



## Engineer Hassan Fathi

Regardless any intellectual disagreement between architects regarding the work of Hassan Fathi and his approach, he is a great figure in the history of the world architecture in general, and the Arab contemporary architecture in particular.

Fathi won the gold medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1985. He also won the first gold medal granted by the International Federation of Architects in the same year, not to mention the honor he received from many architecture institutions in many foreign countries.

He also received the State's Award from the Egyptian Supreme Council of Culture. He was chosen by Egyptian architects as honorary president for their first conference in April 1985, until the fourth conference in 1988.

Fathi believed that developing and poor communities had no option but to use compatible technology in construction, which depends on local materials and local skills, but it had to meet all living requirements, without relying on the Western technology. He had a futuristic vision and predicted the severe shortage of conventional energy sources, something which led to the allocation of large amounts of money

for searching for alternatives to this energy, so he felt the need to rely on compatible technology in construction. Fathi was born on 23 March, 1900 in Alexandria for a well-off family. He moved to Cairo when he was eighteen years old, and lived with his family in Helwan, southern Cairo. He joined the engineering high school to study architecture as part of the civil engineering, and graduated in 1926.

He worked as an engineer in the public administration of schools in the local councils - and his first work was to design a school in Talkha city, and this was first practical work in rural architecture, which was not suitable for living, as he put it.

He was commissioned to design a home for the elderly in a village in Minya governorate, then began to search for a new designs for rural architecture, but his boss asked him to adopt classic designs but he refused and resigned in 1930.

After that, he worked as a teacher in the Faculty of Fine Arts in Zamalek, Cairo until 1946. Salim Takla Pasha, the owner of Al-Ahram newspaper at that time, was impressed by Fathi ideas and asked him to make some adjustments in his own home. In 1942, Fathi designed the rural house of his friend Hamid Saeed, a known artist at that time.



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In 1946, he was commissioned to develop the architectural design of Qurna village, Luxor, and this was the actual beginning of the architectural achievement of Fathi, and the most important achievement that was popular all over the world at the time.

Since 1963, Fathi worked in several committees in the Ministry of Scientific Research, the United Nations, and the Aga Khan Development Network.

Although Fathi came at the age of great Egyptian architects like Labib Gabr, Mahmoud Riad, Mustafa Pasha Fahmy, and Hassan Shafie, he had his own different approach, and focused on environment architecture, especially rural architecture and architecture of the poor. He stressed the importance of popular participation in building, using construction systems compatible with the local environment.

The question now is: What will happen after Fathi, who opened this human thought widely.