Holiday Powers

314 words

Belkahia, Farid (1934--)

Born in Marrakesh, Morocco, Belkahia is one of the foremost modernist artists in Morocco. Belkahia was director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Casablanca from 1962 to 1974. He turned away from oil painting and easels in the early 1960s and began working primarily with large-scale hammered copper. While retaining multiple dimensions, the copper was meant to be hung on walls and was used to create bas-reliefs. Since the mid-1970s and up until today, Belkahia is best known for the work he has done with leather that he treats using traditional techniques and stretches over shaped supports, and then paints with naturally occurring dyes. The process of the work on both copper and leather is an important aspect of their creation for Belkahia, and his work typically highlights not just the organic shapes that make up the content of the work, but the texture and dimensionality of the materials themselves. He often employs Tifinagh letters and symbols that are culled from traditional visual culture within Morocco, looking to rugs, tattoos, and architecture. Belkahia has had multiple personal exhibitions at major structures in Morocco, including the national gallery, Galerie Bab Rouah in Rabat, the Galerie L’Atelier in Rabat, the cultural Moussem of Asilah. He has also had international solo exhibitions including at Darat al Funun (Amman) and the Musée d’art moderne et contemporain (Nice).

References and further reading:

Belkahia, F. (1967) ‘fiches et questionnaire.’ *Souffles* 7-8: 25-31. (This is a significant source for early writing by the artist.)

Benchemsi, R. and Belkahia, F. (2010) *Farid Belkahia*, Casablanca: Venise Cadre. (This book accompanied a retrospective exhibition and has lengthy information.)

L'Institut International du Multimédia. “Farid Belkahia.” [www.faridbelkahia.com](http://www.faridbelkahia.com) (The artist’s website includes images and information as well as further reading.)

Maraini, T. (1990) *Ecrits sur l’Art: Choix de Textes Maroc 1967-1989,* Rabat: Al Kalam: 175-186. (This book contains re-published selections of contemporaneous writing.)