



Khalid El Bekay

Moroccan 1966

Khalid El Bekay is a renowned Moroccan artist with a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona. El Bekay's works are a crossroads of cultures, a forum where their thoughts and feelings manifest their most personal concerns.

El Bekay has participated in several exhibitions internationally, including the Art Fair of Milan, Art Fair of Bologna, Venice and Padua has participated in MIART. On the other hand, his work can be found in various collections such as the Girona Watercolor Museum, the Ethnographic Museum, the Royal Palace of Morocco, and the World Trade Center in Barcelona etc...

Born in 1966 in Casablanca, Khalid El Bekay graduated from the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Tetouan in 1990 and graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Barcelona, engraving section. His first exhibition dates from 1987 in Barcelona. In 1997, he was finalist of the 30th Biennial of painting of Tarragona. He lives and works between Barcelona and Casablanca.

In the artistic production of El Bekay, we find the cultural and geographical traditions associated with other Western or Mediterranean cultural references. The light of his paintings is reminiscent of his Mediterranean roots; it unfolds in shades of red, yellow or blue.

The artist uses the technique of gray or white paper collage on wood without using sharp instruments. He paints very simple elements, marrying East and West: coffee cup, tea glass, teapot, pear, apple ... Their arrangement is reduced to the essential, by juxtaposition of fragments, in an apparent sobriety. The collage technique based on the superposition of papers has given way to flat colors.

"My work is a mixture of cultures between Western and Eastern. My paintings are the materialization of my dialogue with the earth, this earth that has the same color but can give fruits of very different colors and forms. "

After 30 years of artistic trajectory of Khalid El Bekay, we can look back with a sufficient perspective on his evolution and analyze his objectives, the essential contributions that are the result of this baggage of three decades rich in experience. He has never been an ordinary artist. After his Moroccan training, he went to Barcelona, his contact with the West in the early 90s, far from his culture and family environment, led him to try different themes that included the figure and portrait, simple and sober, almost nostalgic. In the Catalan capital, he studied engraving, a discipline he has always cultivated, but also, whether for economic needs or the need to follow his own path, away from what others are doing, instead of choosing painting, he used paper, a cheap and always available material, recovering it as he found it or painting it beforehand for his works. Thus, probably unintentionally, he became a collage artist, a technique that should not be considered a subgenre of painting, in fact, it was highly appreciated by the Surrealist movement and was accredited and introduced by Picasso in contemporary art and has its own history. Although only a few artists have delved into its specificity and most only use it marginally, this procedure contains in itself infinite possibilities. In the case of El Bekay, he achieves his own identity and entity, which some critics have claimed is simply his way of painting. Certainly, the effect is very close to painting, but despite the fact that painting, broadly understood, is the inspiring source of a good part of the most recent manifestations of contemporary art, the specificity of the glued paper must be emphasized, which allowed this artist to create, already in the mid-90s, a particular language, very effective in its total and sensual visualization, of voluptuous chromatism obtained with these layers of paper always torn by his own hands, in sharp contrast with silver or gold backgrounds, and especially thanks to the use of black which, in addition to giving shape to forms, brings in some objects (eggplants, coffee...) the ideal counterpoint to enhance color to the maximum.

It is impossible to avoid his Moroccan roots, origins of which he is proud and to which he remains faithful, which impose themselves on his memory and work, an indelible mark that constitutes his perpetual source of inspiration, although in his work one naturally detects his great relationship with Western culture. El Bekay's theme reflects feelings rooted in his mind, a personal lexicon that has become an expressive ritual. Pears, eggplants, teapots, cups, objects always arranged in an undefined space with that primitive side so dear to those who have transmitted it in their other cultures, like Matisse or Gauguin overlap or juxtapose, sometimes projecting shadows, establishing a syntax that does not need the Renaissance concept of space, perspective, or shading that would make it a banal and undesirable imitation of reality. For this reason, what is represented resizes and establishes a dialectical relationship between the motif and the background. Often, these backgrounds appear as surfaces covered with geometric tiles, or textured with reliefs like a gestural dripping that represent blurred Arabic calligraphies, which seem to symbolize the word, the tradition that becomes an image through the gesture. In fact, these objects do not represent the object, but the idea of the object. Everything is actually in function of this impulse to transmit this idea of the object, what it really represents for him.

1)



Khalid EL BEKAY (Morocco, b. 1966)

“Bambu VIII”

Ink, collage, acrylic on canvas

120 x 90 cm

Dated 2020

It can be commissioned

2)



Khalid EL BEKAY (Morocco, b. 1966)

“Bambu XIV”

Ink, collage, acrylic on canvas

100 x 200 cm

It can be commissioned

3)



Khalid EL BEKAY (Morocco, b. 1966)

“Te-vert VI”

Mixed Media on Canvas

150 x 150 cm

Dated 2016

It can be commissioned

4)



Khalid EL BEKAY (Morocco, b. 1966)

“Beijing I”

Mixed Media on Canvas

150 x 150 cm

Dated 2016

It can be commissioned

5)



Khalid EL BEKAY (Morocco, b. 1966)

“Beijing V”

Mixed Media on Canvas

150 x 150 cm

Dated 2016

It can be commissioned