

# THE GABR FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER



*Marias Meshrequey, 2025 Fellow with Sara Badr 2017 Fellow at the International Migration Review Forum IMRF.*



*Ibrahim Hammouda 2017 Fellow & Mariam Al Sherif 2025 Fellow at the Davos Lodge, in Switzerland.*

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# To Shift or Not To Shift

**M. SHAFIK GABR**

January 2026

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Davos in the Swiss Alps is renowned as Europe's highest city (1,560 m) and is well known as the city that hosts the World Economic Forum (WEF) annually, founded and created by Professor Klaus Schwab.

In the summer, Davos is popular for hiking, mountain biking, and sailing on Lake Davos. In winter, it is a major ski resort, plus every January hosting WEF.

I started attending WEF in the early 1990s. Attendees were restricted to 700-750 participants, and leaders such as Presidents, Prime Ministers, heads of global institutions were welcomed with one accompanying advisor, unlike today when a CEO or President arrives with two dozen accompanied staff plus security.

In the old days, you could find Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Shimon Peres of Israel, sitting in the Congress Hall welcoming participants to talk to them between sessions, as Amr Moussa, General Secretary of the Arab States, and Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, allowed with no security or entourage blocking them.

Those were the days that the WEF religiously followed its declared mission "Improving the State of the World"

Now the WEF has gone through a major shift. It started with Klaus Schwab opening the door for exclusive selection of participants that can have serious input and discussions to a global open forum to serve anyone who had the money or those whose voices can resonate across the world even at the expense of leaders who had the tools to work on improving the state of the World.

When Covid hit Earth and the world leaders failed badly to work together causing chaos and unnecessary deaths, I stopped attending the WEF and focused on my Foundation.

As the world shifted by the advent of super intelligent cell phones, high speed internet, a plethora of unregulated social media, an abundance of fake material, and an emerging AI whose wide and deep impact has not been recognized, I decided a new event was needed.

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The new event had to bring experts from around the world together – no fees – in different specializations and under Chatham House rules, to discuss the immediate future and what they see as coming to us “human beings in the short-term. The new event was “Expecting The Unexpected”, a long working dinner.

I remember my Master’s degree thesis focused on long-term economic planning and the benefit of five-year plans. Today, all that is irrelevant and given the quality of our leadership, the Op of the iceberg of AGI, the decline of humanism over the rise of sheer power, it is imperative for success to have a close reading of the world’s pulse on a daily basis.

On 21 January this year, an opinion piece in the New York Times discussed the WEF, denying its death as premature but admitting its transition and questioning its relevance.

The first US President to attend WEF was Bill Clinton in the year 2000, who walked the streets of Davos with minimal security and greeted the crowds. It was the peak of enthusiasm for globalization. This year, unlike 2000, when Trump addressed the WEF, he used mockery as a weapon of diplomacy. In his January speech, President Trump oozed power and deployed ridicule and belittling as a message for submission.

The Trump visit to Davos reinforced the belief that Washington was no longer predictable nor bound by any fundamental principles.

It was surreal watching Trump rip open the international order in front of global leaders in the audience and not a squeak in response. No one dared stand up and leave the Trump speech. The only such act was by Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank, who walked out of a dinner at the WEF during the US Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick’s pouring heavy criticism of Europe.

The Lutnick dinner was hosted by Larry Fink, CEO of Blackrock (with \$13 trillion under management), who was also appointed – not known how – as Co-Chair of WEF after the shameful way of treating Klaus Schwab, who created the WEF , on the basis of anonymous, unproven allegations by the WEF board that Schwab appointed. It was definitely a coup.

Fink ended the dinner before the dessert and Lutnick was heckled. Opinion leaders wrote after the event that Fink is expected to shift the WEF’s mission from improving the state of the world to how the business and political global elite marry their interests.

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One surprising fact is that whilst Trump, as President of the most powerful nation on Earth, is tolerated and yet to be challenged, his crew from Lutnick to his Secretary of War, plus his Secretary of State to his Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, are very aggressive in their language without reason or any incoming challenge.

Interestingly, Lutnick wrote an opinion piece published in the Financial Times on 21 January during WEF, declaring “We are here to make one thing crystal clear: with President Trump, capitalism has a new Sheriff in town.” Lutnick added, “We are not at Davos to blend in.” Whilst WEF did not ask Lutnick to blend in, I assume working face to face, discussing, negotiating, and talking to each other rather than at each other would produce better results than autocracy declarations.

America is a great country with so much to offer to Americans and to the world as a whole. The world also needs to offer America its best. It is a two-way relationship and there is no need to destroy such a mutual interest futuristic vision, not only for today’s generation but also for the future.

I had the privilege of meeting President Trump briefly and in the few minutes of one-to-one discussion, before being joined by Robert O’Brien, who was President Trump’s NSA at the time and Steven Mnuchin, who was at the time President Trump’s Secretary of the Treasury, Trump made a lot of sense with a clear memory.

In our meeting, President Trump was focused, knowledgeable, detail-oriented, and human in his responses. Traits he does not display publicly. The brief meeting spoke of an intelligent, transactional, focused human being with deep ideological beliefs towards his country and the world.

Trump survived vicious and unconventional attacks to become President, so far as to be shot as I predicted in an earlier opinion piece. Trump defied all that was thrown at him and was elected. He needs space and a special approach. No doubt about that.

Former US Presidents are not without fault. Vietnam, Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Gaza, Iran-Contra, and more are US policy failures. It is not Trump alone, but there is great hope that Trump can surprise us in his remaining years with a shift where his leadership brings positivity, where today negativity reigns.

As I sat penciling this opinion piece, I remembered clearly what my late parents hammered in my grey cells. “With power comes great responsibility. The more power you have, the greater empathy and humble manner you should display.” May all the powerful remember they can shid the world – hopefully to better.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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M. Shafik Gabr is a renowned leader in international business, innovation, and investment, and is one of the world's premier collectors of Orientalist art, and an accomplished philanthropist.

During his career, Gabr established over 25 companies, plus three investment holding companies, including ARTOC Group for Investment and Development, which is a multidisciplinary investment holding company with businesses in infrastructure, automotive, engineering, construction, and real estate. Over the past three years, he has focused on investment in technology and artificial intelligence.

Gabr is the Chairman and founding member of Egypt's International Economic Forum (EIEF), a member of the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum, a Board Member of Stanhope Capital, International Chairman of the Sadat Congressional Gold Medal Committee, and a Member of the Steering Committee of Parliamentary Intelligence Security Forum.

Gabr is on the Advisory Board of the Centre for Financial Stability, the Advisory Board of The Middle East Institute, and the Global Advisory Council of the Mayo Clinic. He is also a former Member of the Metropolitan Museum's International Council and a former member of the Business Council of the World Economic Forum.

In his capacity as Chairman of EIEF, Gabr has hosted global leaders from the worlds of politics, economics, business, media, technology, and culture. These include President Vaclav Klaus, President Atifete Jahjaga, President Boris Tadić, President Zlatko Lagumdžija, Prime Minister Tony Blair; Secretaries James Mattis, John Kelly, and Rex Tillerson; H.E. Amr Moussa, members of Congress, business leaders in technology, academics, and media figures from CNN, Fox, and CNBC. Gabr has also hosted six CNBC programs on 'World Business' and 'Peer to Peer'.

Moreover, as Chairman of the Shafik Gabr Foundation, Gabr regularly hosts his interactive 'Expecting the Unexpected' working dinners in Cairo, Davos, London, Munich, and Washington, DC. The dinners are off the record and engage leaders across the board in timely predictions of geopolitical and geo-economic issues. The most recent dinners were held in Davos on January 16th, 2025, during the World Economic Forum, and on February 16th, 2025, at the Munich Security Conference. The guests included former Presidents, Ministers, Ambassadors, members of Congress, international organization chairs, heads of think tanks, business leaders, and distinguished scholars from Europe, the Middle East, the United States, and Asia.

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Gabr has previously served as the Chairman of the COMESA (Common Market for East and South Africa) Business Council and a member of the Executive Board of the International Chamber of Commerce (Paris). He also served on the advisory boards of Zurich Financial Services and The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Furthermore, Gabr was a founder of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt in 1982, serving as its first Egyptian President from 1995 until 1997, and was a Founding Member of the Wilson Global Advisory Council.

Gabr has been recognized among the “Most Influential Arabs” and “Top 50 Business Leaders in the Arab World.” In 2009, Mr. Gabr was presented with the Foreign Policy Association’s (FPA) award for Corporate Responsibility. In June 2014, Mr. Gabr was awarded the Meridian Global Citizen Award, and in November 2014, the Middle East Institute’s Visionary Award. In March 2015, Gabr received the American University in Cairo’s Global Impact Award in New York. In May 2016, Gabr was awarded the College of Mount Saint Vincent’s Saint Vincent de Paul Award and Drew University’s Peacebuilder Award. In September 2017, Gabr received the Policy Direction and Leadership Award from the London Centre for Policy Research. Most recently, in November 2024, Gabr was awarded the highest honor conferred upon foreign nationals by the President of Italy: the ‘Grande Ufficiale’ (Grand Officer) of the ‘Ordine della Stella d’Italia’ (Order of the Star of Italy) for his extraordinary achievements and merit.

Since 2016, Gabr has focused his attention on innovation and investment in technology, as well as his Foundations. Gabr has invested in a wide spectrum of technology companies, ranging from startups to fully mature companies, and across a wide variety of sectors. Gabr’s focus is multidimensional in a world of technology, which is reflected in his personal approach to the sector through its multifaceted applications, including AI, machine learning, data mining, mobility, and business.

M. Shafik Gabr’s contributions and insights have been the subject of numerous articles, including some published in Egypt Independent. Additionally, his perspectives on international business, investment trends, and cultural diplomacy have been featured in interviews with global media outlets such as Bloomberg, CNBC, BBC, Al-Horra and many more. Through these platforms, Gabr has highlighted his extensive work on cross-cultural dialogue and offered perspective on world markets and geopolitics.

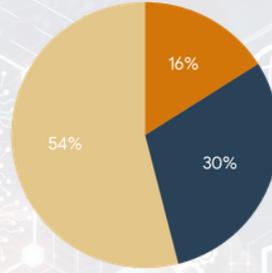
Through The Mohamed Shafik Gabr Foundation for Social Development, Gabr is helping to improve elementary-school education in Egypt, introducing students to arts and culture, and promoting sports and physical fitness for youth. In the area of higher education, Gabr is a major supporter of the American University in Cairo. The Foundation also developed a free medical-care system by providing “Medical Caravans” for residents of underprivileged areas of Greater Cairo. The Foundation established its first Medical and Social Development Centre in Mokattam, Cairo, offering free medical and health services. In 2012, Gabr established the Shafik Gabr Foundation in the U.S., which supports educational and medical initiatives and, in November 2012, launched the ‘East-West: The Art of Dialogue’ initiative (see [www.eastwestdialogue.org](http://www.eastwestdialogue.org)), promoting exchanges between young emerging leaders from the U.S. and Egypt with the purpose of cultural dialogue and bridge-building. At present, the Foundation’s Fellowship program has over 140 Fellows.

Gabr is recognized as one of the world’s largest collectors of Orientalist art, amassing a unique and extensive collection that captures the beauty, culture, and history of the Middle East and North Africa. His collection showcases masterpieces from the 19th and early 20th centuries, reflecting the works of prominent Orientalist painters who were captivated by the region’s vibrant landscapes, traditions, and people. Through his dedication and passion for preserving and sharing these historical artworks, Gabr has significantly contributed to fostering cultural appreciation and understanding of the Orientalist movement on a global scale.

Gabr holds a BA in Economics and Management from the American University in Cairo and an MA in Economics from the University of London.

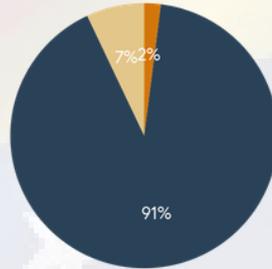
# MONTHLY WORLD PREDICTIONS

Will the progress of AI in 2026 be positive or negative for humanity?



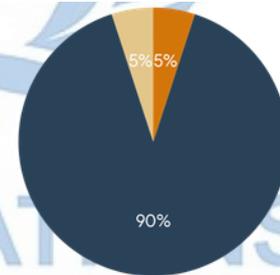
- Positive
- Negative
- Don't Know

Do you approve or disapprove of the kidnapping of the Venezuelan President and his wife by the US?



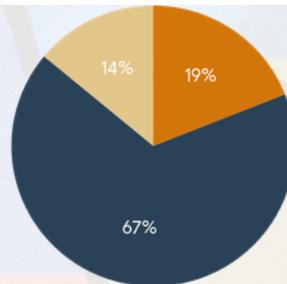
- Approve
- Disapprove
- Don't Know

Is the UN succeeding or failing in resolving conflicts around the world?



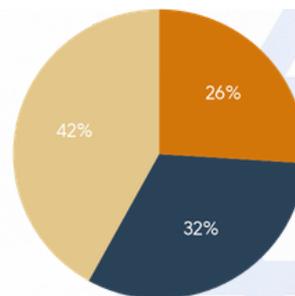
- Succeeding
- Failing
- Don't Know

Will the Russia-Ukraine War end by the end of April 2026?



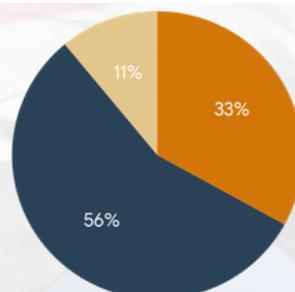
- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Will there be a Phase 2 to the Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire?



- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Will there be a ceasefire in Sudan by the end of April 2026?



- Yes
- No
- Don't Know



# FELLOWS' UPDATES



## Abdallah Hussein, 2025 Fellow

Abdallah Hussein, 2025 Gabr Fellow, concluded 2025 by leading a major project in collaboration with the Government of Egypt and the Abu Dhabi Sports Council, serving as Project Owner, with his company acting as the implementing partner.

## Jude Hussein, 2025 Fellow

Jude Hussein, 2025 Gabr Fellow, was accepted into Stanford University's Executive Education Program for late spring 2026 and was promoted to Chief of Staff in the Pennsylvania State Senate.



## Ibrahim Hammouda, 2017 Fellow

Ibrahim Hammouda, 2017 Gabr Fellow, has taken on a new role with Levantintel, a Cyprus-based media and consultancy firm dedicated to identifying high-growth business opportunities across the region. In his current position, Ibrahim focuses on connecting businesses and investors through analytical reports, business briefings, and interviews with senior decision-makers. His work continues to reflect the Fellowship's emphasis on cross-regional engagement and informed dialogue.

***[Click here to view article](#)***



# FELLOWS' UPDATES



## **Marwa Abdallah, 2018 Fellow**

Marwa Abdallah, 2018 Gabr Fellow, recently completed an article reflecting on the legacy of late Egyptian filmmaker Samir Seif, focusing on his film *The Savage*. The piece will be published during the Cairo International Book Fair 2026.

## **Michael Goff, 2014 Fellow**

Michael Goff, 2014 Gabr Fellow, had his Living Literature Review grant from Giving Coefficient (formerly Open Philanthropy) renewed through March 2027. He will also be getting married on 13 March 2026.



## **Sarah Badr, 2017 Fellow**

Sarah Badr, 2017 Gabr Fellow, was offered an extension of her role as an IOM Global Youth Changemaker for North Africa, recognizing her continued advocacy for migrant youth rights, inclusion, and positive migration narratives.



# FELLOWS' UPDATES

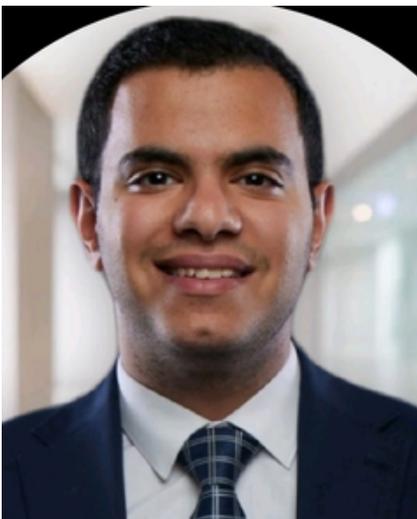


## **Shady Sherif, 2018 Fellow**

Shady Sherif, 2018 Gabr Fellow, recently began the Erasmus Programme in Leuven, Belgium, one of Europe's leading academic destinations, welcoming over 1,000 exchange students annually.

## **Shehab Farouk, 2014 Gabr Fellow**

Shehab Farouk, 2014 Gabr Fellow, will be speaking at DecreeCon, organized by Decree, on construction disputes in Oman on 21 January 2026. He has also been selected by the World Bank to contribute as an expert to its Business Ready Project, focusing on regulatory frameworks, public services, and the business and investment climate in Oman.



## **Youssef Emam, 2025 Fellow**

Youssef Emam, 2025 Gabr Fellow, has been selected as a member of Ain Shams University's Legal Clinic, where he leads and contributes to initiatives focused on practical legal training, legal awareness, and community engagement.



# FOUNDATION EFFECT

*Across the Fellowship network, members continue to engage in leadership roles spanning diplomacy, business, civil society, technology, and media. These efforts reflect the Foundation's commitment to empowering Fellows as active contributors to regional and global conversations.*

## DAVOS LODGE ENGAGEMENT

Ibrahim Hammouda, 2017 Fellow and Mariam Al Sherif, 2025 Fellow, represented the Shafik Gabr Foundation at the Davos Lodge during the World Economic Forum in Switzerland. Their participation supported the Foundation's mission to expand its global presence and foster dialogue across regions. As the Foundation firmly believes, dialogue is the first line of defense against radicalization and conflict. By investing in leaders and convening spaces for exchange, the Foundation advances a core principle: trust is the currency of international trade. Supporting these leaders is not only an investment in individuals, but in a more stable, resilient, and interconnected global market.

***Click to watch***



*Ibrahim Hammouda, 2017 Fellow & Mariam Al Sherif, 2025 Fellow*



*Maries Meshrequey, 2025 Fellow & Sarah Badr 2017 Fellow*

## FOUNDATION IN ACTION

Maries Meshrequey and Sarah Badr met in The Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the “Egypt’s Inter-Ministerial Workshop in Preparation for the International Migration Review Forum”. They were both facilitators in this workshop as part of the UN Network for Migration, helping the Egyptian government consolidate and refine its National Voluntary Global Compact for Migration Review. The report will be submitted to the UN General Assembly to showcase the achievements of Egypt in advancing the GCM objectives.

# ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP



**2022 Gabr Fellows at the National Defense University with the NDU President, Lt Gen Michel Plehn**

Launched in 2012, the Gabr Fellowship program helps connect and build constructive relationships between future leaders aged 24 and 35. Each year, the Fellowship consists of 16-24 Fellows, half of whom are men and the other half women, with an equal distribution between participants from the United States and Egypt. The Fellowship also accepts applicants from Jordan, Lebanon, France and the United Kingdom. Fellows represent a variety of sectors, including the arts, law, finance, tech, non-profits, and entrepreneurship – both business and social.

The mission of the Fellowship is to promote greater mutual understanding by building bridges between the two cultures by facilitating and the exchange of ideas between emerging leaders from the United States and Egypt. Together, they explore one another's cultures, political realities, business trends, and their goals for the future.

In addition to engaging in deep discussions with key stakeholders from both countries in business, government, academia, religion, science, tech and finance, all Fellows are invited to form multinational teams to complete an action project. These projects empower the Fellows as intercultural ambassadors, amplifying the Fellowship's reach and impact.

Ultimately, through hands-on activities, rigorous discussions, cultural site visits, and the collaborative action projects, the Fellows have a greater understanding of both countries and become part of an international cohort dedicated to building a more equitable and peaceful world.



**Gabr Fellows with Major General Mohamed El Keshky, Egypt's Former Assistant Minister of Defense**

The Gabr Fellows have acquired a greater understanding of both Egypt and the United States and the challenges faced by both communities. Having served as cultural as well as linguistic ambassadors to one another, they then return home to play the role of diplomat, introducing Egyptians and Americans to a people, a culture and a future never before explored in this way.

Together, they are creating the legacy of The Gabr Fellowship: an international cohort dedicated to pursuing cooperative, collective solutions to their region's most pressing issues.



**Gabr Fellows at the Pyramids**



# SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION

**THE SHAFIK GABR FOUNDATION INVITES YOU TO INVEST IN THE FUTURE AND PARTNER WITH THE FOUNDATION USING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING MEANS:**

## SPONSOR A FELLOW

Individuals have the opportunity to nominate a Fellow and, if selected, sponsor their participation in the Gabr Fellowship. Sponsors will be recognized in all Foundation publications, marketing materials, and at all events.

## CORPORATE PATRON

Corporations can nominate Fellows for participation in the Fellowship Foundation and sponsor their participation on a company-wide level. The company will be listed in all publications, the logo will be presented on the Foundation's homepage, and be given visibility at all events in the United States and Egypt.

## UNRESTRICTED SUPPORT

A general operating grant can empower the Foundation to continue to invest in innovative platforms to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the East and West. From new technologies to expanding the program to more countries and a greater number of participants, the Fellowship can create a broader multiregional impact.



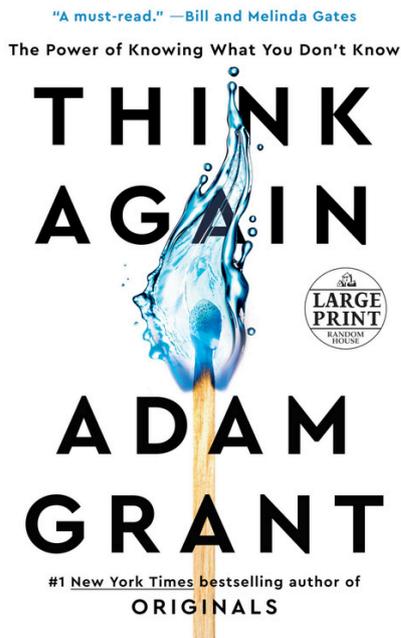
**TO SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION VISIT <https://www.eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/how-to-support/>**

**We also invite our readers to contribute thoughts, stories, and recommendations for the newsletter!  
Please write to [chairman@shafikgabrfoundation.org](mailto:chairman@shafikgabrfoundation.org)**



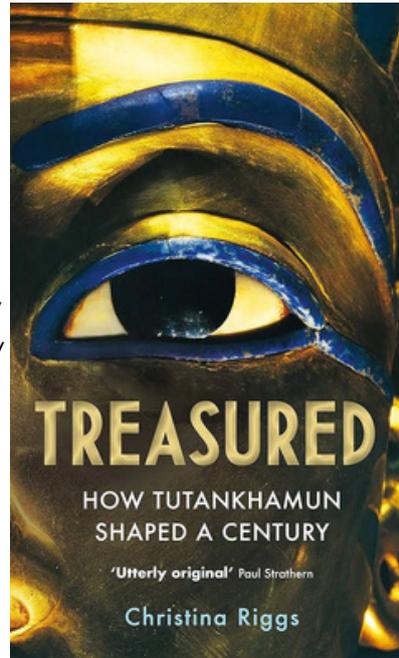
# CHAIRMAN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

## BOOKS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS



### Think Again by Adam Grant

"Think Again" argues that the most critical skill for success is the scientific mindset. The ability to value humility over pride and curiosity over conviction so you can unlearn outdated beliefs and evolve through constant rethinking.



### Treasured: How Tutankhamun Shaped a Century by Christina Riggs

This is a non-fiction book that explores the historical, political, and cultural impact of the discovery of the young pharaoh's tomb in 1922. Also explains how "King Tut" became a global icon and a symbol in broader geopolitical contexts.

## MOVIES & DOCUMENTARIES



### Eden (2024)

This film is based on the true events surrounding several European settlers who arrived on the isolated Floreana Island in the Galápagos Islands in the 1930s to start a new life. The story documents how their utopian dreams dissolve into chaos as tensions rise between the various parties.



### Companion (2025)

Companion (2025) is a sci-fi thriller about an AI android, Iris, who breaks free from her controlling boyfriend during a tense weekend with friends. The film explores autonomy, control, and toxic masculinity through a blend of horror and dark satire.

# January 2026

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR JANUARY FELLOWS!



**Ahmed Rdwan**  
2015 Fellow  
January 1st



**Shehab Farouk**  
2014 Fellow  
January 1st



**Sherif Soliman**  
2017 Fellow  
January 1st



**Wessam Baher**  
2022 Fellow  
January 9th



**Basma Fahem**  
2015 Fellow  
January 11th



**Reem Soliman**  
2013 Fellow  
January 12th



**Daniel Lanberg**  
2013 Fellow  
January 14th



**Hadeel Adel**  
2016 Fellow  
January 20th



**Jack Lincoln**  
2022 Fellow  
January 22nd



**Mohamed Mubarak**  
2013 Fellow  
January 26th



**Katie Applebaum**  
2018 Fellow  
January 27th



**Alex Taylor**  
2016 Fellow  
January 29th

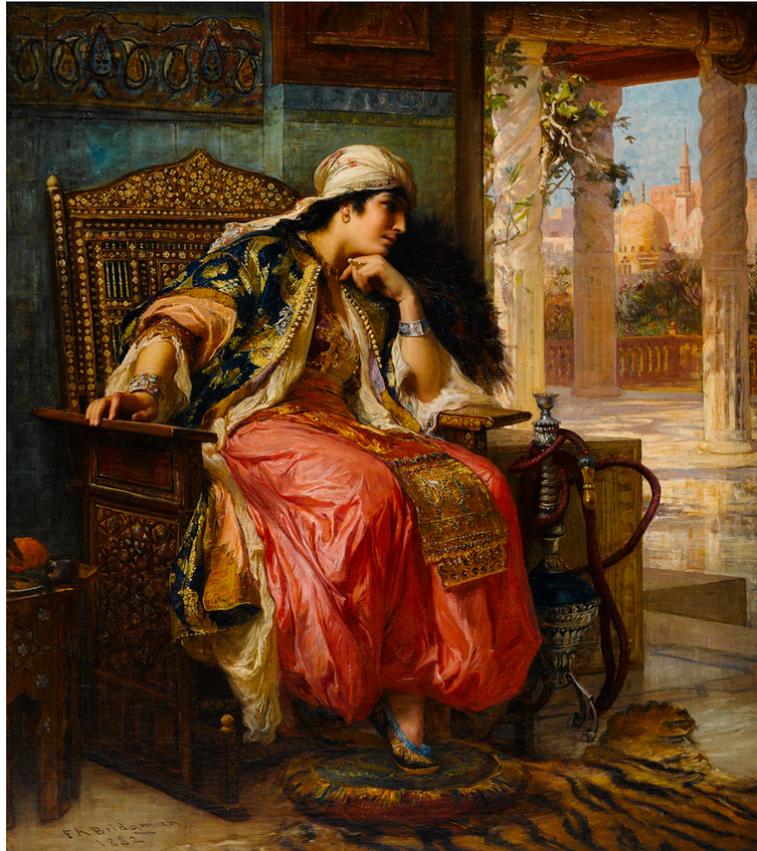


**Lydia Kamal**  
2025 Fellow  
January 29th



For more information on the Shafik Gabr Foundation and its  
East-West: The Art of Dialogue Initiative,  
please visit the website **[eastwestdialogue.org](https://eastwestdialogue.org)**

For earlier itineraries of the program, please see the previous years' reports at  
<https://eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/brochures/>



*Frederick Arthur Bridgeman*  
*The Favorite, 1882*  
*Oil on Canvas*

**THE SHAFIK GABR COLLECTION**  
Connect with us



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