

# HELEN E. COPELAND GALLERY

MENU

**THE HELEN E. COPELAND GALLERY PRESENTS**

VOX  
POPULI

2018

UNDERGRADUATE  
JURIED EXHIBITION

Abbès Saladi at the Dean's

# Gallery in Cheever Hall



The work of Moroccan artist Abbès Saladi will be in the Dean's Gallery in Cheever Hall through the Spring semester.

These works are on loan from local printmaker, Richard Nelson who was a friend of Saladi's. They met at a print workshop in Asilah, Morocco in the summer of 1984 and continued to trade works with one another on the years that followed.

Born in 1950 in Marrakech where he died in October 1992, Abbès Saladi 's father left his family when he was four. Unable to raise Saladi, his mother sent him to live with his uncle, who is a café owner medina of Casablanca. From that age, Abbès proved to be a "wise child." He was shy and started to exhibit mania in the form of obsessive drawing and scribbling constantly. At the age of twenty, after graduating from high school, he left Casablanca to study philosophy in Rabat. During his second year of study, he was diagnosed with dementia which would affect him for the rest of his life. He was admitted to a psychiatric hospital under the care of Dr. Tayeb Chkili who, interested in Saladi's drawings, entrusted him with drawing

materials. Saladi began to draw and he would not stop until his death.

In 2015, Saladi's painting "L'Offrande", oil on panel, was sold at an auction dedicated to contemporary Moroccan artists for 466,000 euros. This is worth noting as the intention behind the auction (organized by the French auction house Million, in partnership with its Moroccan counterpart Mazad) was to solidify and recognize Moroccan artistic contributions to contemporary art in the Western and European art world.

According to Dounia Benquassem, Director of AfricArts, in [Dictionary of Contemporary Artists in Morocco](#): *The course of Saladi is singular. This painter is fascinated by the strangeness of his imagination. His works unveil a specific style based on metamorphosis and hybridization. Its pictorial universe offers a mosaic of motifs drawn from the Arab-Muslim imagination, of hybrid bodies, of zelliges, of minarets. The precision of the line, the profusion of details, combined with the subtlety of the tones and the transparency of the washings, overturn the foundations of the real, distort beings more than things and open a phantasmagoric world where the chimeric bird reigns. Saladi cultivates symmetry and, as a distinguished storyteller, familiarizes us with unreal characters from the symbiosis of the plant, the animal and the human.*

To read a personal story from Saladi's friend, Richard Nelson, [click here](#).

To read an psychoanalytical analysis for Saladi by Rouchdi Chamcham, [click here](#).

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Gallery Director