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Arena for Contemporary African, African-American and Caribbean Art

Meriem Bouderbala

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Meriem Bouderbala, 1960, Tunisia

About:

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When we speak about the Arab Countries, and specifically of Arab Women, we immediately associate them with the idea of harem, veil, and dance. Arab women are seen as oppressed and repressed by a culture that does not leave space for the feminine side of itself. This can be true if applied to a certain sphere of that culture. But, it is also true that female Arab artist have come a long way to gain recognition in the contemporary art world. This is the case of the Tunisian Meriem Bouderbala.



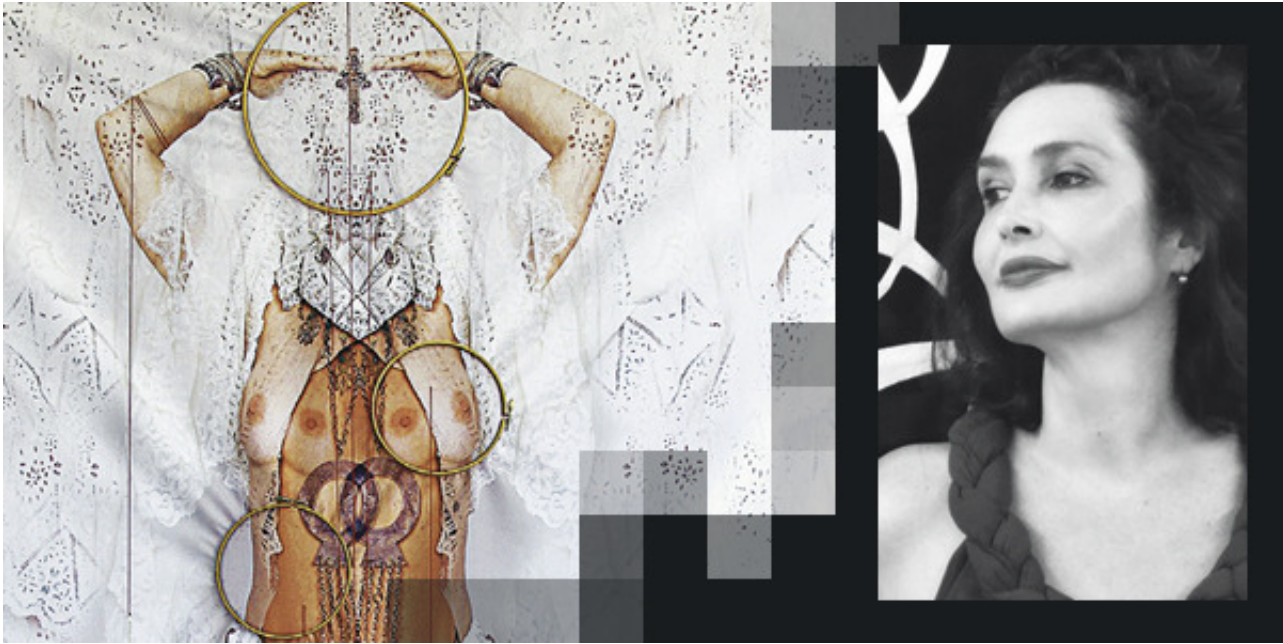
By using her own body in her work, the artist challenges the enduring Orientalist vision of the image of the Arab women by comparing her own body with that of exoticism that become established in the collective imaginary.



Meriem studied painting and engraving at the school of Beaux-arts in Provence from 1980 to 1985 obtaining a Post-Graduate Diploma in Plastic Arts. She then moved to London in 1986 to study engraving at the Chelsea School of Art. Since 1986, Meriem has exhibited her artwork frequently in Tunisia and throughout Europe. Meriem's work has received wide recognition and she has won a number of prizes and important commissions.



Some of her work are parts of the permanent collection of the Arab World Institute in Paris. Meriem's work is theoretically conditioned by her passion to explore and exploit the potential of "minority art," or contemporary art that works outside of traditional schools of thought. Her works play with photography and installation, and challenges the body representation and identification of oneself and of the other. Her art also explores a multiplicity of themes including femininity, chaos, and culture. She uses many mediums comprising textiles and a variety of papers and canvases. She uses rust and natural dyes with a focus on natural products such as water, sand, powders, and metal. Today, Meriem lives and works between Paris and Tunisia, and she truly believes that belonging to both cultures has a central influence on her work.



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