

Mohammed Melehi, Morocco's Modern Art Master



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Mohammed Melehi is Morocco's modern art master. Renowned for linking Bauhaus to Islamic art and bringing radicalism to the late 1960s of Morocco, the revolutionary artist's resume included several years living abroad. Melehi formally trained as an artist at the Royal Academy of Arts in Seville, then spent time studying art in Rome,. He then received a scholarship to study at the prestigious Columbia University.

Melehi returned to Morocco in 1963 and took a position at the Fine Arts School in [Casablanca](#). His return was met by a charged political atmosphere; the French Protectorate governing Morocco had ended eight years prior and people were testing their liberties and democratic voice.

Mohammed Melehi is Morocco's modern art master showcases work at Loft Art Gallery in Casablanca.

Melehi, alongside Mohammed Chabâa – modern art painter and former national director at the National Institute of Fine Arts of [Tetouan](#) – and Farid Belkahia, an influential Moroccan modern artist – felt the need to use art to encourage the freedom movement. Similar to Chabâa who used traditional materials like copper, ram, henna, and walnut stains to celebrate Morocco's Amazigh (Berber) and African roots, Melehi used natural dyes painted on calfskin and drew inspiration from the Medina to compose his work. Later on, he used car paint (cellulose) to support the riots and strikes of the working class. At one point, Melehi's activism positioned him to cross paths with Abdellatif Laâbi, founder of *Souffles*, a French and Arabic language literary magazine published in Rabat (1966-1971); Melehi designed *Souffle's* cover.

Throughout his career, Melehi tried to spread his message and vision with Moroccans. As a National Director, he encouraged students to take trips and study Berber crafts and architecture; his goal was to discover how modernism is an expression in Morocco.

Melehi's work is characterized by patterns of uplifting color, an ambiance of freedom, and wavy parallel lines that he used throughout his career. His later work included painting on wood and collaborations with architects. In Morocco, his work can be viewed at the Loft Art Gallery in [Casablanca](#). Currently, the UK is hosting his first solo exhibition, *New Waves: Mohamed Melehi and the Casablanca Art School* is at the Mosaic Rooms, London, until 22 June.