

RETAIL

Herms mourns loss of top window dresser Lela Menchari to COVID-19

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Lela Menchari was once artistic director of Herms' flagship Parisian store windows at 24 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honor, amazing passersby with astonishing, bold displays. Image credit: Herms

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

French luxury giant Herms paid tribute to Lela Menchari, a Tunisian-French window dresser who, for decades, set the looks for the brand's flagship store in Paris.

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Ms. Menchari's passing on April 4 came soon after news that Italian footwear maker Sergio Rossi had succumbed to the COVID-19 coronavirus originating from China. As artistic director of the windows of Herms' store at 24 Faubourg, Ms. Menchari charmed visitors to the Parisian outpost with visuals that surprised and amazed.

"Thanks to Lela, exoticism found a home, happily and permanently, in Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honor", said Herms CEO Axel Dumas in a statement.

French author Michel Tournier called Ms. Menchari the "Queen of Enchantment."

Colorful character

Born in 1927 in Tunis, Ms. Menchari was a trained painter at the Beaux Arts School of fine arts in the Tunisian capital, followed by the Beaux Arts School of fine arts in Paris.

Briefly, she was a model for fashion designer Guy Laroche, before joining Annie Beaumel's decoration team at Herms in 1961.

Three years ago, an exhibition titled "Herms tire-d'aile, les Mondes de Lela Menchari" celebrated her vision at the Grand Palais, giving the public an opportunity to savor her vision for Herms.

Ms. Menchari was the driving force behind the **Herms'** colors committee, with her legacy evident in the house's women's silk collection.

"Many of us at Herms have learned a lot from Lela," said Pierre-Alexis Dumas, artistic director of Herms, in a statement.

"She taught us to look at the world through the prism of color," he said. "She was a storyteller without equal that

enchanted the world. We are infinitely grateful to her for all that she has done for us, that she passed on to us."

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