

STUART SCHAAR

*Miloud Labeid
(1938-2008):
an extraordinary
artist*

When you entered his apartment

you walked into a magical world. Directly in front of the door, perched on a plank near the ceiling, he had placed a score of antique doll heads, making the place surreal. He roamed Morocco's and Europe's flea markets and second-hand shops looking for one-of-a-kind items, which he added to his ever-growing collection. Anything beautiful and unique and affordable, he bought. These included old watches, works of art, and any other hard-to-find object. He would hone in on the single rare and exceptional piece amidst a pile of junk and pluck it out for his collection. He filled his walls with friends' paintings, as well as a few of his own creations.

He put the best of his acquisitions in a museum, which he established 70 km from Marrakech, next to the country house and studio where in his later years he produced most of his painting. A few tourist guide books listed the museum, and people found their way there to relish a Kandinsky lithograph or other works of art.

In many ways Miloud was a self-made man. He took some art lessons from the late Jacqueline Brodsky, but he learned most of his painting skills through observation and experimentation. He resembled a blotter, taking in and appropriating new sensations, forms, and structures, which he had seen along the way. When he came back from a trip to New York City, whose dynamism he loved, he became obsessed with skyscrapers, but not the ones he had seen in that city, but rather those he created from his imagination after being surrounded by endless faceless buildings. He populated his canvases with new images and shapes, which looked like architectural mega structures. He also made three-dimensional wall sculptures of objects such as colossal lips or limpid buildings and, along the way, he discovered the virtues of lipstick red.

A wealthy patron purchased the apartment/studio in which Miloud lived for many years in exchange for a half a dozen paintings

...over and over again, whereas his creative urges led him to experiment ceaselessly and change his style of painting frequently. A few stimuli worked their way into his art. After his patron died, Miloud was able to live off the proceeds of the sale of his art.

At the end of his life, Miloud suffered from cancer of the pharynx. He had smoked earlier on and had stopped, but it was too late. He deserved the recognition he had achieved as one of Morocco's greatest artists.



MILLOUD.