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# Debut solo exhibition of Algeria’s Baya Mahieddine at the Sharjah Museums Authority

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SHARJAH — As part of its “Lasting Impressions” series, Sharjah Museums Authority (SMA) is launching the first solo exhibition in the Arab world, outside Algeria for Algeria’s pioneering Baya Mahieddine, according to a press release from the organisers.

Mahieddine’s retrospective is the 11th edition of the exhibition series held at the museum, which aims to spark inspiration by introducing works of prominent artists from the Arab world and their contributions to art in the region.

Running for more than 70 years, the five-month exhibition series, which spans over six decades, has featured more than 70 artists that were exhibited for the first time.



On display along with more than 70 artworks by Algerian artist Baya Mahieddine at the Sharjah Museums Authority through July 31 (Photo courtesy of Sharjah Museums Authority)

Drawing inspiration from cultural traditions and environmental surroundings, coupled with her unique style, Algerian artist created dreamlike compositions, largely dominated by female characters.

Her impressive paintings are showcased across 16 halls at Sharjah Art Museum, taking visitors on a journey of work from her early works until her death.

Manal Ataya, director general of SMA, said: “We are truly honoured to be the first institution in the Arab world to present a solo exhibition of this scale celebrating her splendid work and the impression she had left on the global art scene.”

The “Lasting Impressions” exhibition affirms that honouring artists and their creative practice is a key contribution to Arab modern art history,” the SMA director general stressed.

Manal Ataya underlined the human-centred approach adopted by the Emirate of Sharjah to deepen its positioning itself as an artistic and cultural enlightenment centre and a source of inspiration in the region.

Ataya went on to say: “Art will remain a key and rich component of human culture and a source of collective memories and voices on our society today.”

A collection of Baya’s exquisite paintings was also loaned by the Sharjah Art Foundation, Barjeel Art Foundation, Tunisia’s Kamel Lazaar Foundation and Elmarsa Gallery in Dubai and Tunisia. The collection was previously loaned to the Sharjah Art Museum by private collectors and various institutions from around the world. It presented Mahieddine’s first solo exhibition in Paris in 1947.

A collection of Baya’s exquisite paintings was also loaned by the Sharjah Art Foundation, Barjeel Art Foundation, Tunisia’s Kamel Lazaar Foundation and Elmarsa Gallery in Dubai and Tunisia.

The artist’s family also loaned to the museum one of her last works that she had completed, before her death in 1992.

Baya Mahieddine — known simply as Baya — was one of Algeria’s most prolific modernist artists. She was born in 1922 in Algiers, Algeria, and died in 1992 in Algiers, Algeria.

With a career spanning nearly six decades, she became pivotal to the formation of a distinct North African modernist and primitive art, a new Algerian and Arab fine art school.

Mahieddine’s work was influenced by international postwar movements, like Surrealism and Art Brut. She was also influenced by European modernism. She was born Fatma Mahieddine.

Co-curated by Dr. Huda and Suheyra Takesh, the exhibition is expected to bring together a wide range of artists and audiences who are interested in learning about Mahieddine’s six-decade-long career.

On the fringe of the exhibition, SMA is organising a panel discussion titled “Women’s Representation in Art” on Women’s Day, at 7pm on March 8.





Chaired by Ataya, the session will see the participation of a number of female art experts fr important contributions of Arab female artists to the art scene.

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2