

THROUGH | AGHMAT

Omar Berrada |
Oli Bonzanigo |
M'barek Bouhchichi |
Michele Ciacciofera |
Sara Ouhammadou |

Curated by Rocco Orlacchio

Exhibition: February 23rd – March 15th 2018

VOICE gallery wants to promote initiatives and dialogues between contemporary art and local culture and history. For the first event, conceived in the framework of the 1:54 contemporary African art fair, held on the 23rd – 25th February, we decided to create a site-specific project in the archaeological site of Aghmat, which is located 30 km from Marrakech.

Aghmat is the first medieval capital in Morocco, built before the creation of Marrakech.

The project is an opportunity for local and international visitors to discover (or re-discover) a fundamental chapter of Moroccan heritage.

Through aims at installing an on going dialogue and confrontation between the work and its environment.

Through builds new relations between the observer, the works and its position in the spatial context.

Through as in the myth of Janus – the god of transition and passage – indicates the evolution of time from past to present and the passage from one state to another, from one stage of life to another.

Through dismantles the limits of consciousness, the crossing into territories of imaginative and unconscious landscapes.

Through is also inspired by the Japanese concept of the Ma or Khora: a pause, an unnameable space out of reach. It is the space between here and there, which forever remains a source of imagination.

Through becomes the site to host processes of creative transformation.

We invited 5 artists to produce and install artworks in the archaeological site of Aghmat: Oli Bonzanigo, M'Barek Bouhchichi, Michele Ciacciofera and Sara Ouhammadou. Their interventions are linked to the site through their material research, and the tradition of ceramic production in Morocco.

Entering this environment, the visitor becomes an element of the narrative created between the artworks and their integration in the site.

Through the visitor's view the artworks and the archaeological site of Aghmat are back to life, a place in which everyone can create his or her own dialogue between the history and the contemporary, projected towards the future.

Oli Bonzanigo

The research of Oli Bonzanigo traced the history of the Almoravids' dynasty, from deep Africa towards the Maghreb, From Northern Morocco to Andalusia, and back to the Sahara desert in Algeria.

Through a sound composition installed in 6 ceramic jars produced in Tamegroute, the artist is narrating the voyage of the Almoravids, recollecting their movement in one geography, and transporting architectural fragments left behind by the 12th century dynasty back to the ancient capital of Aghmat, in order to visualise together past and future in a fictional present, the age of the capital of Aghmat.

Hammam Amoravide / Tazagourt, 2018. ultramarine acrylic on cotton towel. (57 cm x 95 cm).

Hammam Almoravide / Aghmat, 2018. ultramarine acrylic on cotton towel. (57 cm x 95 cm).

Al-Qubba al-Murābiṭiyya / Marrakesh, 2018. ultramarine acrylic on cotton. (67 cm x 170 cm).

Alhambra / Siviġlia #1, 2018. ultramarine acrylic on cotton, metal frame. (230 cm x 170 cm).

Alhambra / Siviġlia #2, 2018. ultramarine acrylic on cotton, metal frame. (170 cm x 118 cm).

Mustaqbal, 2018. ultramarine acrylic on wool. (114 cm x 156 cm).

Almaḍy, 2018. ultramarine acrylic on wool. (114 cm x 156 cm).

Harakato al Haḍir, 2018. sound installation produced in collaboration with Khalid Icame, Kamar Studios, Marrakesh (15 min.). 6 ceramic jars from Tamegroute, copper oxyde and ultramarine acrylic paint. (110 cm x 40 cm).

M'Barek Bouchichi

(Text by Francesca Masoero)

Welcome to the reign of the master of waters. An imagined space where the politics of water distribution come at work. Continuing along the lines of his research into the presence of blackness and the traces of slave trade in Morocco, M'Barek Bouchichi explores here water and water-springs as sources not only of aggregation, but also and foremost of discrimination and marginalisation. As an entry point, he adopted the discovery of a separation existing for water springs for the haratin (the former black slaves) [...] deriving from the access to, and control over natural resources as well as the historically enrooted racialized relationships at play in the country.

Through an etymological and onomatopoeic game, the very image of the root becomes here both the conceptual and the figurative thread orchestrating the work and navigating us through it. [...] In Arabic, a same word is associated to both race, veins and roots. These multiple references indeed underpin the little meditative objects displayed, these seemingly natural, partly humanoid roots, or these maritime fossils, assembled in a composition of earth, fire, water, steal and dried arboreal rests.

Temporary Structure?, 2017. Terracotta, metal / Installation, variable dimensions.

Production by Le 18, Marrakech, Morocco

Omar Berrada & M'Barek Bouhchichi

Created for the exhibition Documents Bilingues at le MuCEM in 2017. Ahmed Bouanani crossed Morocco during the 60' to document popular heritage and arts. Henriette Camps-Fabrer, a researcher, worked on special jewels techniques found only in the South of Morocco. From those documents Omar Berrada and M'Barek Bouhchichi collaborated on what will disappear. Working with craftsmen, they created a piece which is, as for jewels, a writing from an erasure. Playing with the concept of authenticity, and their heritage, they created an historical fiction with authentically false jewels.

Fiction Populaires (une enquête commande) - Documents Bilingues, 2017. Natural clay and silver, variable dimensions.

Sara Ouhaddou

(Text by Cassandre Gil)

The impression of an impression, as a print of a print, the impression of a perception, the impression of a landmark, a temporality. As many interpretations of the objects Sara Ouhaddou puts together pieces of history as pieces of her own story. [...] Here, she worked on ceramic, experimenting with the clays from the Ourika region.

She pushes back the limits of this very fragile material. She actually creates a "mise en abyme" of the clay: the clay as a material but also as the soil, as the geographical territory, as a heritage in a sense, a collective memory and imaginary. The clay itself is a combination of contexts. All of these impressions, perceptions and various words are however gathered under one single notion: the recurring question of symbol as language.

Figures Terre naturelle, 2016. Natural clay, 20 x 20 x 2 cm each.

Première figure, 2014. Natural white clay, 60 x 60 x 3 cm

Michele Ciacciofera

(Text by Michele Ciacciofera)

By reading about the recent rediscovery of the ancient capital of Aghmat, place in which I often passed across unaware of what was preserved underneath, I immediately thought of a classroom. The antonomasia of learning and socialising, the classroom, with its colorful desks depositories memories, is the place where the irrelevance of chronological hierarchies between things allows to perceive the continuous temporal passages produced by the discovery of original images, individually and collectively. On the desks, some books reproduce archetypal images and signs producing a subliminal and silent communication between the place and the viewer, freed from sonic and verbal distractions. [...]. The installation, placed inside one of the hamman's rooms, therefore communicates how signs, hence languages, are not produced by randomness, but rather by historical processes and ideological nets.

A second work, installed outside the construction, aims at creating a dialogue between the ruins, or the reality, and the myth, left motif of Mediterranean societies' evolution. More specifically, this second work revisits the mythological and evocative value of the taurus, a symbol associated to fertility, to the moon and to constellations, but also to power and, even more, to rebirth. [...] In a sort of homage to the myth as a collective, foundational and distinguishing value essential to man, the coloured woolled threads embrace a pile of old bricks found in the excavation of the site of the ancient mosque, in an ideal projection on the ground of the taurus constellation.

Hamam – the library of the encoded time, 2018. Ceramic from Tamgroute enamelled in Ourika. Candles, school tables. Variable dimensions.

Inextricable networks, 2018. Installation. Wool and metal structure. Variable dimensions.