

e_flux Agenda

Announcing awardees of inaugural research grants, Mohamed Melehi exhibition, and digital programming

Alserkal



Mohamed Melehi in the garden of the Casablanca Art School. Installation by students from the sculpture course, c.1967. Archives SMF.

September 16, 2020

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September 19–October 10, 2020

New Waves: Mohamed Melehi and the Casablanca Art School Archives: September 19–October 10

Concrete, Alserkal Avenue

Ripple Effects: Legacies of Radical Pedagogy in the Art School : September 26, 5–7pm, Online workshop with Mohamed Melehi and Morad Montazami

Alserkal

Al Quoz 1

Dubai

United Arab Emirates

info@alserkalavenue.ae

alserkal.online

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Alserkal Arts Foundation returns to fall programming with a commitment to research-led practice and multidisciplinary dialogues, both online and offline.

Alserkal Arts Foundation opens the exhibition ***New Waves: Mohamed Melehi and the Casablanca Art School Archives***, in Alserkal Avenue in Dubai on September 19. Curated by Zamân Books & Curating, the exhibition tells the story of the radical Casablanca Art School, retracing Melehi's career chronologically from the 1950s to the 1980s. Previously unseen works and archives present Melehi as a painter, photographer, muralist, graphic and urban designer, art teacher, and cultural activist.

Originally scheduled for March 2020 but postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the exhibition will open in the OMA-designed Concrete during Alserkal Lates to launch the fall season, with an accompanying live and digital programme.

This retrospective exhibition brings a pioneering artist's multi-faceted career to life, giving UAE audiences a unique insight into a practice that feels critical and relevant for contemporary concerns in this region. The travelling exhibition and the Dubai iteration marks the first time that the full breadth of Melehi's works has been shown on a global stage, including in-depth research on Melehi's documentary photography, highlights from his graphic design studio SHOOF, and the remarkable murals of the Asilah festival.

The Foundation awards three inaugural research grants

Alserkal Arts Foundation presented the 2020–22 research grants to researchers breaking new ground in their innovative approaches to transnational film histories, contemporary architecture and urbanism, and indigenous knowledges and local ecologies in the context of Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA). The recipients are **Léa Morin, Manar Moursi, and Shahana Rajani and Jeanne Penjan Lassus**.

Léa Morin is a curator and independent researcher based in Casablanca, Morocco. Her project, *CINIMA 3: Lodz – Casablanca, Some meaningless events to retrace*, reframes the history of cinema in the Maghreb, retracing the missing stories of a lost generation of aspiring Moroccan filmmakers, particularly exchanges between Lodz in Poland and Casablanca in the period following Moroccan independence in the 1960s.

Manar Moursi is a multi-disciplinary designer and artist from Cairo, Egypt. *The Loudspeaker and the Tower* looks at the proliferation of new mosque constructions in Egypt, particularly unusual mixed-use typologies. An architectural study deploying extensive photographic documentation of both ubiquitous and overlooked structures, the project reconsiders minarets as both symbolic and strategic apparatuses.

Shahana Rajani and Jeanne Penjan Lassus are artists based in Karachi and Bangkok, respectively. Their project *Embodied Cartographies and Visual Entanglements in the Delta* traces practices and transmissions of situated knowledges in the Indus Delta to develop sensorial methods that grapple with climate change, ecological disturbances, and the politics of representation. They focus on coastal communities reckoning with infrastructural development, and the militarisation of the landscape in the delta region of Sindh, Pakistan.

Awarded for a two-year period, with support of up to USD 5,000 for individuals, and USD 10,000 for collaborative projects, the research grants support radical and unconventional research that challenges established methods and modes of practice. Supporting knowledge production and critical exchange that disrupt and expand the boundaries between disciplines, the grants place an emphasis on alternative frameworks that link the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Digital programme: *How Will We Return?*

Alserkal Arts Foundation initiated ways to attend to the immense cultural and social challenges of the present moment. *How Will We Return?* a series of dialogues between cultural practitioners including Mary Ellen Carroll, Lumumba Di-Aping, Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, Katya García-Antón, Basim Magdy, Jahnvi Phalkey and Akeel Bilgrami, is an epistemic project, shaping the organisational approach and future direction of Alserkal Arts Foundation. Watch the three volumes and roundtable on alserkal.online.

New Waves: Mohamed Melehi and the Casablanca Art School Archives is presented by Alserkal Arts Foundation. Curated by Zamân Books & Curating, the original exhibition was produced by The Mosaic Rooms, A.M. Qattan Foundation. This exhibition was organised in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary African Art Al Maaden (MACAAL). With additional thanks to Jotun Paints UAE, and to our logistics partner Crown Fine Art.

