

Art & Culture

Village life

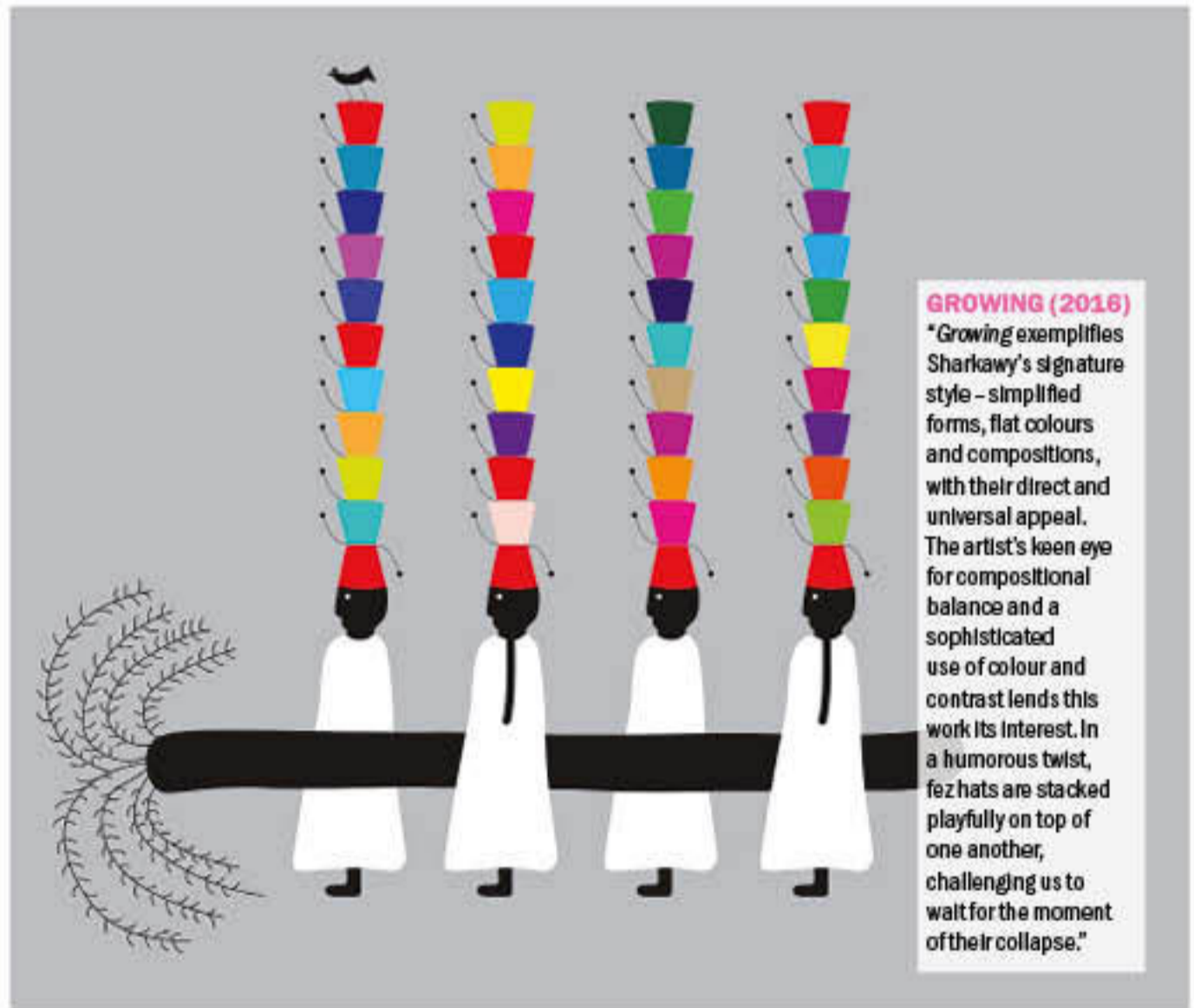
Curator **Melissa Enders-Bhatia** takes us through Egyptian artist Mohamed Sharkawy's colourful new exhibition, which is inspired by his home town

It was back in 2000 when then 18-year-old Egyptian Mohamed Sharkawy began painting. Since then, he's developed his own style, participated in regional solo and group exhibitions and now lives and works in Bahrain, where he has just launched a new body of work, *Where Shall We Sit?*

The exhibition, which is currently at Bin Matar House, is a collection of colourful paintings, murals and sculptures that were inspired by life in the artist's home village Naga Hamadi, Egypt. This is where he remembers having a simple, joyful childhood spent close to nature, among friends and village members who gathered in the cool shade of palm trees.

Melissa Enders-Bhatia, curator and head of art and exhibitions at Shaikh Ibrahim Center for Culture and Research, tells us about the artist's inspirations through four works...

Free. Open Sat-Thu 8am-1pm, 4pm-7pm. Until Saturday November 26. Bin Matar House, Muharraq, www.shaikhebrahimcenter.org.



GROWING (2016)

"Growing exemplifies Sharkawy's signature style - simplified forms, flat colours and compositions, with their direct and universal appeal. The artist's keen eye for compositional balance and a sophisticated use of colour and contrast lends this work its interest. In a humorous twist, fez hats are stacked playfully on top of one another, challenging us to wait for the moment of their collapse."



BLUE AND PALM (2016)

"Here, Sharkawy reduces his usually exuberant colour palette to just simple black and white, with blue and red accents, resulting in a somewhat more sombre mood. Closeness to nature is reflected in the current works through the identification of man and palm tree - palm fronds may grow out of man and fez tops adorn palm trees."



COLOURED MEN (2016)

"Through this set of life-sized, fibreglass sculptures, the men in Sharkawy's work literally come out of his paintings and to life. In the installation, they are placed so they are in conversation with each other, while looking at the other artworks. They are a continuation of the artist's sculptural work, and his first foray into the use of fibreglass."



WHERE SHALL WE SIT (2016)

"The mural, measuring 890 centimetres high and 850 centimetres wide is the largest by Mohamed Sharkawy to date. Adorning the main wall of the Bin Matar House, this namesake of the exhibition is an amazing artwork in and by itself, and provides a dramatic background for the sculptures that are placed throughout the Muharraq gallery."