

Nexus Lecture 2011

Ismail Serageldin

Librarian of Alexandria

Knowledge and Memory in Alexandria
A Bridge between Islam and Europe



Sunday, 30 October 2011

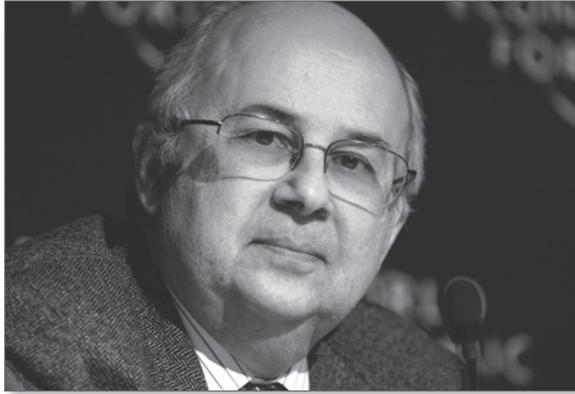
2.30 p.m.

Auditorium Tilburg University

Warandelaan 2, Tilburg

Tickets available at www.nexus-instituut.nl

Ismail Serageldin



Sixteen centuries ago in Egypt, the legendary Library of Alexandria went up in flames. The largest collection of scholarly, philosophical and literary texts of Antiquity fell victim to neglect, prosecution and destruction. Yet the spirit which had inspired the creation of the library lived on to form the foundation of all libraries, universities and museums that came after. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina was to become synonymous with intellectual freedom, tolerance and scholarly curiosity. It is impossible to imagine the great tradition of European humanism without the knowledge and civilization which had their origins or met their destiny in Alexandria. There is one man who has made it his life's work to once more gather together this knowledge and to revive this spirit of civilization in our times: Ismail Serageldin, founder and president of the New Library of Alexandria.

The hypermodern New Library of Alexandria, which opened its doors in 2003, was created with the help of donations from great European and American libraries and through the donation of rare manuscripts from the Arab world. The Library comprises an advanced network of libraries, eight academic research centers, four

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Programme 30 October 2011

2.00 p.m. Coffee and tea

2.15 p.m. Room open

2.30 p.m. Welcome *Rob Riemen*

2.45 p.m. Nexus Lecture *Ismail Serageldin*

Followed by public discussion led by *Rob Riemen*

4.30 p.m. Reception

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museums, numerous conference rooms, a planetarium and a server room which functions as a permanent archive for the Internet. With over a million visitors a year, the Library symbolizes the increasing self-confidence, also intellectual and democratic, of the Arab world, where Ismail Serageldin is considered a leading voice of reason. His plea for Islamic liberalism, freedom of expression, tolerance, nonviolence and critical rationalism makes Serageldin, who senses the hopeful eyes of the entire world upon him, today's foremost Arab Enlightenment thinker.

Ismail Serageldin (Egypt, 1944) studied Physics at Cairo University. After defending his PhD thesis at Harvard University in 1972, he began working at the World Bank, where he was a Vice President from 1992 to 2000. Serageldin was one of the founders of the Global Water Partnership, and was University Professor in Wageningen. He published over sixty books and received many academic distinctions. His name will forever remain connected to the current intellectual renaissance in Alexandria.

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Understanding through Context

The Nexus Institute, founded in 1994, brings together the world's foremost intellectuals, artists and politicians, and has them think and talk about the questions that really matter. How are we to live? How can we shape our future? Can we learn from our past? Which values and ideas are important, and what are their premises?

In doing so, the Nexus Institute places itself at the centre of the Western cultural and philosophical debate. In the best European humanist tradition, its annual Conferences and Lectures, open to all and visited by over a thousand people, have become a platform for informed intellectual debate on pressing contemporary issues. The same spirit of tolerance and erudition is upheld in the Nexus Symposia, Masterclasses and the *Nexus* journal.

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