

Néjib Belkhodja is Immortal | The Father of Contemporary Tunisia

Néjib Belkhodja died in May 2007 but his art is alive and shapes the modern landscape of today's Tunisia. Art defines a Nation - Ben Ali stopped Tunisia's definition but the man behind the creation of the Nation was Néjib Belkhodja who created the Tunis School of Art in the 1960's - it was his vision of the ideal world and the creation of the artistic village with the support of his friend, the architect Slah Smaoui, and together they created the village of "Ken", which translates to Once Upon A Time |

<http://www.villageken.com.tn/> - this is the best kept secret in North Africa! This is merely a whisper being sent out to the world about the genius of the late, great Néjib Belkhodja. He lived amongst us for seventy-four years and consumed life and lived like so few. He had integrity, something that is lacking in the world today. He set such high standards for himself and others around him. He was the man to teach the world about the power of art and the way in which we

should conduct ourselves in our lives. It is difficult to put into words the importance of this man. He lived an outspoken existence with courage and conviction. The word Prophet is a word that best describes the giant that is, Néjib Belkhodja. During his lifetime he was a Nation builder and a world guide. He was often ignored and marginalised yet still he bore the troubles of his Independent Nation on his shoulders. His work is so important, to see it and understand it will change the way you see yourself and all that is around you. Throughout his life the Leaders were fully aware of the power of Belkhodja; a man who would not be broken by the State or who could not be used as a political toy. He suffered enormously throughout his life, humiliated and disregarded by the Nation. On the 16th June 2007 in the Medina in Tunis I heard such pitiful tributes to a man of such stature who, at the end was honored by hypocrites. He died virtually penniless and his work is jailed in the Ministry of Culture, banks and five star hotels around his native country of Tunisia. There is no Museum of Modern Art in Tunisia so you wont see the work of Belkhodja in any Museum around the world. No. His work is too powerful to be released by his jailers. He sheds light on all the World

Leaders. He opens our minds to what is the function and meaning of Art. His work develops Nations and his contribution to the world is beyond compare. His departure from this world has come at just the right time; when the world needs him most. Here is a man, who belongs to us all and in his lifetime has shown us the meaning of generosity. His work introduces us to poets and architecture, to calligraphers and musicians. The subtly within the work is breathtaking and he puts into place the order in which art should be seen, heard and spoken. Born in 1933 his mother was Dutch and his father Tunisian. He grew up in the Medina in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, North Africa. For those that don't know what the Medina is, it is the heartbeat of the city, where all the aristocracy resides and where cultural activities were in abundance. It is a walled city within a city, with narrow streets as arteries and huge colourful studded doors, which break up the continuity of the whitewashed wall. The Medina has it's own language, it own specific architecture. The Medina is the untouchable heart of North Africa. The reason Belkhodja chooses to focus his work on the importance of the Medina is that it is the heart of life. It is beyond the control of modern

dictatorship. So his work is about the spiritual heartland of the World. The significance of the Medina in Belkhodja's work is constant as he saw the obvious change in the Medina. For nearly forty years he focused his whole artistic life around the idea of the Medina and his work reads like a biblical message to us all. His work is invincible and belongs to us all, to cage it would be a travesty of justice. He speaks about the change within society. The universal change of importance between commerce over culture and how the world places more respect on money rather than creativity. Here is a tribute to his beautiful wife, Najet Belkhodja. Without her love and support we would never of had the Nejib that we see today. We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Of Widowhood by Chinwe Azubuike Blood shot eyes from endless stream of tears. Unfathomable thoughts of denial. Questionable words to celestial bodies and gods. Irrational musings aimed at nothing. The total stripping of aided beauty. The sudden chastity commanded and demanded, from the inside to the outside, seeming endless days of incarceration. The constant haunting dreams, presumed doubts of 'the' occurrence. The feared bullying from kins, unbecoming. The new vacuum

in our hearts and beds. The registered absence-forever, Of the other half. The final acceptance of death's handiwork. Poem by Chinwe Azubuike

[Unseen Art Scene](#)



This is merely a whisper being sent out to the world about the genius of the late, great Néjib Belkhodja. He lived amongst us for seventy-four years and consumed life and lived like so few. He had integrity, something that is lacking in the world today. He set such high standards for himself and others around him. He was the man to teach the world about the power of art and the way in which we should conduct ourselves in our lives. It is difficult to put into words the importance of this man. He lived an outspoken existence with courage and conviction. The word Prophet is a word that best describes the giant that is, Néjib Belkhodja. During his lifetime he was a Nation builder and a world guide. He was often ignored and marginalised yet still he bore the troubles of his Independent Nation on his shoulders. His work is so important, to see it and understand it will change the way you see yourself and all that is around you. Throughout his life the Leaders were fully aware of the power of Belkhodja; a man who would not be broken by the State or who could not be used as a political toy. He suffered enormously throughout his life, humiliated and

disregarded by the Nation. On the 16th June 2007 in the Medina in Tunis I heard such pitiful tributes to a man of such stature who, at the end was honored by hypocrites. He died virtually penniless and his work is jailed in the Ministry of Culture, banks and five star hotels around his native country of Tunisia. There is no Museum of Modern Art in Tunisia so you won't see the work of Belkhodja in any Museum around the world. No. His work is too powerful to be released by his jailers. He sheds light on all the World Leaders. He opens our minds to what is the function and meaning of Art. His work develops Nations and his contribution to the world is beyond compare. His departure from this world has come at just the right time; when the world needs him most. Here is a man, who belongs to us all and in his lifetime has shown us the meaning of generosity. His work introduces us to poets and architecture, to calligraphers and musicians. The subtlety within the work is breathtaking and he puts into place the order in which art should be seen, heard and spoken.

Born in 1933 his mother was Dutch and his father Tunisian. He grew up in the Medina in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, North Africa. For those that don't know what the Medina is, it is the heartbeat of the city, where all the aristocracy resides and where cultural activities were in abundance. It is a walled city within a city, with narrow streets as arteries and huge colourful studded doors, which break up the continuity of the whitewashed wall. The Medina has its own language, its own specific architecture. The Medina is the untouchable heart of North Africa. The reason Belkhodja chooses to focus his work on the importance of the Medina is that it is the heart of life. It is beyond the control of modern dictatorship. So his work is about the spiritual heartland of the World. The significance of the Medina in Belkhodja's work is constant as he saw the obvious change in the Medina. For nearly forty years he focused his whole artistic life around the idea of the Medina and his work reads like a biblical message to us all. His work is invincible and belongs to us all, to cage it would be a travesty of justice. He speaks about the change within society. The universal change of

importance between commerce over culture and how the world places more respect on money rather than creativity.

Here is a tribute to his beautiful wife, Najet Belkhodja. Without her love and support we would never of had the Nejib that we see today. We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Of Widowhood by Chinwe Azubuike

Blood shot eyes from endless stream of tears.
Unfathomable thoughts of denial.
Questionable words to celestial bodies and gods.
Irrational musings aimed at nothing.

The total stripping of aided beauty.
The sudden chastity commanded and demanded,
from the inside to the outside,
seeming endless days of incarceration.

The constant haunting dreams,
presumed doubts of 'the' occurrence.
The feared bullying from kins, unbecoming.

The new vacuum in our hearts and beds.
The registered absence-forever,
Of the other half.
The final acceptance of death's handiwork.

Poem by Chinwe Azubuike