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## Art exhibition explores Arab female identity

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Visitors are invited to explore the complex reality of Arab female identity through the artwork of Lalla Essaydi, now on display through April 13 in the Hammond Hall Art Gallery on the Fitchburg State University campus, 160 Pearl St., Fitchburg.

Essaydi's art, which often combines Islamic calligraphy with representations of the female body, addresses the complex reality of Arab female identity from the unique perspective of personal experience. In much of her work, she returns to her Moroccan girlhood, looking back on it as an adult woman caught somewhere between past and present, and as an artist, exploring the language in which to "speak" from this uncertain space.



Fitchburg Art Museum Director Nick Capasso will give a talk on Essaydi's work at the gallery in Hammond Hall at **3:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 23**, with a reception to follow. Capasso is an expert on the artist and her work, having organized the exhibition "Lalla Essaydi: Les Femmes du Maroc" for the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in 2009, where Capasso was curator of contemporary art from 1990 to 2012. In 2011, he attended the Getty Foundation's Museum Leadership Institute.

Capasso is also Chair of the Public Art Curatorial Committee at the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, Boston. He holds a Ph.D. in Art History from Rutgers University. In 2009, he organized the exhibition "Lalla Essaydi: Les Femmes du Maroc," which originated at deCordova and traveled to the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University.

The exhibition, part of the university's CenterStage arts and culture series, is supported by Women in Today's Society and is being offered in conjunction with its community read of Nobel Prize winner

Malala Yousafzai's memoir I Am Malala.

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