

Rewiring Narratives

New Media Art from the Arab World

Edited by Haytham Nawar & Ala Younis

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DIRIYAH ART FUTURES

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Nomadic Visions and Digital Frontiers: The Evolution of Media Arts in Morocco and the Maghreb

Morocco, the Maghreb, and the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are often overlooked in contemporary cultural discourse, with attention frequently limited to traditional forms of cultural expression. However, since the 1990s, New Media Art in Morocco and the region has experienced significant growth and renewal. The unique political and social contexts of these communities—combined with their rich narratives and poetic traditions (both written and oral), along with a strong presence of music and ritual—have enabled a diverse field of artistic experimentation. These works often blend a fascination with technology with poetic and rhythmic elements, serving as tools for direct or metaphorical commentary on individual and collective realities.

Technological advancements during this period democratized access to media production, allowing artists to adopt video and digital media and significantly improved both accessibility and quality. This development spurred a growing interest in New Media Art among emerging and established artists in Morocco and the Maghreb. Formats such as digital film and video, video installations, digital mapping, Internet art, and hybrid forms became key tools for communication and artistic expression. Artists used these mediums to explore paths of subjective expression within a fragile yet newfound freedom.

While societal challenges persist, Moroccan artists are increasingly playing a pivotal role in reshaping their realities. Digital and media art, along with social media platforms,



Posters of various editions of the Casablanca International Video Art Festival, Morocco

have become vital means of expression. Recognizing the significance of new media, numerous initiatives have emerged to foster artistic creation and establish long-term platforms for this growing movement.

Morocco's Leading Role

Morocco has long been at the forefront of New Media Art in the region. The Casablanca International Video Art Festival, launched in 1993 by the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences at Ben M'sik University, was a landmark initiative. Through training and awareness programs led by the faculty and pioneering artists, Morocco became a regional hub for video art, with numerous video research workshops established across universities.

A key figure in the early years of the Casablanca International Video Art Festival (from the early 1990s to 2000) was Marc Mercier, renowned for his curatorial work and his role as director of the Videoformes festival in Manosque, France. He was instrumental in shaping the festival's international scope and experimental orientation. Later on, curators such as Majid Seddati and Moulim Laaroussi as well as artist Abdelkebir Rabi carried the torch, continuing the festival's commitment to media innovation and critical discourse. Organized by Ben M'sik University in Casablanca, the festival was a pioneering platform for media art in the Maghreb, regularly featuring globally acclaimed video artists. Iconic

names, including Bill Viola, Nam June Paik, Gianni Toti, Marcel Odenbach, Harun Farocki, Marina Abramović, and Łoic Connanski, were presented in its early editions.

For us young video artists at the time, it was a formative experience to encounter such groundbreaking works, often looping in projection rooms, and to meet some of these artists in person. The festival provided not just exposure to international media art, but also a sense of belonging to a larger, experimental artistic movement.

As a participant in these workshops, I was able to create videos that were showcased in national and international festivals, earning awards and opportunities to study abroad. For many Moroccan artists, the festival and the medium of video art became engines for personal, professional, and social transformation.

Notable artists such as Mounir Fatmi, Brahim Bachiri, Nour Eddine Tilsaghani, Abdelaziz Taleb, Abdelghani Bibt, Abdellatif Benfaidoul, and others emerged from this scene. Mixed-media artists, including Mohamed El Baz, Yto Barrada, Hicham Benohoud, and Hassan Hajjaj, also expanded their creative trajectories.

The Casablanca International Video Art Festival was not only a site of exhibition, but also a space of artistic

Catalogue of the 6th
Casablanca International Video
Art Festival, 1998

Mustapha TAHOURI, Aziza HAMIM

«La folie de l'instant» 6 mn
Le plaisir de la vie consiste-t-il?
Au fond ou à la forme?
A la richesse ou à la pauvreté?
La richesse ne consiste pas à la possession
d'un objet mais à la lutte pour l'obtenir.

Abdelaziz Talib

Academy of Media Arts Cologne-Allemagne
«Rauschen» 7 mn 2000
... Une interprétation personnelle de deux
mondes différents : le rêve et la réalité...
«Test» 5 mn 1999
... Depuis pas mal de temps l'Etre Humain
, arrête plus de tester, et qui? Lui-même!
«Dangerous» 3 mn 1999
... Souvenez-vous... mort... naissance... la vie?
Une vidéo faite est dédiée spécialement à
Moha et sa sœur Laïla : mes amis qui se sont
décidés l'été dernier.
«Zwei (tansend)»
... Nouveau millénaire... chacun sa route...
mauvaise communication...
Identité... 2000!!

Club l'Objectif Dore de l'Art Photographique

Youssef WICHOU, Said LARTI

«SARA... ESPOIR» 21 mn 16 mn
Sara, petite fille issue d'une modeste famille,
souffre d'un handicap depuis sa naissance. Le
documentaire relate donc sa vie quotidienne,
et sa lutte pour survivre «presque» comme les
autres.

Rahim SABRI-Ali SENHAGI

La caméra rode les boulevards entre : les
jeunes, vieux, hommes et femme , pose la
question: «Le mariage...pour vous...c'est
quoi?»

Karim SALLAHI

«L'amour aux trousse» 5 mn 40
Il fouille...il fouille son passé, le noir l'enve-
loppe.. Elle... omniprésente dans mémoire. Un
fil invisible séparant ce qui est réel de ce qui
illusoire, mais le rouge à lèvres, est là pour les
rapprocher.



production and growth. Several notable works were either born directly from the festival or emerged in its orbit. For instance, Mounir Fatmi's installation *Personne n'est seule, rien n'est solide* (1996), which reflects on memory and architectural fragility, was part of his trajectory shaped by early festival exposure.

In 1995, Fatmi was selected for the prestigious German Videokunst prize, marking an important milestone in his international recognition. My own video work, *Le Mur / The Wall* (2000), was the result of workshops curated by the festival in collaboration with Agadir's Atelier de Video de l'Institut français and Ibn Zohr University. The work went on to screen in multiple international festivals and receive awards. Likewise, works by Abdelghani Bibi and Nour Eddine Tilsaghani, both active in the early video scene, were shaped by this fertile ecosystem and received international attention. These examples underscore how the festival catalyzed artistic production and opened pathways for recognition far beyond the Maghreb.

Despite the festival's sustained presence over two decades, video art remains marginalized in Morocco's contemporary art field. This is not due to a lack of quality or interest, but rather to the art world's reluctance to recognize video art as a marketable product with significant value.

Videokaravaan: A Nomadic Vision / 2002-2010

My interest in media art was profoundly shaped by the atmosphere of discovery at the Casablanca International Video Art Festival. For many in my generation, the turning point came when I encountered works like Gianni Toti's *VideoPoemOpera*, a radical synthesis of image, text, rhythm, and sound that the artist created between the 1980s and 2004, which felt closer to poetry than cinema. Yet perhaps one of the most intimate and lasting influences was the work of Toni Serra (Abu Ali), especially his short *WAHAB* (1994). In just three minutes, the artist introduces us to a way of understanding video that is closer to reading, poetry, or even a Sufi-like form of philosophy, rather than something driven by technological spectacle.

WAHAB features a simple, meditative sequence: an old Egyptian tune playing while the wind lifts a plastic bag in what feels like an improvised dance. This fleeting choreography of wind and matter becomes an ephemeral poem, unfolding before our eyes with a rhythm that seems divinely



Pictures of various video installations and films presented by Videokaravaan, in Test Portal Amsterdam, 2015

orchestrated. We understood, through works like this, that video could become a spontaneous form of literature: free, intuitive, and spiritually resonant. These inspirations deeply shaped our practice and thinking. After formative experiences in local workshops, both Abdellatif Benfaïdoul and I were awarded UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries for Artists. I went for an artist residency at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne (1999–2001), while Benfaïdoul joined the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. These residencies deepened our conceptual and technical approaches, but the philosophical foundations had already been laid through encounters with works like *WAHAB*.

Inspired by these transformative experiences, Benfaïdoul and I cofounded Videokaravaan in 2002. This art collective operated as a “nomadic program,” crossing borders and reshaping how media art could be produced, shared, and experienced. Rather than relying on traditional institutions, Videokaravaan took art directly to diverse audiences on university campuses, in cultural centers, at local cafés, on rooftops, in medinas, even inside desert tents—transforming nontraditional spaces into ephemeral arenas for dialogue and experimentation. We used portable projectors, minimal equipment, and flexible setups that allowed for screenings, workshops, and discussions to unfold in any environment.

Unlike static institutions, which often required formal application processes and operated within urban, elite cultural circuits, Videokaravaan was fluid and decentralized. It offered workshops on digital storytelling, video editing, sound art, and experimental documentary practices. These were often hosted in partnership with Morocco's Ibn Zohr University (Agadir), Institut Français, or Villa des Arts (Rabat), but just as often, they occurred in informal community spaces or public squares. This accessibility opened the door to a younger generation of artists, some without prior access to formal arts education.

The kinds of works we showed were equally varied: experimental video essays, abstract visual poetry, politically reflective short films, and multimedia installations, often created by emerging artists from the region. Some tackled urban alienation or migration; others explored spirituality, memory, or gender. Videokaravaan introduced artists such as Hakim Belabbès, Bouchra Khalili, Younes Rahmoun, and Hassan Echair to both local and international audiences, helping to amplify their voices and aesthetics.

Our collaborations extended internationally, with institutions such as the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven), Berlinale Talent Campus, and CaixaForum (Barcelona), allowing us to bridge North African practices with global conversations on media art. From 2002 to 2010, Videokaravaan played a pivotal role in reshaping the landscape of mixed-media and experimental art in Morocco and beyond, operating not only as a platform, but as a method: participatory, mobile, and consciously de-institutionalized.

In 2010, we transitioned into a new phase with the founding of the Arab Media Lab, continuing our commitment to media art, but this time through a permanent and locally grounded platform in Marrakech.

The Arab Media Lab Project: A Physical Platform for Media Art in Marrakech

Following the success of Videokaravaan, the collective's founders took a significant step in 2010 by establishing a permanent platform in Marrakech: the Arab Media Lab (AML) project. The initiative was created to anchor media art practice in the Moroccan context while fostering regional and international exchange through a multidisciplinary approach.



Pictures of various video installations and films, presented by Videokaravaan, 2014

As an independent hub for research, production, and training, the AML provides a nurturing environment for emerging artists to explore cinema, digital storytelling, and mixed media as tools for social and aesthetic transformation. It champions a decentralized model of cultural engagement, often activating nontraditional public spaces such as rooftops, medinas, public squares, and rural locations to reach wider and more diverse audiences.

The AML's programming includes curated screenings, exhibitions, and a range of training modules spanning media art, creative documentary, sound art, and experimental cinema. Across its programming, the AML has facilitated the production of more than fifty original video works and films, many of which have been showcased at local and international festivals, art spaces, and academic institutions.

Its flagship initiatives include:

Digital Marrakech Festival (2011–present)

This annual festival is dedicated to showcasing media art, experimental cinema, and digital storytelling from the MENA region and beyond. It includes screenings, exhibitions, artist talks, and public programs, with a focus on new voices and interdisciplinary practices. Over the years, the festival has hosted numerous acclaimed filmmakers, media artists, and theorists, and has become a central event in Morocco's digital and audiovisual landscape.

Videokaravaan posters, 2002–10, samples pictures of various video installations and films, presented in *Les transculturelles des abattoirs*, 2009, Van AbbeMuseum-Eindhoven, 2005



Arab Media Lab project space
and activities, 2021–present



Media Art Morocco Workshop Series (2015–18)

This long-term training initiative offered intensive labs in experimental filmmaking, media art, video editing, sound design, and digital storytelling. Conducted across various Moroccan cities, including Marrakech, Agadir, Casablanca, and Tiznit, the series engaged more than sixty young creators, many of whom developed their first works during the program.

Tangier Interzone Film Program (2021–present)

This curated screening and discussion project explores the mythologies, subcultures, and layered histories of Tangier and the Beat Generation. To date, the program has showcased more than forty-five films featuring works by both emerging and established filmmakers.

Planet of the Arabs and Arab Stereotypes in Western Media (2023)

This screening and lecture series critically examined representations of Arab identity in Western film and media. Hosted in educational institutions, community centers, and cultural venues, the program included both historical works and contemporary responses.

Beyond the New Norm (2020–21)

This online master class and workshop series developed during the COVID-19 pandemic brought together media artists and independent filmmakers from Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco to explore new collaborative possibilities amid global lockdowns. Under the mentorship of Ali Essafi, Hakim Belabbes, Sara Kaddouri, Muhammad

Images and posters: *Designed bread*—Soudade kaadan, DM3_Dirk Raucher, DM2_Besides the Sea—Nadia Hotait, DM4_Emre Önel, Abdelaziz Taleb, Abdelatif Benfaïdoul



ABDELAZIZ TALEB

Taymour, and Abdelaziz Taleb, the program combined creative exploration with emotional resilience. Over the course of eight months, two collaborative films were produced and later premiered at the AML's headquarters in Marrakech, marking a symbolic return to physical gathering after the pandemic.

The AML has also developed a growing archive and research database of more than 400 video works, curated for academic, educational, and public presentation purposes. These resources support critical discourse and enable ongoing access to media art from the Arab region.

The AML regularly collaborates with a wide range of institutional partners, including the Prince Claus Fund, British

Council, AFAC, Pro Helvetia, Goethe-Institut, CaixaForum, Hivos Foundation, Doen Foundation, La Mostra video de Barcelona, Desorg, and several Moroccan universities. These collaborations have enabled regional mobility programs, artist residencies, and coproductions, helping to solidify the AML's position as a cultural bridge across geographies.

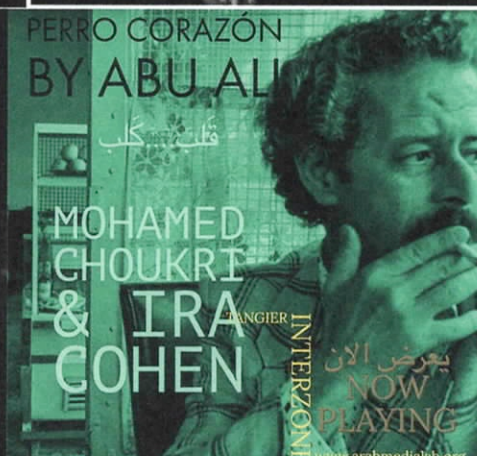
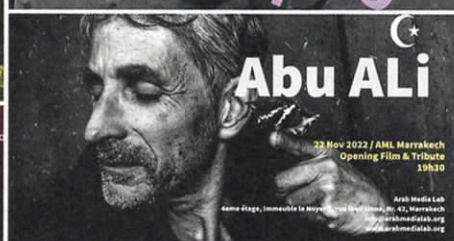
Over the years, the AML has featured and collaborated with acclaimed media artists and filmmakers, such as Faouzi Bensaïdi, Hakim Belabbes, Ali Essafi, Jordi Esteva, Halida Boughriet, Maha Maamoun, Narhanya van Dijk, Jan-Willem van Ewijk, Kogonada, Mary Jirmanus Saba, Ahmed El Shaer, Soudade Kaadan, Hicham Lasri, Hassan Hajjaj, Ghassan Salhab, and many more. Their involvement has helped to situate Moroccan and Arab media art within a dynamic, global conversation.

With its commitment to experimentation, inclusivity, and public engagement, the AML remains a transformative force in contemporary media art, bridging the local and the global, the poetic and the political, the physical and the virtual.

Founded in 2002 by Abdellah Karroum, L'Appartement 22 in Rabat emerged as one of Morocco's first independent platforms for contemporary art. While multidisciplinary in scope, it has maintained a strong and consistent engagement with media art practices, particularly through its long-standing collaboration with Younes Rahmoun. Often exploring themes of spirituality, repetition, and interiority, the artist's video-based works have been presented through residencies, publications, and exhibitions hosted at the space. His practice and presence within the platform have helped to affirm video as a valid medium for conceptual and socially conscious exploration in the Moroccan art scene.

The Mohammed VI Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rabat further expanded institutional engagement with media art, particularly during the 2020 Biennale d'art contemporain de Rabat, which included the exhibition *Carte Blanche à Mohamed El Baz*. This presentation featured a range of artists working across media, including Ilias Selfati, Youssef Ouchra, Sa'ïd Afifi, M'Barek Bouhchichi, Safaa Erruas, and Maria Karim, many of whom presented works that merged installation, video, and conceptual approaches. The inclusion of such practices within a major national institution signaled a shift in how media art was being positioned within Morocco's mainstream cultural discourse.

Curated by Abdelaziz Taleb
for the Arab Media Lab
project, 2021–present, *Abu Ali*
(Toni Serra), *Dalila Ennadre*,
Micropunta, poster design:
Abdelaziz Taleb



The Marrakech Biennale also played a pivotal role in fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. With its emphasis on site-specific works, public interventions, and transnational collaboration, the biennial provided a platform for media art to be experienced beyond traditional gallery formats. Its programming helped to bridge global and local narratives, offering artists and audiences a space to engage with new technologies, moving images, and performative media in relation to Morocco's complex histories and urban environments.

Collectively, these initiatives, alongside independent efforts such as the Arab Media Lab and Digital Marrakech Festival, have contributed to an enriched ecosystem for media art in Morocco, transforming what was once a marginal practice into an increasingly visible and vital part of the country's cultural fabric.

From Revolution to Innovation: The Evolution of Video and Media Art in Tunisia

In Tunisia, experimental approaches to film and animation emerged sporadically before the 1990s, exemplified by the groundbreaking *La Mohammadia* (1974) by Ahmed Bennys. I first encountered this work through the curatorial project *Halaqat Nord-Africaines*, led by Moroccan filmmaker Ali Essafi. These early efforts reflect a nascent engagement with experimental practices, laying the groundwork for the eventual rise of video and media art in Tunisia.

Before the 2011 Tunisian revolution, video art was not a common practice among Tunisian visual artists. However, some pioneering experiments were undertaken by members of the diaspora and individuals who pursued higher education abroad, such as Ismaïl Bahri, Nicène Kossentini, and Farah Khelil. Within Tunisia, a few university-based artists and their students also contributed to this early exploration of the medium.

The revolution marked a turning point for video art in Tunisia, as it gained prominence alongside photography. The widespread use of social media and mobile devices during this period played a pivotal role in the medium's growth and democratization. At the same time, in the context of social unrest, mobile technology enabled the production of compelling video experiments, such as works by Oussema Troudi, Belhassen Handous, Ismaïl Bahri, and Souad Mani.

Following the revolution, media art became a more confident medium among diaspora artists. However, local galleries were still hesitant to embrace it, often underestimating its value. Similarly, experimental video works were met with skepticism within the film industry. At Galerie Gorgi, Souad Mani became the first artist to present a video during its Talan event. The artist has since expanded her practice into transmedia art, exploring connected objects, Internet art, and sound art. Along with Romain Papion, she cofounded the duo WUJud with Romain Papion, a digital arts director. Their collaborative work revolves around connected objects and digital experimentation. Haythem Zakaria has delved into sound art, while Farah Khelil and Ali Tnani have developed projects that explore the use of data and digital mediums.

Fatma Kilani established the El Kazma Video Festival in 2015, and it has played a vital role in promoting video art in Tunisia. This festival continues to provide an essential platform for emerging and established artists, fostering greater appreciation for and recognition of video art as a dynamic and evolving artistic practice.

In 2019, the collective La Boite cofounded Gabes Cinema Fen, an annual festival based in Gabes, southeastern Tunisia. The festival focuses on moving images and features three main sections: Cinema, Video Art, and Virtual Reality, alongside an Arts & Thought segment that encourages interdisciplinary dialogue and critical reflection.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, video art had gained widespread acceptance, evolving beyond the academic sphere to become a widely practiced form of artistic expression. Prominent artists who have continued to produce impactful video works include Mouna Karray, Mouna Jemal Siala, Ali Tnani, and Nidhal Chamekh.

The pandemic also saw the emergence of a new wave of video artists, including Walid Ben Ghezala, Sahar El Echi, Baya Medhaffar, Nader Ayache, Yosr Guesmi, Mohamed Ali Ltaief, Rima Rabai, Malek Khemiri, Mohamed Rachedi, Elyes Jeridi, and Aya Chriki, among others.

Finally, the Interference Festival, which started in 2016, has become a key platform for highlighting experimental practices, particularly those involving light, further emphasizing the innovative spirit of Tunisia's contemporary art scene. Curated by Bettina Pelz and Aymen Gharbi, the public art festival is mostly dedicated to light art.

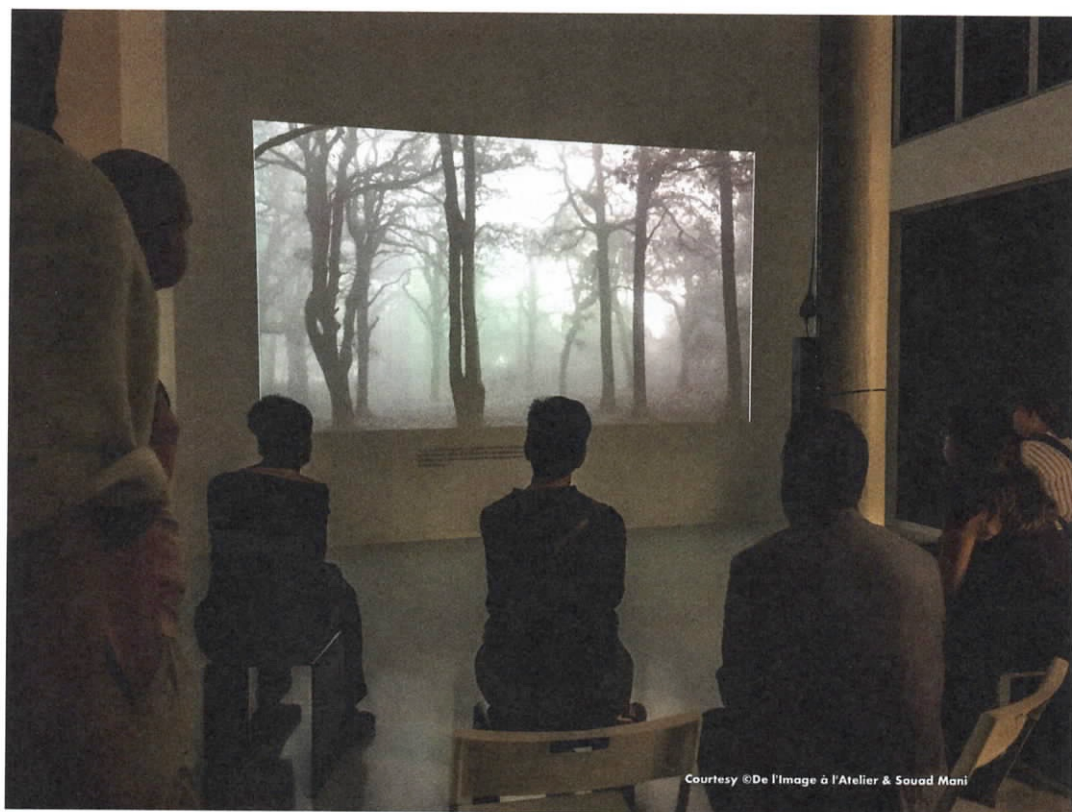
Framing Identity: The Rise of Video and Digital Art in Algeria

Algeria has cultivated a distinctive voice in video and digital art, shaped by its complex historical, cultural, and sociopolitical landscape. This artistic evolution has been significantly influenced by a generation of pioneering artists who have used the mediums to explore themes of identity, memory, and sociopolitical critique.

Among the pioneers is Malek Bensmail, known for seamlessly blending documentary techniques with artistic experimentation. His works *Territoire(s)* (2017), *Algerian TV Show* (1997), and others delve into themes of identity, historical memory, and political realities, offering nuanced insights into Algeria's multifaceted narratives. Through his compelling visual language, Bensmail examines the interplay between individual lives and larger societal structures, creating thought-provoking works that resonate both locally and globally.

Equally influential is Zineb Sedira, whose video installations exploring themes of memory, migration, and Algeria's colonial history have garnered international acclaim. One of the most recognized voices in Algerian video art, Sedira creates powerful narratives that draw from personal and collective histories, using layered imagery to address issues of displacement and cultural identity. Through works such as *Mother Tongue* (2002), the artist reflects on the intersections of personal memory and geopolitical histories, creating spaces for contemplation and dialogue.

Kader Attia has also been instrumental in shaping Algeria's contemporary art scene, particularly through his innovative use of video as a medium for critical engagement. His work frequently addresses themes of postcolonial trauma, cultural repair, and the legacies of colonialism. In his video installations, Attia explores the scars, both physical and psychological, that colonial histories have left on individuals and societies. One of his landmark works, *The Repair from Occident to Extra-Occidental Cultures* (2012), examines the concept of "repair" as a metaphor for addressing historical injustices and cultural loss. His videos often incorporate archival footage, interviews, and performative elements, blurring the lines between art, ethnography, and activism. Attia's approach encourages viewers to confront uncomfortable truths while imagining possibilities for healing and transformation.



Courtesy ©De l'Image à l'Atelier & Souad Mani

Déclencheur Collective, *Focus
Tunisia—Déclencheur Collective*,
September 27, 2023, Marseille
Photography Center, *On screen*

In addition to these figures, artists such as Ammar Bouras, Adel Abdessemed, and Zoulikha Bouabdellah have significantly contributed to Algeria's video art landscape, navigating themes of identity, displacement, and societal critique. Their works often challenge traditional artistic conventions, creating space for bold experimentation.

Emerging artists, including Mustapha Sedjal, Rachida Azdaou, Amina Zoubir, Amina Menia, and Kheireddine Khaldoun, are continuing this legacy, pushing the boundaries of video art and mixed media. These artists often work through independent platforms like Ateliers Sauvages, a collective that fosters creativity and experimentation. Zoubir, in particular, has been a pivotal figure as both an artist and a curator. Her 2013 exhibition *Algerian Artists Write the "Video Body," 1995–2013* explored the representation of the body in Algerian video art, addressing both aesthetic and ethical questions.

The accessibility of Internet platforms and digital tools has allowed younger artists to experiment with video in avant-garde ways. The launch of the first Algiers Video Art Days: Wide Shot, in 2022, marked a significant milestone. Organized by Espace Divali and curated by Amel Djenidi, the event featured screenings, panel discussions, and conferences that brought together artists from Algeria and beyond.

While institutional support remains limited, the resilience and creativity of Algerian artists continue to propel video art forward. With figures such as Bensmail, Sedira, and Attia leading the way, and a new generation building on their legacy, Algeria is carving out a dynamic space for video art on the global stage, blending local narratives with universal themes in increasingly innovative ways.

Projecting New Visions: Libya's First Video Art Exhibition at the Historic Red Castle

In Libya, the first video art exhibition took place in 2012, organized as a civil society initiative by the Arete Foundation for Arts and Culture. This Libyan nonprofit organization is dedicated to promoting artistic creativity and cultural exchange within Libya and neighboring countries. The exhibition featured works by various international and Libyan artists, with videos projected onto the walls of the Old City.

The foundation transformed the historic Red Castle into an open exhibition space by installing screens at seven different locations, creating unique viewing stations. "We wanted the

setting to differ from traditional art galleries,” explains Reem Gibriel, the executive director and founder of Arete Foundation. Gibriel emphasizes Libya’s need for such cultural events, highlighting the innovative nature of the exhibition. “Libya does not have video artists or an audience familiar with this art form. To reach a wider audience, instead of expecting people to visit art galleries, we decided to bring the exhibition here, to the Red Castle,” she notes.¹

The exhibition received support from several prominent organizations, including the Prince Claus Foundation (Netherlands), the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, the Tawasul Libya Corporation, and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Tripoli.

Looking Ahead: Media Art in Morocco and the Maghreb 2.0

The journey of New Media Art in Morocco and the Maghreb is a testament to creativity’s power to thrive against the odds. What started in university workshops, ateliers, and the Casablanca International Video Art Festival has blossomed into a movement that continues to evolve, breaking barriers and inspiring change. Those early efforts did not just teach technical skills, they created a space for artists to experiment, connect, and dream bigger.

Today, media art in the region feels like a living, breathing thing—always moving, adapting, and crossing boundaries, both physical and cultural. It is a conversation between tradition and technology, a bridge between South and West, and a reflection of the struggles and hopes of the people who shape it.

As the Maghreb looks to the future, its artists remind us that creativity is not just about making something beautiful—it is about imagining what is possible. These individuals are not just showing us their world; they are inviting us to see the world differently. And in that invitation lies the real magic of media art: a way of connecting us all, no matter where we are from.

¹ Houda Mzioudet, “First Glance show entertains Libyan video art enthusiasts in the Red Castle,” *Libya Herald*, December 26, 2013, <https://libyaherald.com/2013/12/first-glance-show-entertains-libyan-video-art-enthusiasts-in-the-red-castle/> [accessed in December 2025].

Abdel Aziz Taleb (Morocco) is a mixed-media artist, producer, archival artist, and curator. He is also the founder and director of the Arab Media Lab Project and the Digital Marrakech Festival, where he plans artist programs, discussions, workshops, and training. The artist sees his films and videos as extensions of his body, through which he explores different visions of poetry, inner identity, the purification of the soul, and deep social realities. A number of his works have been selected for inclusion in leading film and video festivals, such as the Berlinale Talents, the Venice Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, and the Festival International du Cinéma Méditerranéen de Montpellier, among others. In addition, he gives lectures and master classes on current media art happenings in the Arab World, and has initiated and produced various projects around Arab stereotypes in the Western media. Taleb advises projects worldwide that contribute to the circulation of works from Arabic and North African countries in different (international) video and film festivals.

Rewiring Narratives: New Media Art from the Arab World rethinks the positioning of artistic and media practices from the Arab world in the grander discourse of New Media Art; not through the mere filling of representational gaps, but through a rethinking of the field as a whole. Emphasizing localized histories, cultural frameworks, political contexts, and technological conditions, this volume maps a dispersed yet interconnected terrain of Arab artists, institutions, and works that challenge linear notions of modernity and authorship. The editorial essay by Haytham Nawar and Ala Younis calls for a methodological shift; situating Arab media art through its own material and social conditions, from early cinema and state infrastructures to post-2011 digital practices, positioning it as dynamic rather than derivative.

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