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Centre Pompidou, in collaboration with Mathaf, presents Farid Belkahia exhibition in Paris

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Farid Belkahia (1934-2014) is considered to be one of the main founders of artistic modernity in Morocco.

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Centre Pompidou – Paris, in collaboration with Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, and the Farid

Belkahia Foundation in Marrakesh, is currently presenting the Farid Belkahia: For a New Modernity exhibition, curated by Michel Gauthier.

The show, on view at the Centre Pompidou, enables visitors to discover the work of Farid Belkahia (1934-2014), who is considered to be one of the main founders of artistic modernity in Morocco, and more generally in the Arab world.

The exhibition traces the main sequences in the work of Belkahia, from Prague and the Expressionist period to works on animal hides and the poetry of signs, including copper use and the founding period of the Casablanca School. It brings together nearly 140 works — paintings, drawings, sculptures, hides and coppers.

In a statement, Mathaf director Abdellah Karroum said: “Mathaf is honoured to join hands with the Centre Pompidou to present this exhibition celebrating the life and works of pioneering artist, Farid Belkahia. The curatorial perspective charts the fascinating evolution of his innovative process and reference to African heritage. Mathaf is committed to showcasing the works of artists from the region and this important collaboration enables us to present Belkahia’s oeuvre to the Parisian and international audience.”

Belkahia’s production constitutes one of the great aesthetic achievements of the postcolonial era. It is distinguished by its conception of modernity in dialogue with vernacular traditions and ancestral art, breaking with many Western avant-gardes which advocated a tabula rasa.

He was born in Marrakesh and moved to Paris in 1955 where he attended the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts [National School of Fine Arts] before

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moving to Prague in 1959 to study stage design, where he remained until 1962.

Mathaf's collection showcases around 100 of Belkahia's finest works. Mathaf has also developed the exhibition's bilingual (French and English) catalogue in partnership with the Centre Pompidou.

Farid Belkahia: For a New Modernity is on view at Galerie du Musée and Galerie d'art graphique, Centre Pompidou until 19 July 2021.

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