

Samah Salah Ellaithy



Ellaithy, *photograph*, 2001

Born in 1968, Samah Ellaithy is a born photographer and installation artist. She holds a BA in psychology and took up photography professionally around two decades ago. Twenty years ago, when Ellaithy debuted, photography as a medium of expression was rarely recognized or shown in public art spaces/galleries.

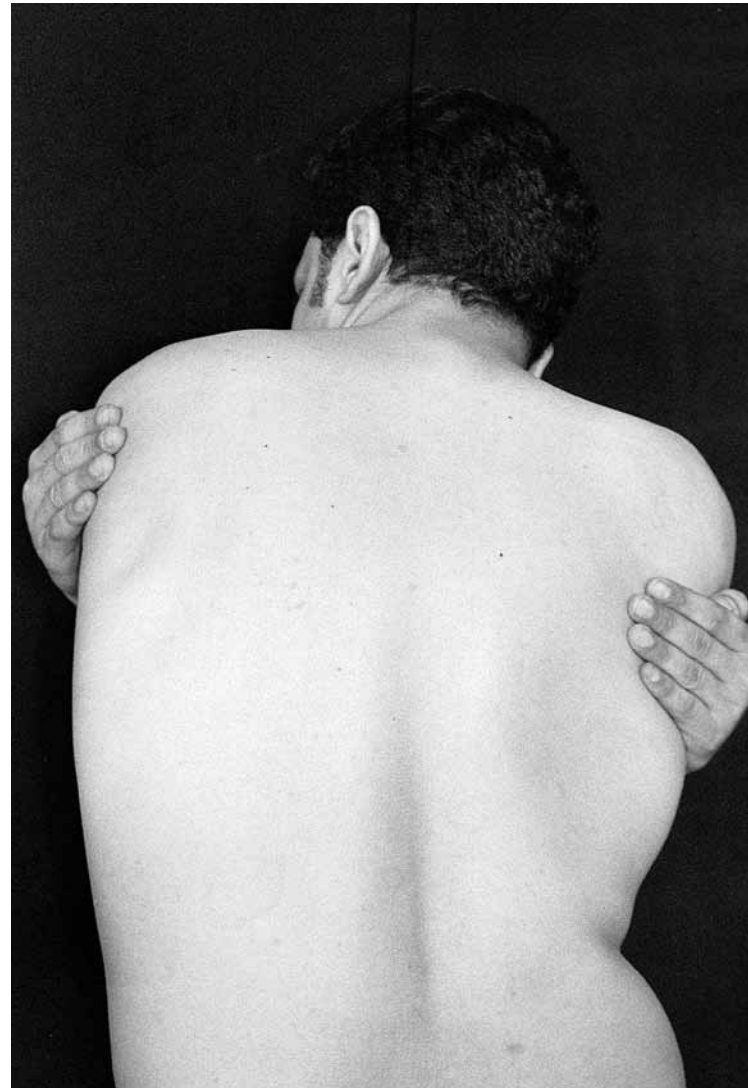
Ellaithy's career began with the Salon of Young Artists in Egypt, one of the earliest institutions

to acknowledge photography as recognized art medium. She is inspired by the works of master photographers / photojournalism Gurus like Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau and Irving Penn. Ellaithy's own photo-projects show a similar inclination to street life photography.

In her creative practice, Ellaithy photographs people or inanimate objects as though humanized, avoiding digital manipulation and

never giving a title to a photograph. She used to exhibit either slides printed in Ciba Chrome (which she prefers, but slide film diapositives has not been imported into Egypt since 2004) or as 50 x 70 cm inkjet or Lambda prints. She often incorporates sound into her installations. For example, in her 2004 Guezira Art Centre show, Ellaithy played sounds used for hypnosis, the voice of a doctor urging self-forgiveness.

A Hug is a recent black and white series of the naked upper body of a male model hugging himself. The close, intimate photographs and the voluptuous expanses of flesh look almost feminised in nature. In her photographs of boats or buildings she often photographs at odd angles with an emphasis on rigorous geometrical composition and the empty space around the subject. The work can be thoughtful and surprising.



Ellaithy, *A Hug*, photograph, 2006