

CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
D'INTÉRÊT NATIONAL

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PARC MONTESSUIT
12, RUE DE GENÈVE
+ 33(0)4 50 38 84 61

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EXPOSITIONS
22.01-07.05.22

M'BAREK BOUHCHICHI
ABDESSAMAD EL MONTASSIR
SARA OUHADDU

En partenariat avec Le Cube
Independent art room, Rabat
Curatrice: Gabrielle Camuset

VÉRANDA

CASABLANCAS

Commissariat d'exposition:
Maud Houssais

لكن حينئذ
Je n'aurai
أحد وقته
de feuille,
j'écrirai
سأكتب
على
le blanc
de
عين
oeil
Villa du Parc



haute
savoie

La Région
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

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contemporain
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culture

The contemporary art center La Villa du Parc has invited in early 2022 Le Cube - independent art room in Rabat (Morocco) to curate a show in Annemasse (France) featuring the singular and complementary practices of three Moroccan artists.

The DNA of Le Cube as a place for experimentation in the formats and contemporary practices of the visual arts in Morocco, the venue's support for the emerging local scene, and its keen interest in questions of narrative, archives, and images strongly resonate with the esthetic and social commitments of our contemporary art center in Annemasse. To open a window on the art scene in Morocco, La Villa du Parc has thus chosen to draw on the expertise and dynamism of a venue that is active in its own land. Le Cube has carte blanche to present a project that is as close a fit with its own commitments as possible while taking advantage of the possibilities that a shift of its vision abroad can offer.

Quand je n'aurai plus de feuille, j'écirai sur le blanc de l'œil¹

M'Barek Bouhchichi

Abdessamad El Montassir

Sara Ouhaddou

22 January – 7 May 2022

Show opening, Saturday, 22 January, at 5 pm

curator Gabrielle Camuset, for Le Cube - independent art room in Rabat, Morocco

The group show *Quand je n'aurai plus de feuille, j'écirai sur le blanc de l'œil* (When I No Longer Have a Sheet of Paper, I Shall Write Upon the White of the Eye) features the artists M'Barek Bouhchichi, Abdessamad El Montassir, and Sara Ouhaddou, whose works highlight fundamental yet irrational narratives that circulate beneath the surface of artisanal and poetic practices in Morocco.

For several years now, writing history has been called into question by taking into consideration missing, elusive, or dismissed records which confuse and obscure our relationship to positions that were thought to be objective and unchangeable. It is in this context and at this scale then that the *Quand je n'aurai plus de feuille, j'écirai sur le blanc de l'œil* exhibition points us towards narratives that are hidden or considered marginal and their emancipating power in our contemporary societies. The show features three artists who are interested in the possibilities of craft practices and orality, practices that transmit, beyond ornamentation and celebration, messages and narratives that are fundamental to their communities. If knowledge and its context are both overshadowed by historiographical forms that are more readily admitted and lost in the production lines of thought, Bouhchichi, El Montassir, and Ouhaddou offer to return to these ancestral expressions of knowledge and scratch the surface in order to plunge us into the cracks that are opened in this way in the narratives and contexts they convey.

The works featured in the show echo different contexts and regions in Morocco. M'Barek Bouhchichi's installations focus on the skills and practices of craftsmen and women of the land whose gestures are perpetuated in the resilience of new systematized and serialized industrial processes. More specifically, it's the question of Black Moroccans' place in today's society that the artist addresses through his projects. These are produced by working with potters, blacksmiths, artisans working in copper and brass, and goldsmiths to point up both their status and the specifics of their expertise and craftsmanship.

¹ The exhibition title is borrowed from the title of a poem by Abdallah Zrika.

Sara Ouhaddou works with craftsmen in several regions of Morocco and mounts collaborative projects in which gestures and techniques are shaken up, questioned, and delved into, inviting all of us to reconsider the codes of their own practices and the narratives they carry with them. Her projects constitute genuine meeting points where each of the craftsmen and Ouhaddou can meet, and where the final form of the work takes shape over the course of their working together. At the same time but on a different scale, through her projects and the exchanges they create, Ouhaddou raises the question of the economy and autonomy of these workers.

Abdessamad El Montassir bases his work on poems that are transmitted orally in the Sahara of southern Morocco and nonhuman knowledge (of plants and landscapes) in order to build narratives that indirectly deal with the silence of history. His films and sound and visual installations speak of the knowledge and both what is forgotten and what does not get transmitted from the history of the region. The artist respects the right to forget that is claimed by the old people there while considering the possible future traumatic events imagined by his contemporaries.

Thus, through a long-term process, the artworks of M'Barek Bouhchichi, Abdessamad El Montassir, and Sara Ouhaddou featured in *Quand je n'aurai plus de feuille, j'écirai sur le blanc de l'œil* reveal the specifics of these skills and knowledge, which have come down to us over centuries yet are being constantly reinvented, teaching us in this way about current realities and trajectories.

Sara Ouhammadou

Born in France in 1986, Sara Ouhammadou lives and works between France and Morocco.

Born into a Moroccan family living in France, Sara Ouhammadou possesses a dual culture that fashions her art practice like a continuous idiom. She began her career as a designer for several luxury brands before developing a social and art practice that tackles the challenges that Moroccan craftsmen and women face. She questions the role art plays as a tool of economic, social, and cultural development, especially in the Arab world. Sharing with us her questioning of the transformations her heritage has been undergoing, Ouhammadou fashions a tension between traditional Moroccan crafts and the codes of contemporary art with the aim of putting forgotten cultural realities in perspective.

Her work has been shown in a number of solo and group exhibitions, including *Connectivité* at Mucem, Marseille; *La trilogie marocaine 1950-2020*, curated by Abdellah Karroum and Manuel Borja Vilel, at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; *QALQALAH قلقله : plus d'une langue*, curated by Virginie Bobin and Victorine Grataloup, at the Kunsthalle, Mulhouse, and CRAC, Sète; *Déracinement* at Z33, Hasselt, and *Manifesta 13*, Marseille; *Global(e) Résistance*, curated by Christine Macel, Alicia Knock, and Yung Ma, at the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and *Notre monde brule*, curated by Abdellah Karroum, the Palais de Tokyo, Paris.

M'Barek Bouhchichi

Born in 1975 in Akka, M'Barek Bouhchichi lives and works in Tahanaout near Marrakech, where he teaches the visual arts.

M'Barek Bouhchichi uses painting, volume, drawing, and video to develop work on a tentative language based on exploring the limits between our inner discourse and its extensions to the outside, the now, and others. He locates his works at the crossroads of esthetic and social concerns, exploring fields of associations as possible ways of rewriting oneself.

His work has been shown in a number of solo and group exhibitions, including *Archive(s) Sensible(s)* at Le Cube – independent art room in Rabat; *Ce qui s'oublie et ce qui reste*, curated by Meriem Berrada and Isabelle Renard, at the Musée National de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, Paris; *Global(e) Résistance*, curated by Christine Macel, Alicia Knock, and Yung Ma, at the Centre Pompidou, Paris; *Les Mains parallèles* at the Selma Feriani Gallery, Tunis; *Chant des champs /Amarg*

N Igran at the MuZEE, Ostend; *Les Mains Noires*, curated by Omar Berrada, at the Kulte Gallery, Rabat; and *Le Maroc contemporain* at the Institut du monde arabe, Paris.

Abdessamad El Montassir

Born in 1989 in Boujdour, Abdessamad El Montassir lives and works between Boujdour, Rabat, and Marseille.

Abdessamad El Montassir's artwork is shaped around a trilogy, the right to forget, fictional and visceral narratives, and future trauma. Generally in his work and research, the artist devises reflexive processes that invite the participants and viewers to rethink history and maps through collective or fictional narratives and nonmaterial archives. At the same time, his projects question traumatic events and their influence on individuals, their behaviors, and their socio-political developments, while deploying processes in which that trauma contributes to a historization.

El Montassir tackles these themes by considering the knowledge of identities that are not human – plants – in order to foster renewed ways of imagining our environment.

His work has been shown in a number of solo and group exhibitions, including *Demain c'est seulement dans un jour*, curated online by Taous R. Dahamni for Le Jeu de Paume Lab; *Archive(s) Sensible(s)* at Le Cube – independent art room in Rabat; *Ce qui s'oublie et ce qui reste*, curated by Meriem Berrada and Isabelle Renard, at the Musée National de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, Paris; *Surgir des cendres*, part of the biennial *Chroniques - biennale des imaginaires numériques*, Aix-Marseille; *Invisible*, curated by Alya Sebti for the 13th Biennale de l'Art africain contemporain de Dakar, and ifa-Galerie, Berlin; *Leave No Stone Unturned*, curated by Clelia Coussonnet, at Le Cube - independent art room in Rabat; *De liens et d'exils* at La Villa Empain - Fondation Boghossian, Brussels; *Al Amakine*, curated by Gabrielle Camuset and Alice Orefice, as part of the 11th *Rencontres de Bamako*; and *Saout Africa(s)*, part of documenta 14 at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin.



M'Barek Bouhchichi, Re-enactment Act III, 2020.

Sculpture composite : muqarnas et alphabet géométrique.

Bois, peinture et cuivre jaune, dimensions variables.

Courtesy de l'artiste.

Production : Fenduq.

Photographie par Mohamed Alouane lors de l'exposition Archive(s) Sensible(s) curatée par Laura Scemama au Cube – independent art room.



M'Barek Bouhchichi, Les Mains Noires, 2015.

Installation (détail), terre cuite.

Dimensions variables.

Courtesy de l'artiste et de Kulte Gallery.

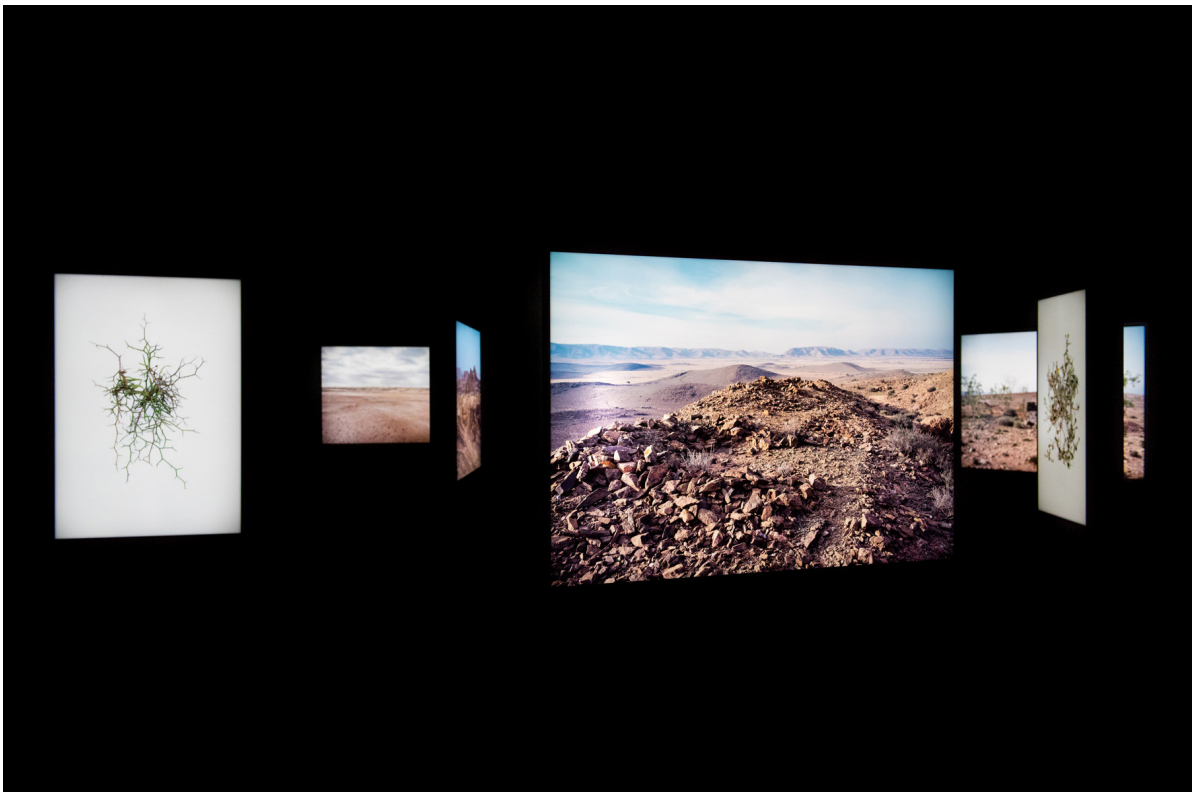


Abdessamad El Montassir, Galb'Echaouf, 2021.

Vidéo full HD, son stéréo, 18min48.

© ADAGP / Abdessamad El Montassir.

Œuvre produite par l'artiste, Le Cube – independent art room, l'Institut français du Maroc, l'IMÉRA avec l'aide du Labex RFIEA+, Pro Helvetia Cairo, Embassy of Foreign Artists et AFAC – The Arab Fund for Art and Culture.



Abdessamad El Montassir, Al Amakine, 2016 - 2020.

Installation photographique et pièce sonore.

© ADAGP / Abdessamad El Montassir.

Œuvre produite par l'artiste, Le Cube – independent art room, Carte Blanche par Al Safar, l'Institut français du Maroc, l'IMÉRA avec l'aide du Labex RFIEA+, Pro Helvetia Cairo, la plateforme Chroniques coordonnée par SECONDE NATURE et ZINC et le gmem-CNCM-Marseille.

Pièce sonore réalisée en collaboration avec le compositeur Matthieu Guillin.

Mise en œuvre : la Société Lumière et l'Atelier Deuxième Oeil.

Photographie par Pierre Gondard



Sara Ouhammadou, Sans-titre, projet Des Autres, 2021.
 Installation, broderies sur caoutchouc et structure en métal.
 Dimensions variables.
 Courtesy de l'artiste et de la galerie Polaris.
 Œuvre produite durant la résidence Art Explora à La Cité Internationale des Arts.
 Photographie par Maurine Tric.



Sara Ouhammadou, Sans-titre, projet Des Autres, 2021.
 Série de dix sérigraphies de 100 × 70 cm chaque.
 Courtesy de l'artiste et de la galerie Polaris.
 Œuvre produite durant la résidence Art Explora à La Cité Internationale des Arts.

CASABLANCAS

22 January – 7 May 2022

Show opening, Saturday, 22 January, at 5 pm

curator : Maud Houssais

Gabrielle Camuset has invited Maud Houssais to show her latest work in La Villa du Parc's porch exhibition space. Exhibiting the CASABLANCAS archives is part of a lively group movement fueled by different researchers, curators, artists, independent art venues, and official institutions to showcase the experiments in artistic modernity in Morocco. We might mention in this regard a forthcoming publication devoted to the archives of the school of fine arts in Casablanca, edited by Maud Houssais and Fatima-Zahra Lakrissa, and published by Zaman Books & Curating, or School of Casablanca, a group project involving residencies, public programs, and online archives headed by the KW Institute for Contemporary Art and the Sharjah Art Foundation, in collaboration with the Goethe Institut Maroc, ThinkArt, and Zamân Books & Curating. .

CASABLANCAS

The 1960s and '70s in Morocco crystalized the beginnings of a reflection on town planning in which the philosophy of the city went hand in hand with art initiatives in the urban space. The newly formed art and cultural social circles following independence took this question as their own to form a collective project of social, political, and cultural reform. In this regard, Mostafa Nissaboury, the poet and cofounder of the cultural reviews *Souffles* (1966-1971) and *Integral* (1971-1977), offers readers in his text titled "Casablanca, fragments d'une mémoire dispersée" a retrospective narrative that lies midway between an eyewitness account and a study carried out in the field, focusing on what Casablanca symbolized in the 1970s. Namely, the city was the embodiment of a field of struggle in terms of both a social struggle and ideas generally, in a sensational questioning of norms and the dictated frameworks for reflection and thinking. Nissaboury deploys in his text ways of writing and pinning down collective memories which can only be thought and articulated by wandering through the physical space – the streets – and symbolic space – memory and history – of the city.

The CASABLANCAS archives show imagines the visual counterpart to a walk through Casablanca in the 1960s and '70s with a scattered though augmented memory, drawing on the archive and documents to summon art practices that helped to produce the city. The invention of a new visual culture is a crucial element in working out the project of a society that must also take place through images. In this regard then, Casablanca's School of Fine Arts, headed by Farid Belkahia from 1961 to 1974, constituted a fertile ground for an urbanistic conception that sees the artist as a fully-fledged influencer. Display in public spaces, graphic design, interior and urban planning and development, and social photography become the touchstone of a decolonial committed art within society. Cinema embodies the catalyst of popular urban culture, which it helps to both found and fix in place. By way of an example, there is Ahmed Bouanani's short film *6 et 12*, which features Casablanca between 6 am and noon. Finally, the graphic and applied arts agencies founded by artists, like SHOOOF, which was opened by Mohamed Melehi and Studio 400, opened by Mohammed Chabâa, or those that worked closely with artists, like the Faraoui and de Mazières architectural firm, stand as a fundamental contribution to the output of a visual culture applied to the street and the city as a whole.

Maud Houssais is a researcher and freelance curator based in Rabat, Morocco. She cofounded, with Kenza Benbouchaib and Fatima-Zahra Lakrissa, the visual arts research platform ARAV (Atelier de Recherche en Arts Visuels). Her research focuses on the question of the making of the city by artists during the 1960s and '70s. She is particularly interested in the means and functions of collaborative work in the art community, among visual artists, architects, filmmakers, and writers.

She is currently coediting a forthcoming book on Casablanca's School of Fine Arts under Fahrid Belkahia's leadership, to be published by Zaman Books & Curating. Her recent projects include "bauhaus imaginista," a program of research and exhibitions. From 2011 to 2016, she was project manager at L'appartement 22, Rabat. Her articles have appeared in a number of reviews and publications, including the collective publication *Sismographie des lutes : Répliques* (Nouvelles Editions Place, 2021) and the online review *The Sole Adventurer* (forthcoming).



Ninon Lesourd et Mohamed Melehi à la galerie L'atelier, Rabat, 1971. Archives : Pauline de Mazières.

EXHIBITIONS

22.01 - 7.05.2022

Media contact Marguerite Pilven

mp.pilven@gmail.com

Villa du Parc

Centre d'art contemporain d'intérêt national

Parc Montessuit, 12, rue de Genève

74100 Annemasse

+33(0) 450 388 461 / www.villaduparc.org

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