Jessica Gerschultz

266 words

**Ben Abdallah, Jellal (b. 1921 Tunis, Tunisia—)**

Jellal Ben Abdallah is a Tunisian artist and illustrator based in Sidi Bou Saïd. He studied at the *Lycée Carnot* in Tunis. His early drawings appeared in the first Tunisian feminist periodical *Leïla* in the 1930s. Ben Abdallah participated in the Salon Tunisien in 1942 and 1945 and established an atelier in Montparnasse in Paris in 1952. During the late nationalist and early postcolonial periods, he was associated with the *École de Tunis*, an elite group of artists credited with forging a Tunisian artistic modernism. Ben Abdallah’s corpus of work spans miniature painting, acrylic on wood and paper, gouache, and monumental design. The majority of his finely detailed paintings depict quotidian life, idyllic women, surrealist imagery, horses, marine creatures, and ethereal seascapes. From 1950 he received numerous state commissions for decorative programs in civic buildings, notably those designed by architect Olivier-Clément Cacoub, including ceramic tile panels in the *Palais des Congrès* in Bizerte and the *Hôtel les Palmiers* in Monastir. Ben Abdallah has exhibited in Tunis and abroad since 1939. Following a retrospective exhibition in 2009, in 2010 his long career was celebrated with a solo exhibition of thirty paintings at the *Galerie Atrium* in Carthage entitled “*Femmes, je vous aime*!”

**References and further reading**:

Bouker, A. (2009) *Jellal Ben Abdallah: ni disciple ni maître*, Tunis: Finzi.

Bouker, A. (2013) *Jellal Ben Abdallah: sous l’artifice, la simplicité*, Tunis: Cérès.

Bouzid, D. (1995) *École de Tunis*, Tunis: Alif- Les Editions de la Méditerranée.

Duvignaud, J. (1983) *Jellal Ben Abdallah: Une Memoire Tunisienne*, Tunis: Cérès éditions.

Louati, A. (1997) *L’aventure de l’art moderne en Tunisie*, Tunis: Simpact Editions.