

musée  
YVES SAINT LAURENT  
marrakech



دخول مجاني

Exposition gratuite

ليلى علوي  
المغاربة

LEILA ALAOU  
LES MAROCAINS

30.09.2018 - 05.02.2019

Avec le soutien des Amis de la Fondation Jardin Majorelle  
بمساعدة أصدقاء مؤسسة حديقة ماجوريل

# Press Release

**Temporary exhibition with free admission**

**Les Marocains by Leila Alaoui**

**30 September 2018 – 5 February 2019**

**at the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech**

**A special entrance reserved exclusively for the temporary exhibitions hall will be located on the Rue al Houdoud during the entire length of the exhibition.**

*" Like others before and after her, Leila Alaoui was someone committed to helping others, and who travelled the world to bear witness to their suffering; it was when doing so that she accomplished her most beautiful work.*

*She held deep convictions. The manner in which she left us justifies my lifelong struggle to defend tolerance. When I think of Leila Alaoui, I remember the words of André Gide: "My old age will have begun when I am no longer offended."*

Excerpt from a speech given by Pierre Bergé in Marrakech on 14 April, 2017, when Leila Alaoui was posthumously awarded the title of Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Republic.

*Les Marocains* is one of the last projects undertaken by Leila Alaoui, a French-Moroccan photographer who tragically died from injuries sustained during a terrorist attack in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 15 January 2016.

Three years later, the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT Marrakech, in partnership with the Fondation Leila Alaoui, will present her work in Marrakech, the city where she was raised and where, as a child, she met Yves Saint Laurent. Her photographic series is a testament to Morocco's cultural diversity, which is also on display at the Jardin Majorelle's Berber Museum.

Regarding her series *Les Marocains*, Leila Alaoui said, *"While exploring my own heritage, I stayed among different communities, and used the fact that I was born Moroccan as a sort of 'filter' – one based on empathy – to awaken and reveal in these portraits the specific character of the individuals I photographed."*

The exhibition presents thirty portraits from her series *Les Marocains*, several seen for the first time, and has been curated by the author and photographer, Guillaume de Sardes.

For the entire run of the exhibition, the Fondation Jardin Majorelle has decided to offer free admission to the temporary exhibition hall, offering as many Marrakchis and Moroccans as possible the opportunity to see *Les Marocains* and bear witness to the photographer's unique gaze vis-à-vis her fellow citizens. It is the first time the foundation has taken such an initiative.

**Curator: Guillaume de Sardes**

**Exhibition designer: Christophe Martin**

**From 30 September 2018 to 5 February 2019**

**at the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT Marrakech**

Made possible with the generous support of the Amis de la Fondation Jardin Majorelle

## **Leila Alaoui : An Epiphany of Faces**

Leila Alaoui produced her series *Les Marocains* between 2010 and 2014. She did not photograph scenes from Moroccan life, but rather portraits, in the strictest and most classical use of the term. Her work can be compared to that of Richard Avedon, one of the greatest portraitists of the 20th century, who said, "*A photographic portrait is a picture of someone who knows he's being photographed, and what he does with this knowledge is as much a part of the photograph as what he's wearing or how he looks. He's implicated in what's happened, and he has a certain real power over the result.*" This is clearly in line with Leila Alaoui's vision: there is nothing in her images that appears stolen. The mobile studio she travelled with on her Moroccan 'road trip' signals, without a doubt, what she was expecting from those chosen to be photographed: that they *assume a pose*, to use a phrase that is a bit outdated, but has the ability to place the young photographer's work in the context of a long history of secular images.

Indeed, how can one not notice the important pictorial dimension of Leila Alaoui's images? The greatest portrait painters of the past – such as Tintoretto, Van Dyke, Ingres – often would rely on devices that she in turn used: a neutral background (in this case, black), and a direct, frontal pose. As in classical portraiture, the role played by garments, whether sumptuous and full of colour, or everyday and mundane, almost makes us forget the presence of the body. The men and women who stand before Leila Alaoui's camera are clearly not there to seduce. And yet, the disappearance of the body under clothing allows a real epiphany of the models' faces. As we move from image to image, we remember above all the faces, the gaze of the models. Their gaze remains with us long after we have left the museum.

**Guillaume de Sardes**

## **Regarding the Fondation Jardin Majorelle**

The Fondation Jardin Majorelle is a non-profit Moroccan institution that uses its own resources to ensure the conservation and functioning of the Jardin Majorelle, the Berber Museum and the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech. The foundation's resources were used to establish the Berber Museum, inaugurated in December 2011, and the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT Marrakech, which opened in October 2017. The foundation's earnings are entirely reinvested in Morocco to finance cultural, educational and social initiatives.

## **Regarding the Berber Museum**

The Berber Museum, housed in the former painting studio of the artist Jacques Majorelle, presents a panorama of the extraordinary creativity of the Imazighen (Berber) people, the oldest of North Africa. The museum's collection of more than 600 objects – including jewellery, arms, basketwork, textiles and carpets – is sourced from every region of Morocco, from the Rif Mountains to the Sahara, and attests to the richness and diversity of this vibrant culture, still very much alive today. A multimedia museum installation, designed specifically for the collection, and employing sound, music, photography and film, transports visitors to a timeless and traditional Morocco they will want to experience firsthand.

[www.jardinmajorelle.com](http://www.jardinmajorelle.com)

## **Regarding the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech**

Located a stone's throw from the Jardin Majorelle, the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT, conceived as a vibrant cultural centre, is housed in a new 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> building that includes a permanent exhibition recounting the forty year history – from 1962 to 2002 – of the Yves Saint Laurent couture house, as well as a hall for temporary exhibitions, photography gallery, auditorium, research library and café-restaurant. A state-of-the-art conservation centre, which safeguards the museum's collection under optimal conditions, is located in the building's basement.

[www.museeyslmarakech.com](http://www.museeyslmarakech.com)

## **The Amis de la Fondation Jardin Majorelle Association**

Established in 2017, the Amis de La Fondation Jardin Majorelle is a non-profit association recognised by the Moroccan authorities. Its members, united in their love for Morocco, are devoted to advancing the development and prestige of the Fondation Jardin Majorelle, and are passionate about fashion, Berber culture, botany, music, theatre, cinema and literature. Funds raised by membership subscriptions and donations to the Amis de la Fondation Jardin Majorelle are used to support and sponsor the cultural, educational and charitable initiatives of the Jardin Majorelle, the Berber Museum and the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech.

[www.amisfondationjardinmajorelle.com](http://www.amisfondationjardinmajorelle.com)