Holiday Powers

322 words

**Melehi, Mohammed (1936-- Asilah, Morocco)**

Mohammed Melehi is known as a leading modernist in Morocco. Since the 1960s, Melehi has been elaborating a body of work based around the recurrent motif of waves. The canvases are consistently hard-edged and optic abstractions – the lines are clean, the colors are clearly delineated, and the brushstrokes and movements of the paintbrush are not visible. The waves have been linked to the waves on the beaches of Asilah, Melehi’s hometown, the gesture of writing Arabic calligraphy, and, in their meditative consistency, to transcendence and prayer. Beyond his painting, the breadth of Melehi’s career has been striking, in his teaching, publishing, and policy roles, and as a graphic designer. He was a professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts of Casablanca (1964-1969) and was an active member of the group surrounding the leftist cultural journal *Souffles* from 1966 to 1969, and designed its original iconic cover. From 1972 to 1977, Melehi was founder and director of the cultural journal *Intégral*. In 1974, he co-founded and became the director of the publishing house *Shoof*. In 1978, Melehi and Mohammed Benaïssa co-founded the Al Mohit association and the annual cultural Moussem of Asilah, an arts festival known for its outdoor murals that has continued up to today. Melehi was arts director at the Ministry of Culture from 1984 to 1992.

**References and further reading:**

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

Melehi, M. (1967) ‘fiches et questionnaire.’ *Souffles* 7-8: 56-68. (This is a significant source for early writing by the artist.)

Gayet-Descendre, N., Maraini, T., Melehi, M. and Restany, P. (1997) *Melehi*, Rabat: Galerie Bab Rouah. (This is the catalog of a large solo exhibition and includes information and photographs.)

El Maleh, E., Maraini, T., and Mernissi, F. (1985) *Présences artistiques au Maroc*, Grenoble: Maison de la Culture. (This is the catalog of a group exhibition that includes significant essays.)