants from all over the world thrive here. Our diverse topography provides a wide variety of microclimates giving visitors the sensation of strolling through a tropical rainforest to hiking in the desert. Four miles of trails wind through 29 uniquely themed gardens including the acclaimed Hamilton Children’s Garden.

About the Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre, Giza, Egypt

Since 1952 southwest of Cairo, Egypt, the Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre have been home of a unique experiment in tapestry weaving. The founder and architect Ramses Wissa Wassef (1911-1974) was dedicated to releasing the innate creativity of young Egyptian villagers freed from the constraints of a formal education. Exhibitions of the weavings have been presented at the Smithsonian in the USA and many museums in Europe. Today, the 12 acre Harrania village campus includes studios for 30-40 artists in textiles, a ceramic studio, two museums and fields growing madder and reseda for dyes. The Art

Centre is open to visitors free of charge on the road to the Sakkara pyramid complex. For more information visit WissaWassef.com or WissaWassefTapestries.us

Directions to the San Diego Botanic Garden
230 Quail Gardens Dr
Encinitas, CA
www.sdbgarden.org
760/436-3036

Encinitas, California is one of the beautiful towns on the Pacific Coast in northern San Diego County. Solana Beach, Del Mar, Carlsbad and Oceanside string along US101, I-5 and Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner.

The Garden is less than one mile east of exit 42 on I-5. Take Encinitas Blvd for ½ a mile east and turn left (north) on to Quail Gardens Drive for 1/3 a mile to the Garden's entrance (on the left hand side of the street).