|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **About you** | **[Salutation]** | Samia | [Middle name] | Touati |
| [Enter your biography] | | | |
| [Enter the institution with which you are affiliated] | | | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Your article** |
| Cherkaoui, Ahmed (1934-1967) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Ahmed Cherkaoui was one of the leading modernist painters of Moroccan art during the period following independence in 1956. Cherkaoui’s large-scale abstract and symbolic canvases negotiated a number of influences from his personal and academic life: Amazighi folk-art, the paintings of Roger Bissièreand Paul Klee, and Surrealism. He predominantly used dark colours in his work prior to 1965, while his later works featured lighter colours and a range of various materials and techniques including fibre, gouache and watercolour, and a new creative approach to space. Highly interested in calligraphy and the motifs of popular talismans, Cherkaoui was also influenced by 20th century western modern art. As such, he combined features of tradition and modernity, and negotiated between the aesthetic and abstract nature of the signs and symbols highlighting Islamic art and innovative modernist techniques. However, Cherkaoui’s resort to signs and shapes including triangles, circles, lozenges, dots, and broken and curved lines extends beyond ornamental purposes. Cherkaoui lived between Europe and North Africa, and died suddenly after returning to Casablanca. After his death, his work was featured in a series of retrospective shows entitled *Hommage à Cherkaoui* organised at the Biennale de Paris and the Salon of Sacred Art in Paris, which was followed by the Biennale Exhibit of New Delhi in 1968 in India. |
| Ahmed Cherkaoui was one of the leading modernist painters of Moroccan art during the period following independence in 1956. Cherkaoui’s large-scale abstract and symbolic canvases negotiated a number of influences from his personal and academic life: Amazighi folk-art, the paintings of Roger Bissièreand Paul Klee, and Surrealism. He predominantly used dark colours in his work prior to 1965, while his later works featured lighter colours and a range of various materials and techniques including fibre, gouache and watercolour, and a new creative approach to space. Highly interested in calligraphy and the motifs of popular talismans, Cherkaoui was also influenced by 20th century western modern art. As such, he combined features of tradition and modernity, and negotiated between the aesthetic and abstract nature of the signs and symbols highlighting Islamic art and innovative modernist techniques. However, Cherkaoui’s resort to signs and shapes including triangles, circles, lozenges, dots, and broken and curved lines extends beyond ornamental purposes. Cherkaoui lived between Europe and North Africa, and died suddenly after returning to Casablanca. After his death, his work was featured in a series of retrospective shows entitled *Hommage à Cherkaoui* organised at the Biennale de Paris and the Salon of Sacred Art in Paris, which was followed by the Biennale Exhibit of New Delhi in 1968 in India.  Born in the small town of Boujad in the Chaouia plain of central Morocco, Cherkaoui's fascination with signs began with his curiosity about the shapes and meaning of his mother’s tattoos. Cherkaoui received degrees from the École des Metiers d’Art de Paris where he studied graphics from 1956 to 1959, and from the Aujame Atelier at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris. In 1961, Cherkaoui moved to Warsaw where he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts. Back in Paris, Cherkaoui was awarded a research grant from UNESCO to study signs and symbols in Amazighi art and Arab calligraphy. Following his studies, Cherkaoui taught drawing classes at the Technical College in Beaumont-sur-Oise.  Cherkaoui’s work during the sixties captured visually complex forms that highlighted Morocco's cultural heritage by drawing upon various traditional forms of tattoos, jewellery, pottery, weaving, and handicraft ware motifs. Cherkaoui used a system of geometric signs and symbols inspired from both the Amazighi tradition and from the Zayanes tribe, who were known for traditional woven wool textiles and other handicrafts.  Cherkaoui participated in many solo exhibitions including his one-man show at the Ursula Girardon’s Gallery in 1962 Paris, and in numerous collective exhibitions, including ‘20 Peintres étrangers’ in the Parisian Musée de l’Art Moderne in 1963. He won the bronze medal at the 10th ‘Salon Interministériel’ in 1962 and took part regularly in the Salon de Mai in Paris. |
| Further reading:  (Alaoui, Ahmed Cherkaoui: The Passion of Signs )  (Alaoui, Decode his Memory: Ahmed Cherkaoui )  (Ali)  (Khatbi, Maleh and Maraini) |