

Mathaf Collection Summary, Part 1

Opened 1 November 2014



Summary, Part 1 inaugurates the permanent display of Mathaf’s collection in the first-floor galleries with a first selection of 100 artists to give an overview of its breadth.

The curatorial concept looks beyond traditional linear histories of art to highlight diverse attitudes, and contextualize intellectual production within multiple modernities. This collection show positions art as a formal and conceptual force, demonstrating artistic intervention as a manifestation of modernity.

African and Arabic representations meet in the paintings of Ibrahim el-

Salahi, the work of Baya Mahieddine exemplifies her unique style of free figuration developed under the limitations of colonial rule in Algeria, Seif Wanly depicts modern Egyptian symbols of social and industrial progress, and Hassan Sharif and Farid Belkahia use natural materials, found objects, and local languages to express strong statements on the making of art in their contemporary contexts.

The exhibition also presents the work of Jassim Zaini, Jewad Selim, and Mahmoud Mouktar, who were pioneers in establishing the art scene in their own countries. These works and artists are witnesses of their times and play active roles in articulating new artistic tendencies and alternative models of society.

By telling the story of the collection and documenting its art histories, Summary Part 1 initiates new routes to interrogate the cultural and ideological changes that have taken place in the transition to a shared global modernity.

The methodology of display adopted in this exhibition is informative rather than spectacular, proposing new relationships between works and key moments in history. From the outdoor piazza to the second-floor galleries, the works show the originality of artistic production, the invention of materials and forms, and artists' new approaches to making art active in their contexts.