



ARTS & CULTURE

Jordanian artist and sculptor Mona Saudi dies at 76

► Her artworks are part of collections around the world, from Paris to London and Sharjah



The works of Mona Saudi, a renowned artist and sculptor, are part of collections around the world. Photo: Sharjah Art Foundation



Samia Badih

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Jordanian artist and sculptor [Mona Saudi](#) has died. She was 76.

The news was confirmed by her gallery on social media. "Very sad that Mona Saudi, the great Jordanian sculptor, left us tonight," William Shabibi of Lawrie Shabibi gallery shared on Wednesday.

"With great sadness we remember Mona Saudi. An irrepressible personality, a great artist, sculpting in stone for over 60 years, Mona was a force of nature. She passed away peacefully last night in her beloved Beirut. What a privilege to have known, and worked with her — we will always remember her. Shine bright Mona Saudi," Lawrie Shabibi's Instagram posted on Thursday morning.



Close friends of the artist also took to social media to remember her. "Mona Saudi is no longer with us. Long live Mona Saudi, a great sculptor and beloved friend," wrote Palestinian artist [Samia Halaby](#) on Instagram.



Born in Amman, Jordan in 1945, Saudi studied sculpture at the Ecole nationale superieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. She worked and lived between Beirut and Amman and her work has been exhibited at home and around the world.

In an interview with *The National* in 2018, Saudi talked about why she left Amman for Beirut and then Paris when she was only 17.

"This was how I planned my life," she said. "I wanted to do an exhibition and then go to Paris. Nobody supported me. I just decided to make my life by myself, so I abolished all kinds of obstacles — family, society, et cetera."

Mona Saudi, standing by her sculpture, outside Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris in 1987. Photo: Lawrie Shabibi Gallery

By the time she turned 18, Saudi had already held an exhibition, at Cafe de la Presse in the old *An-Nahar* newspaper building in Beirut, and was off to the Ecole Superieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Saudi mainly worked with stone and today one of her works sits outside the Institute du Monde Arabe in Paris. In a recent interview with Nathalie Bondil, director of museum and exhibitions at Institut du Monde Arabe in *Forbes*, Bondil said: "My meeting with Mona Saudi, this immense contemporary sculptor, moved me: a woman who cuts stone is very rare... "

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Decades after her first sculpture titled *Mother/Earth* (1965), Saudi's work has been exhibited around the world. Today, pieces of her artworks are in the collections of cultural institutions around the world including the Sharjah Art Foundation, the British Museum in London, National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC and the Ministry of Culture in Cairo.

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