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**AN  
EXHIBITION  
OF PAINTINGS  
BY ERITREAN  
FIGHTERS**

# **PAINTING IN ERITREA**

A deep study of historical developments of painting in Eritrea has yet to be made. However, significant findings have been recorded that give insight into further research.

## **ROCK and CAVE PAINTINGS**

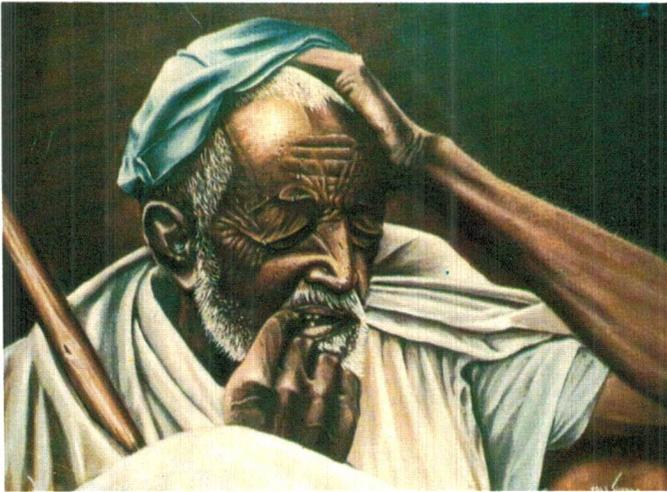
In Eritrea, archeological discoveries show that there are ten thousand year old paintings on rocks and in caves. The paintings represent wild and tame animals, hunting activities, naked human beings; in not more than two colours. The variety in terms of content and format was very limited.

## **TRADITIONAL PAINTING**

The traditional painting seems to have developed through the influence of the coming of Christian, Byzantine and Muslim religions in Eritrea and was limited to religious themes. Thus it did not manage to make any development into other areas for a long period. However, under the influence of the Portuguese travelers, painting started to cover non-religious aspects of life. But it never made significant progress beyond depicting animals and tools. Most of the traditional paintings are now found in churches, monasteries and mosques; but a lot were vandalised or destroyed by wars and natural disasters - floods, wildfires or exposure to extreme weather. Some are also found in museums of ex-coloniser countries like Italy and Britain and the present colonizer, Ethiopia.

## **MODERN PAINTING**

In Eritrea modern painting developed from the traditional painting but it particularly emerged with the advent of colonialism



In general, the paintings and other art works produced by the successive colonisers, including the Ethiopians, have portrayed the prominence and superiority of their respective cultures and power; while undermining ours.

As a result of such emasculating political, cultural and economic oppression it was not possible to develop indigenous modern painters of substantial numbers and quality. Thus their paintings by and large did not encourage our society to appreciate art and develop critique.

Since 1970, with the emergence of the EPLF, under the national democratic programme and in the process of the national liberation struggle; modern painting has made impressive progress under the principle of "Art for the Masses". Today painting has become popular among the fighters and the people. Art critique is also developing.

The current modern painting and artworks mainly reflect past, present and future military, economic, cultural and social situations of our country. They also portray to our people as well as to the outside world, our just struggle, patriotism, national resources, colonial oppression, natural disasters and our bright future, the natural beauty of our country and our aspiration and hopes. These endeavours have helped to further solidify and enhance our peoples sense of identity, challenging the enemy's multidimensional plots to undermine our identity.

Within the constraint of material shortages and experience prevalent in a situation of armed struggle, the EPLF is trying to encourage the development of art in the following ways:

The EPLF has developed art within the core curriculum in schools. Art clubs have also been formed for students with promising talent in art, to promote discussion and exchange their experiences.

Seminars on the role of the arts in the liberation struggle are given to fighters.

Features on arts are broadcasted to the Eritrea people over the radio "Voice of the Masses".

Regular courses are given to artist fighters. Occasionally course are also given by foreign artists.

In-depth occasional papers on a theoretical aspects of art are distributed to encourage discussion of art among fighters and people.

Regular art competitions are organised.



Educational and mobilisation posters are made for public celebrations, conferences and congresses.

Art exhibitions are shown in the liberated areas, in Sudan and abroad.

Art has also become popular among the children's homes and the displaced persons camp of Solomuna whose residents are mainly women.

A separate School of Arts has recently been established.

Now it seems timely to form a national association of artists to promote the role of art in national reconstruction, by the effort of those living inside and outside Eritrea. Although our modern paintings have improved over the years, we still have a long way to go to raise our society's capacity, knowledge, level of appreciation and criticism of works of art in general. We, therefore, call upon concerned individuals and organizations to co-operate in providing material and educational support for our efforts.

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## List of Paintings

### Serial No; Name of Painter; Type;

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Echo; Asghedom; Oil                        | 10. Handicraft; Berhane Adonai; Oil              |
| 2. Benefits of Literacy; Michael Adonai; Oil  | 11. Fisherman; Mulugheta Tesfai; Oil             |
| 3. Shepherd; Michael Adonai; Oil              | 12. Rose Flower; Ghirmai G. Leul; Oil            |
| 4. Break; Michael Adonai; Oil                 | 13. The Aged; Tesfai Zemichael; Oil              |
| 5. Child and Candle; Fissahaye Zemichael; Oil | 14. Being Late; Ghebream Tekhle; Oil             |
| 6. Child-play; Fissahaye Zemichael; Oil       | 15. A Woman Fighter; Elsa Yacob; Oil             |
| 7. Sahilian Family; Berhane Adonai; Oil       | 16. Burial Folklore; Woldu Afeworki; Oil         |
| 8. Liberated Barentu; Berhane Adonai; Oil     | 17. Enemy Weapons for our struggle; Michael; Oil |
| 9. Harvest Season; Berhane Adonai; Oil        | 18. Woman Militia; Mathewos Merhatsion; Oil      |



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19. Our Cafeteria; Afeworki Asmerom; Oil
20. Our Commando Operation; Ghirmai G. Leul; Oil
22. Surge of Call of Mother Land; Mussie Asghedom; Oil
23. Exodus; Tesfai G. Michael; Oil
24. Escape from Conscription; Mussie Asghedom; Oil
25. Last Hour of a Martyr; Michael Adonai; Oil
26. Political Prisoner; Ghirmai G. Leul; Oil
27. Children in Terror; Tsegereda Yohannes; Oil
28. For Peace, Liberation and development; Tesfai G. Michael; Oil
29. Two Generations; Michael Adonai; Oil
30. Aspiration for Liberation; Fissahaye Z. Michael; Oil
31. In Defense of our Liberated Areas; Fissahaye Z. Michael; Oil
32. Arag; Fissahaye Z. Michael; Oil
33. Arag; Ghirmai G. Leul; Oil
34. Our Musical Instruments; Fissahaye Z. Michael; Oil
35. The Agony of the Enemy; Mussie Asghedom; Oil
36. Vigilance; Suraphiel Yacob; Oil
37. A Child; Michael Adonai; Charcoal
38. A Petty Merchant; Woldu Afeworki; Pencil
39. Aboy Haleka; Abraham Moghes; Charcoal
40. Meriem; Tesfaledet Haile; Charcoal
41. Barkan Girl; Haile Berhe; Charcoal
42. Happy Child; Tirhas Iyassu; Postle
43. Elder Sister; Michael Adonai; Scraper
44. No Surrender; Michael Adonai; Ditto
45. A Mother; Tesfai G. Michael; Water Colour
46. Farming with Camel; Berhane Adonai; Water Colour
47. After the Battle; Mussie Asghedom; Water Colour
48. 1980-Studio; Fissahaye Z. Michael; Water Colour
49. Nacfa; Berhane Adonai; Water Colour
50. War and Drought; Mesfin Belai; Ink Colour
51. Unity; Fissahaye Z. Michael; Water Colour
52. The Horn of Africa; Michael Adonai; Water Colour
53. Grinding-Saho Style; Ghirmai G. Leul; Water Colour
54. Wandonab; Ghirmai G. Leul; Water Colour
55. Self-reliance; Berhane Adonai; Water Colour
56. Expectation; Ghirmai G. Leul; Water Colour
57. A Baker; Ghirmai G. Leul; Water Colour
58. Challenge; Berhane Adonai; Water Colour
59. Victory; Mussie Asghedom; Water Colour
60. Fatima Edris; Michael Adonai; Water Colour
61. Chingiät; Mussie Asghedom; Pencil Colour
62. Landscape of Rora; Mussie Asghedom; Water Colour
63. Bridge; Ghirmai G. Leul; Ink
64. Still Life; Ghirmai G. Leul; Water Colour
65. Mensura; Ghirmai G. Leul; Water Colour
66. Nakhura; Amanuel Afeworki; Water Colour

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