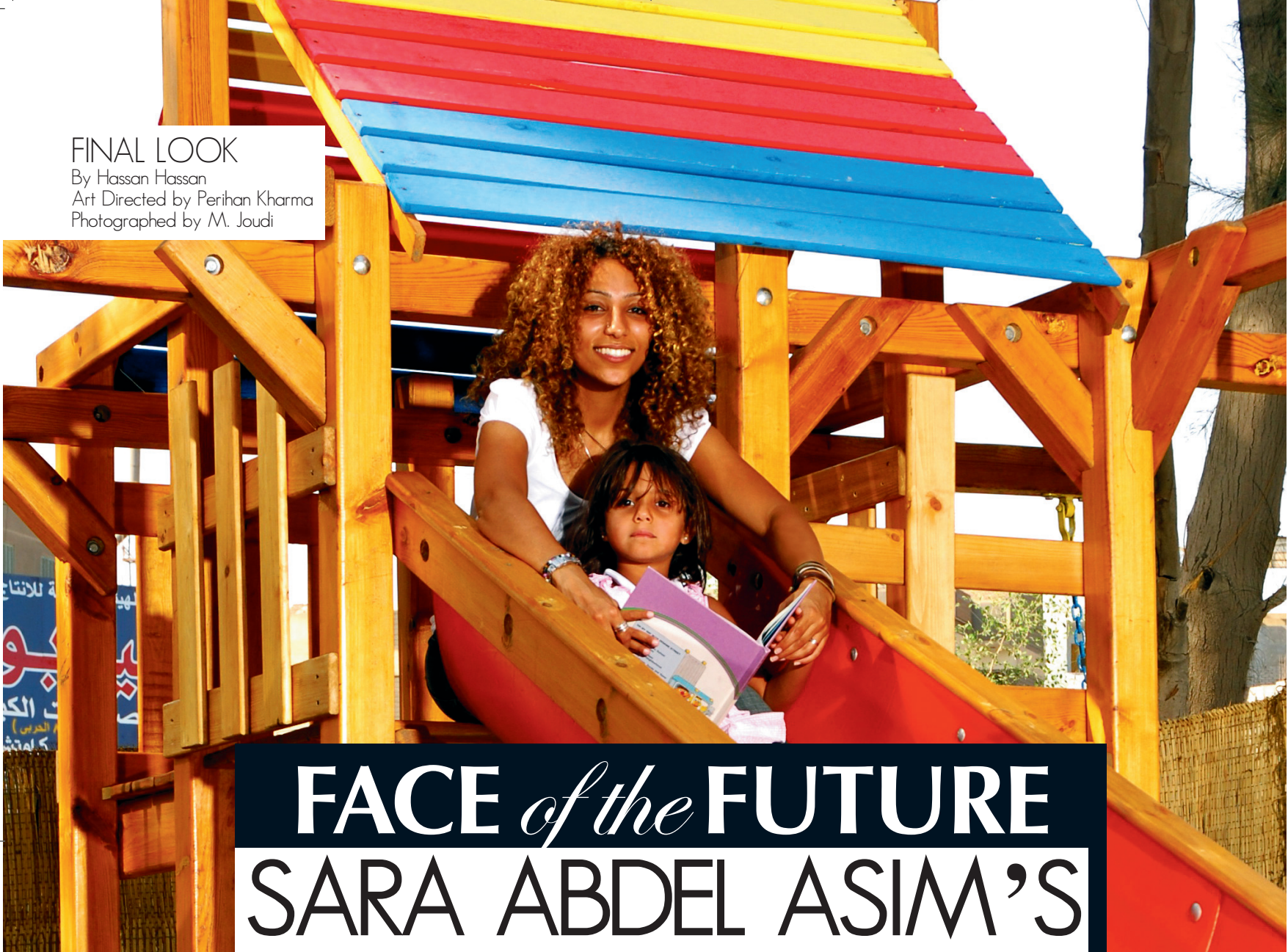


FINAL LOOK

By Hassan Hassan

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FACE *of the* FUTURE

SARA ABDEL ASIM'S

TREASURE ISLAND

In a charming little villa in Maadi, 25-year-old Sara Abdel Asim is teaching a generation of toddlers to be creative, competent and independent individuals. Enigma spends a day at her delightful Treasure Island nursery.

If it takes a village to raise a child, then Sara Abdel Asim ought to be voted village chieftain. With an infectious smile and lashings of patience, Sara manages to soothe even the most difficult child. Together with her sister May, she has opened Treasure Island; a preschool and day care centre with a difference.

While May is in charge of the management and administrative elements of the centre, the unique educational and creative curriculum comes courtesy of 25-year-old Sara, who has long harboured a dream to open her own nursery. After graduating from the School of Fine Arts in Cairo with a degree in Interior Design, she chose to change paths and work for the German nursery Giggles. During her two years at the nursery she became thoroughly acquainted with the Montessori schooling system – an educational concept that views each child as a “unique being” who should be encouraged to develop social, emotional and intellectual skills. Sara prides herself on Treasure Island’s tangibly creative atmosphere, which allows children to explore the limits of their imagination and

become confident, independent and thoughtful. “We encourage children to use all five senses, we don’t just show them the picture of the apple, we show them the apple,” explains Sara. “We let them look at it, feel its texture, smell it and even taste it.” Ensnared within a beautiful villa in Maadi, the children are taught discipline and are thoroughly prepared to enter the

“Never underestimate the knowledge a child can take in”

‘big kids’ world of primary school. They’re encouraged to hang up their own jackets, wash their hands themselves, eat together and work according to a schedule. Sara is particularly thrilled that a toddler who only just learnt to walk always gets up after lunch to wash her hands on her own.

And this young entrepreneur is as pragmatic as she is creative. With a rare combination of qualities suited to the world of pre-school rearing, Sara lights up when the kids surround her; it is obvious she has found her calling. They wave for her to come over throughout our interview, and each one of them gets a small hug, a minute on her lap or a little squeeze of the arm. She relates innately with the children and is passionate about giving them the best of herself. “Never underestimate the knowledge a child can

take in. This is the most important time in a child's life, with regards to developing social behaviour skills later on," she says.

Sara also has very distinct ideas on how to teach children. She doesn't coddle them and is intent on allowing each child to express what they want to do, what they don't understand and how they think they can fix it. "It's all about giving them a base, it's the most important time of their lives, the time to learn social behaviour and gain the knowledge that every action has a reaction," she says. Yet this is just the beginning for Sara. With her flair, wit and discipline she is managing to offer toddlers a brighter future. ■

*Treasure Island Nursery, 63 Nady St./Corner of 250 Road,
Maadi, + (202) 2380 1881/ 010 621 7819*

ENIGMA QUESTIONNAIRE

Describe yourself in five words...

Kind, passionate, creative, optimistic and temperamental.

What qualities do you dislike in other people?

Dishonesty.

Who do you look up to?

My parents and older sister.

What do you do in your spare time?

I go out, try to have fun and spend most of my spare time with my friends or my niece Tamara.

What is the most valuable lesson life has taught you?

Never regret anything because everything is an experience.

What would you save if your house were on fire?

My laptop! And whatever is next to me really.

Who would you like to play you in a movie of your life?

Beyonce Knowles definitely!

