

Artissima
Booth BTTF2

3-5.11.2023
OVAL - Lingotto Fiere District, Torino, Italy



1Baya Mahieddine, *Composition au luth, aux oiseaux, aux papillons, aux raisins et aux vases de fleurs*, 1983

Gouache on paper, 99 x 148 cm

Elmarsa Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Algerian artist **Baya Mahieddine**, universally known as **Baya**. On view as a part of Artissima's *Back to The Future* curated section, the exhibition *Baya Mahieddine (1931-1998)* comprises of a series of gouache paintings that shed light on her groundbreaking career as one of the most famous Algerian artists of her time. This project draws attention to Baya's profound influence on North African post-colonial art movements during the mid-twentieth century and beyond, with an interest in highlighting her life as a driving factor for her passion within the arts. Often associated with the Surrealist movement, her work alludes to a folkloric retelling of lived experiences. Rich in symbols and ornamentation, the textural qualities of garments and the characters invoked behind the painted women all point to the importance of the artist's Algerian and Kabyle cultural heritage. "Painting harmonies within enchanted islands", Baya lived the majority of her life in Algeria, passing away in 1998.



Baya was drawn to art as an adolescent by observing what she lived with and saw around her, a mix of Algerian and Berber cultures within French colonial Algeria. A life fraught with challenges and compromises, her success has stemmed from her unequivocal ability to paint intuitively, working alongside the emotion of happiness during the process. Often painting the female form, Baya later came to divulge that she painted images in her mother's likeness, whether spiritually or in physicality. Gravitating towards depictions of mothers, children, fauna, flora and mystical musical instruments, her paintings frame moments in time where joy is experienced. Noted to have long periods of time in her life devoid of painting, her focus was reprioritized on motherhood. Motherhood in a time of tumultuous political uprising in Algeria, such as the war of independence and the political discourse around the exile of creatives and scholars within the country, would have only heightened the necessity of her decision making.

Baya was highly valued by many of the leading figures of Parisian avant-garde such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and the father of Surrealism, André Breton, who exclaimed enthusiastically: "Baya is queen" in his writings on the talented artist in her youth. With an illustrious history of solo and group exhibitions curated by parties of influence, Baya has been celebrated in Algeria, France, and the Middle East throughout her career. Re-entering the modern art discourse in the present, Baya has reclaimed international recognition with the first North American exhibition comprised primarily of her work organized by the Grey Art Gallery at New York University in 2018, and a major retrospective held at the Sharjah Art Museum in 2021 as part of the 11th edition of the 'Lasting Impressions' series.

Art Fair Facts

Artissima, Back to The Future, Booth BTTF 2

Opening Time: 3-5 November, 2023, 11:00 – 20:00

Location: OVAL – Lingotto Fiere District, Torino, Italy

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Baya Mahieddine, *Paon et poisson*, 1976, Gouache on paper, 50 x 50 cm



Baya Mahieddine, *Femme et poissons*, 1974, Gouache on paper, 49.3 x 32.6 cm



About Elmarsa Gallery

Founded in 1994, Elmarsa Gallery is located in Tunis and Dubai, with an expanding European presence in Paris. Specializing in both modern and contemporary art, the gallery represents and supports the career of some of the most influential and recognized artists of the 20th and the 21st century from North Africa and the Middle-East, with a wide-ranging exhibition programme at its two gallery spaces. Active in both the primary and secondary markets, Elmarsa also represents its artists at major international art fairs focusing on African and Middle-East art in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Paris, London, Marrakech, Miami and New York.

Represented Artists

Abdelkader Guermaz, Abderrazak Sahli, Abdelaziz Gorgi, Aly Bellegha, Aly Ben Salem, Amel Bennys, Ammar Farhat, Asma M'Naouar, Atef Maatallah, Baya Mahieddine, Brahim Dhahak, Edgar Naccache, Feryel Lakhdar, Gouider Triki, Halim Karabibene, Hatim Elmekki, Hedi Turki, Jellal Ben Abdallah, Khaled Ben Slimane, Mahjoub Ben Bella, Moses Levy, Nejib Belkhodja, Nello Levy, Nja Mahdaoui, Omar Bey, Rachid Koraichi, Thameur Mejri

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