

NEWS

The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington 98505

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for further information
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Tapestries woven by children in a tiny village near Cairo, Egypt will adorn The Evergreen State College Art Gallery January 5-16. The children, all taught to weave before their ninth birthday, have revived the ancient art of weaving in their rural village --- and succeeded in producing works shown in galleries throughout Europe.

Their success and their art works came to the attention of art patron David Williams of Sonoma, California, who brought the tapestries to the United States. He'll discuss his "find" and the work of the child/artists in a free public lecture at Evergreen January 7, beginning at 7 p.m. in Lecture Hall Three.

The tapestries are all woven by the children free hand, without sketches or designs. Each is an original work of art; each represents months of labor; and each reflects the simple, pure creativity of children taught only the very basics of weaving and encouraged to create and explore their own patterns directly on traditional hand looms.

The work is the result of an experiment encouraged by French-educated Egyptian architect Ramses Wissa-Wassef, who wanted to test his personal theory that "all mankind is innately and innocently creative." He established a small tapestry studio for children in Harrania, near Cairo, introduced the children --- any children who were willing, not only those who demonstrated an 'artistic' talent --- to the primitive high loom, gave them colorful, natural-dyed yarns and elementary instruction. Then he set them loose to create on their own.

Within a few years, Professor Wissa-Wassef's young artists were the topic of European art enthusiasts and their work began to adorn the walls of galleries across the continent.

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Dick Nichols, Director
Information Services

Accompanying the tapestry exhibit in the Evergreen Library will be two other displays --- a 35-piece photographic study of American consumers shown shopping in supermarkets and department stores by Evergreen artist/photographer Kathleen Meighan; and examples of murals completed by visiting Evergreen faculty artists Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Pope Dimitroff. The mural display represents more than 40 years of artistic creativity by the Dimitroffs who have performed in a variety of media, with varying styles and techniques.

All of the displays are free and open to the public beginning January 5.