

[Ahmed Basyony at the Venice Biennale](#)

By [Issandr El Amrani](#) June 7, 2011 at 12:27 PM [Share](#)



Artist Ahmed Basyony, during the Egyptian revolution, a few days before his death.

In a review of Arab art at the Venice Biennale, a tribute to Ahmed Basyony - [FT](#):

And so to Egypt, where wasted energy was also the inspiration for a performance piece by Basyony. In February 2010, he wired himself inside a transparent sweat suit and ran on spot for a month in a glass vitrine. The film of that happening is now part of an exhibition put together by two friends of Basyony, artist Shady El Noshokaty and curator Aida Eltorie. The other work is footage of the protests in Cairo last January, which was shot by Basyony himself three days before he was killed by snipers.

Certain critics assert that the informal nature of this latter film invalidates it as art. How wrong they are. In an installation whose success depends on its simplicity, the juxtaposition of Basyony's caged, relentless jog with his nerve-wrackingly unpredictable images of the crowds as they chant, pray and flee from police, is riveting. Watching those impassioned yet peaceful faces brings to mind Robert Rauschenberg's declaration that he worked "in the gap between art and life". That was long ago, and in another country. Basyony may be dead but the promise of his revolution lives on – not least in this year's rich panorama of Arab art.