About AFAC

The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC was founded in 2007 through the initiative of Arab cultural activists as an independent foundation to support individual artists, writers, researchers, intellectuals, as well as organizations from the Arab region working in the field of arts and culture. Since its launch, AFAC’s programs have steadily expanded to cover cinema, documentary film, contemporary photography, visual and performing arts, music, creative and critical writings, research on the arts, entrepreneurship, trainings and regional events. Based in Beirut, AFAC works with artists and organizations all over the Arab region and the rest of the world.

Our vision

AFAC strives to build a flourishing cultural and artistic scene across the Arab region that contributes to establishing open and vibrant societies, where young and seasoned voices engage with each other in the wake of the massive transformations being witnessed in the region.

In such a context, AFAC seeks for works of art and culture to contribute to the following goals:

- Take advantage of the grey areas and collapse of self-evident certitudes in our region to spur fresh thinking and innovative visions of the future.
- Search for tools to bear witness to the hopes and tendencies our region is living through, with techniques that go past traditional documentation to create new forms of experimental writing in ways and dealing with the image.
- Rediscover the complexity and diversity of our societies, and search for marginalized narratives in both the near and distant pasts.
- Promote engagement between Arab societies and their diasporas, especially after such a large number of Arab artists have become refugees or been forced into exile across the world, which has reflected on them personally and the art they produce, as well as on various societies they are now working in.
- Expand the space for civic engagement through the offerings of intellectuals, artists, researchers and civil society organizations; a space to dialogue, questioning, critical reflection, and tolerance.

How we work

1. Autonomy: AFAC is keen on diversifying its funding sources allowing us autonomy to work towards realizing our vision.

2. Transparency: AFAC adheres to transparency at every stage of work, beginning from the grants application forms which are accessible and open to all, up until the selection process itself, which is the responsibility of a committee of jurors chosen annually for each category.

3. Dynamism: AFAC carries out periodic evaluations of its work, taking into consideration deliberations between jurors, social and political changes, and the new creative genes that accompany them, which allow us to be constantly prepared to evolve or modify our programs.

Strategic Areas of Work

Supporting the production of cultural and artistic work lies at the core of AFAC’s work. Since our inception, numerous changes have taken place in our funding programs in response to the needs, gaps, and emergence of new forms of expression and storytelling. The fund for supporting novelists has transformed into encouraging other genres of creative writing, while the support for documentary filmmaking has expanded, adding a dedicated program for enhancing documentary photography.

The support that AFAC offers is not restricted to cultural and artistic work, it extends to cover research on the arts, to secure appropriate channels of distribution and to guarantee the sustainability of pioneering cultural organizations in the Arab world, whether by way of financial support or through training and mentorship. In accordance with this, AFAC’s work is divided into five strategic areas: providing grants, developing training programs, building and sharing knowledge, broadening the pool of supporters for the arts, and cultivating appreciation for and engagement with contemporary arts and culture productions by connecting them with audiences.

• Grants: AFAC offers close to two hundred grants every year through open calls to submit applications. These grants are spread over nine programs, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, the AFAC Documentary Program, Music, the Research on the Arts Program, Creative and Critical Writings, Training and Regional Events, Cinema, and the Arab Documentary Photography Program.

• Training and Mentorship: In addition to the grants, AFAC sets up programs that offer training and mentorship to develop missing skills and practices, as is the case with the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship and the Arab Documentary Photography programs.

• Knowledge Building and Sharing: AFAC’s extensive database includes more than 10,000 applicants and 1,350 funded projects, which has made it into a considerable source of information on cultural trends, modes of artistic production, social impact, geographic contexts, and all the relevant statistics. AFAC shares this information through reports, infographics, grants’ stories and studies that it commissions.

• Broadening the Pool of Supporters for the Arts: AFAC is committed to strengthening philanthropy for the arts, and to working with the private sector to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship in the field of cultural and artistic production. Our aim is to expand and diversify sources of funding for artists, writers, intellectuals and researchers, as well as organizations that present artistic and cultural content.

• Building Audiences: AFAC seeks to cultivate appreciation for and engagement with arts and culture production to reinforce the transformational power of creative expression.

MORE ABOUT AFAC

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AFAC is registered in Lebanon under decree 6388 dated 24 September 2011, as the Lebanese branch of the foundation AFAC, registered in Zug, Canton of Zug, Switzerland on 23 June 2006, under article 80 of the Swiss Civil Code. Previously, AFAC was registered in Jordan as the Jordanian branch of the foundation AFAC, under registration number 2009, dated 11 April 2007. AFAC is audited yearly by PricewaterhouseCoopers in Zurich, Switzerland.

Design: Studio Safar
preface

an introduction
to the AFAC
annual report 2018
When AFAC was established in 2007, it was precisely to respond to this need for an independent support system, to fill a void that existed in the Arab region. There were individual artists striving within an often quite challenging context to create their work. There were some institutions, mostly in the capital cities, nurturing—encouraging, exhibiting, supporting—this process of creation. But there was no stable and independent funding infrastructure either to support individual artists or arts organizations, and thus no ecosystem that might allow them a fighting chance at longevity or sustainability.

The metaphors used here, that of infrastructure and of ecosystem, at first glance seem to exist at odds with one another. The first is architectural, implying something not just solid but deliberate and man-made, while the second is organic, referring to a living system that adjusts itself as a whole in response to any change in the surroundings. But both metaphors are necessary in order to be able to describe the role that AFAC has come, over the last twelve years, to play on the cultural scene. As a funding body, it provides the vital infrastructure that supports artistic practice and allows it to grow. But in the other roles it has come to play, AFAC itself is in fact part of the cultural ecosystem and must shift and change in accordance with what is required to maintain health and balance.

Systems of arts patronage are nearly as old as art itself. The process of creation requires support—chiefly material, but also moral, intellectual, and informational.

The role that was once played by emperors, kings, and the nobility is now fulfilled by the state and various different kinds of institutions. Patronage is vital to maintaining the cultural scene, but in order to do so, the patronage system must serve the cultural scene and not the other way around. The model of the independent, non-profit institution, while not perfect, is the one most suited to maintaining a non-exploitative model of support, provided it keeps asking itself the right questions.
These roles, while quite various, can roughly be sorted under three key aims: knowledge production, sustainability, and network building. All of these goals function in conjunction with one another, and are in fact reliant on one another in order to be fulfilled. Putting together our annual report is an opportunity for us to reflect on what we have achieved and how it was achieved, to ensure that our short-term plans align with our long-term goals, and to ask ourselves honest questions about where we have been and where we want to go from here.

A lot of information is covered in the actual body of the annual report and its accompanying annexes in great detail, from an in-depth overview of programs and partnerships, to a full schedule of our activities over the last year both within and outside the Arab region, to statements from each of the program juries reflecting on the year’s batch of applications. Therefore, in this preface, we thought it might be more interesting to shed a light on some of AFAC’s behind-the-scenes considerations. To talk about the thinking behind our strategies, the ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ of the way we set up our programs, and the questions we ask ourselves as part of a long-standing and ongoing commitment to be more transparent and retrospective with ourselves and our partners.

This last year, 2018, saw the first cycles of a number of new programs as well as the launch of an ambitious new initiative: the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP).

Planning and building the North Africa Cultural Program was very much an exercise of allowing a big, regional picture to emerge from much smaller, local mosaic pieces. To do so, a number of field visits were organized that included extensive meetings and discussions with various cultural actors across the five countries that comprise the North African region: Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt.
The two grant schemes the program makes available are aimed not at individual artists, but at cultural entities and organizations, and are meant to provide institutional national fund supports institutional infrastructures that cross-border cooperation, collaboration, and networking. And so, the goal of the field visits and meetings was to identify the particular challenges of each local context in order to pinpoint the ways that AFAC might be able to offer support without having it create a backlash for the institutions being supported, and how it might foster collaborations without imposing them.

Sensitivity to context is paramount to the way we make decisions about our programs, and during the field visits, it became quickly clear that there were various different forms of organizational structures through which cultural entities operated in the North African countries. Some took the form of traditional institutions officially registered with the government. Others, depending on the resources available to them as well as the constraints imposed on cultural work by the authorities, were much looser and more informal. Thus, the NACP fund was designed to take these circumstances into account, and is made equally available to formal institutions as well as unregistered collectives and entities with other, less traditional forms of organizational structure.

In addition, the findings of the NACP discussion groups indicated a number of issues and obstacles in common among the different North African countries, though the degree to which they posed a problem to cultural work was the biggest variable. Still, they present an interesting overview of some of the challenges that must often be dealt with at an institutional level in the region at large. For example, the issue of censorship, which can be state-imposed, but is sometimes self-imposed in order to avoid offending certain political or religious parties that might make work more difficult for organizations. There is also the issue of mobility and visa restrictions, which means that collaborations often have to be planned with such possible setbacks in mind.

The findings further showed that there was a real need for decentralization, for paying attention to the peripheries rather than just the capital cities. This is important not just from an artistic standpoint, as overlooking the peripheries means ignoring vibrant art scenes and movements whose inclusion makes for a richer cultural output, but from the standpoint of knowledge production. It is impossible to have a full picture of a particular context if knowledge is always only ever produced from (and consumed by) the center.

To decentralize knowledge production is to create a more detailed and inclusive picture of what actually is, as well as what is possible. And this becomes even more vital when read against the need, as one participant put it, “to have a budget for errors.” Organizations must be able to learn not just from one another’s successes, but from one another’s failures as well, and knowledge exchange can only be facilitated by prioritizing networks, particularly those that bypass the habitual routes.
Prioritizing these "non-habitual" routes of knowledge exchange largely informed why and how AFAC, in partnership with the Drosos Foundation, conceived the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship Program, which saw its first cohort of participants embark on the inaugural year of a three-year program in 2018. Once more, it is a program focused on strengthening cultural institutions rather than individuals. Unlike the NACP, however, which is a little more hands-off, ACE is designed to be "an experiment in 'learning by doing,'” whereby specialists from different sectors, both from the region and from “alternative centers” (for example, India and Brazil as opposed to the US and UK), share their expertise on everything from technological tools to fundraising to institutional ethics.

Practitioners from the region also make themselves available to mentor the grantees through the various different stages of their experience.

The strategy of consistently innovating programs meant to empower institutions is certainly a way of allowing AFAC’s resources to stretch further than they would if only individuals were being supported. But once more, the metaphors of infrastructure and ecosystem, taken together, help better explain the multifaceted aims and effects of such a strategy. For cultural institutions are not only like foundations, which, when fortified, are able to support more ambitious constructions, they are also a fundamental part of a healthy cultural ecosystem. One cultivated for the express purpose of sustainability. One that organically allows for more artistic diversity to flourish and grow by creating more venues, more audiences, more nodes of dissemination and circulation, more formal and informal networks of information, more modes of expression, more engaged communities, and ultimately, more art.
Looked at from a different perspective, supporting a multitude of other cultural institutions is yet another way of supporting individual artists, who end up having more room for their work at almost every level.

Inside the judges’ chambers

Supporting individual artists through grants is one of the fundamental functions of AFAC’s existence, the bread-and-butter of its work.

Every year, a new jury of seasoned practitioners is appointed for each of the disciplines supported. After a committee of readers narrows down a shortlist of applicants, the jury reads, evaluates and meets in person in Beirut to deliberate over several days to make a final selection of grantees, who are then awarded a fund to create or complete the work in question.

Jury members have an especially challenging—and interesting—job before them, because they are given no directives by AFAC on whom to choose, or what types of work or subjects to prioritize. They are encouraged to take risks on those artists putting their work forward for the first time, but ultimately, the jury members’ extensive knowledge and experience in their respective fields are what allow them to evaluate the projects with discernment and nuance. Because what they are being asked to evaluate is not a finished work, whether it be a text or film or performance, they are required, based on the information given, to assess the potential of an artwork; to gamble on the promise of a completed artwork based on what the artist was able to convey of what they hope to achieve.

And what they hope to achieve is naturally shaped by what they think AFAC hopes for them to achieve, simply because they are being asked to submit an application, which has specific criteria and specific questions for them to answer. Therefore, on AFAC’s side, crafting the application itself is a process that is always subject to review. If it begins to feel like a particular question on the application is shaping the discourse around the artist’s work in a confining way, then the question is either eliminated or rephrased. For example, in years prior, there was a question that asked artists to evaluate their work’s “relevance to the Arab region.” It was found that artists were interpreting the question as a requirement to link their work to current affairs, to a particular political landscape that they might not wish to address directly, or at all. The question is no longer on any of the applications.
Similarly, new questions might find their way onto the application should they seem necessary. In 2018, a question about audience engagement and access was added, a way of asking artists to think about the life their work will take on after completion, and what audiences it seeks to create around it. It is in fact another way of asking about “relevance” without the notion of a singular or monolithic “Arab region”.

And again, on AFAC’s side, it is also a way of considering the always-delicate balance between the esoteric/experimental and commercial, especially that we are consistently exploring ways to open avenues before as many different types of works and artists as possible, from the avant-garde to the more conventional, from first-time creators to seasoned practitioners. And this is always with the awareness that artists, too, need “a budget for errors”: room to experiment, to find or hone their voices, to discover unexpected forms of success through unanticipated failure.

The jury’s independent, non-directed evaluation process is thus our biggest asset and what allows the selection process to be so rich and nuanced. Given their experience as practitioners, jury members are able to see past the ‘pretty package’ of a work and look clearly at its substance. This is the promise of a work, visible only to a sensitive and practiced eye.

Our willingness to review and change established practices also applies to the programs being funded. This year, AFAC added two new programs to its grant schemes: Creative and Critical Writings (CCW) and Research on the Arts. The former is a replacement of the Novel Writing program, which saw the completion and publication of 27 new novels between 2014 and 2016. CCW was implemented in response to the need we perceived to encourage different, more under-represented forms of writing, such as poetry, theater, graphic novels, and critical writing on literature and the arts. The CCW jury this year praised the selections for using “advanced intellectual and aesthetic approaches that are able to imagine alternative cultures that lie on the margin of the prevailing culture.”

This, too, is another form of decentralization, which in turn creates new networks and avenues of knowledge that will feed back into the prevailing culture and hopefully contribute to the process of shifting it into more accommodating forms.
The second new program added this year, Research on the Arts, a program implemented in cooperation with the Arab Council for Social Sciences (ACSS) is one that particularly encourages interdisciplinary proposals that link the arts, humanities, and social sciences. It asks applicants to explore questions that we are also consistently asking ourselves as an institution, questions about how, for example, institutional processes, official and unofficial, affect the emergence of art, positively and negatively; how the impact of the fluctuations of the art markets and public funding affect what art is being produced; the relationship between artists and the state.

The impact of the state, of laws, of class, of history, of exile, of public perception, of institutions, on art and its creation. As a program, it is one that asks researchers to study the dynamic, ever-shifting relationship between art and society, whereby art is not simply a "premise," or a "docile object to be examined," as this year’s jury put it, but rather an active agent in itself, one that is affected by different factors but that also effects its own change.

This bone-deep belief in art’s social impact is paramount to the type of work AFAC does, and it necessarily asks us to flip the question and consider, too, how social upheaval impacts artists themselves and their work. That aforementioned relationship between art and society has philosophical, moral, and aesthetic ramifications at once, and these become ever more urgent in times of crisis. Unfortunately, the Arab region has had its share of crisis, and crisis is therefore an essential component of how, what, and why some Arab artists are creating work. Ongoing wars, as well as their far-reaching consequences, have forced artists into confrontation with questions of how exactly to respond to such circumstances. This applies not only to artists who have directly experienced the consequences of crisis and upheaval, but to those who have borne or wish to bear witness as well.

At the same time, art cannot simply reproduce the humanitarian model of relief-response to crisis, because then it remains mired in the shifting quicksand of current affairs. Artists should in fact not be expected to respond to crisis in the same way, or even to produce something immediately recognizable as "a response."
There must be room for different ways of reacting, without the presupposition that art is being made with the express purpose of acting as a counterpoint to official national narratives. To see it as such means that it can only be read against, or in conjunction with, political history, which in turn denies it the possibility to be understood on its own terms, as an expression of complex moral, emotional, personal, and technical ambition, and denies artists, too, the agency of being creative actors rather than just political subjects.

These considerations are always behind the way in which applications are evaluated, and in 2018, they also led to the implementation of a six-month writing workshop that took place in Berlin from May to October of that year. "Writing Catastrophe," run by Egyptian writer Haytham al-Wardany, was aimed at recent Arab arrivals to Germany, particularly those hailing from Syria.

It was an in-depth exploration of how literature might, or can, respond to crisis, involving writers personally implicated in such a line of questioning in various different ways. Part trauma-therapy, part writing boot-camp, the workshop insisted on the fundamental premise that aesthetic and technical considerations are not ways of bypassing or minimizing emotional content, but are essential ways of filtering, understanding, processing, digesting, documenting, and representing.

Looking backward at the experiences and lessons of the last year is always the greatest motivator to looking forward to the possible prospects for the next. And the prospects for 2019-2020 are exciting and dynamic, continuing the trajectory of opening up new paths and possibilities for knowledge production, sustainability, and network building across the Arab region and beyond. Building on the overwhelmingly positive response to the inclusion of Creative and Critical Writings on the list of funded programs, AFAC is organizing a conference on Critical Cultural Journalism in early 2020, a possible preliminary step toward opening up yet another funding scheme. A robust culture of art and literary criticism, one built on real critical engagement with the work rather than nepotism, gate-keeping, or score settling, serves to raise the bar for the cultural scene in general. The current shortage of intelligent and insightful critical
During this next year, AFAC will also be studying the possibility of creating a structure to support work after it is finished—that is, a fund for distribution, dissemination, and circulation. Knowing that they have the financial support necessary to see them through this part of the process, an artist is less likely to accept an unfair or exploitative distribution deal, one that might in fact limit their rights to their own work only in order to receive quick financial compensation. Artists are empowered to feel that they indeed own their work, and the sense of financial security gives them the capacity to negotiate. Again, and ideally, the long-term effect of such a thing should translate into healthier and more sustainable distribution models overall as artists take the fate of their work back into their own hands.

There is likewise a discussion on the table about an annual convention, one that would bring together arts practitioners, curators, researchers, and actors from different organizations and institutions together in one place once a year. Ideally this would act as a platform for people to meet and present their work in such a way that encourages the crosscutting of disciplines, topics, and themes, creating a forum for critical engagement, and for knowledge production and exchange.

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We are still and always looking for ways to be more actively inclusive: to engage, attract, and encourage more women applicants across all disciplines, and to bring in more applicants from the underrepresented countries and areas of the Arab region (this year we had our first grantees from the Comoros Islands and Djibouti). There is also the question of how to explore new funding sources in order to ensure sustainability for cultural institutions.
The first Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship workshop of the cycle saw intense debate around the issue of engaging the private sector, on whether it might provide an opportunity for new partnerships or whether such an approach might require uncomfortable compromises in the long run.

There are plans to continue adding to our new communications strategy and tools, to find ways of utilizing different forms of media to reach more people, to make AFAC, and information about AFAC, more interactive and accessible to people across the region and beyond.

As an arts institution, AFAC needs to be solid. It needs to provide stable ground upon which others can build, as well as a sense of security. A sense that, in a rapidly-shifting, volatile world, there are certain places of safety and order that one can count on. This is because art, or more importantly, the sort of rich reflection that incubates art, requires a measure of stillness in order to unfold.

This stillness is complex and difficult to pin down, but one of its definitions, certainly, is unstructured time. Another one is the cessation of anxiety. In providing funding to artists and arts organizations, what AFAC is really offering is the gift of time. Time that doesn’t have to be spent earning money, worrying about earning money, worrying about not earning money, worrying about how all the components of a work of art might be able to come together if one is constantly worrying about money. It is this precious and intangible thing that AFAC is working to provide through the provision of material support.
 Individual philanthropists have always been the backbone of arts patronage, using their resources to uplift artists, and, in so doing, uplifting and advancing their communities and societies. Many great works of art owe their creation not just to the artist that conceived them, but to the patron who supported the artist through the course of their work. Among its many roles, AFAC seeks to facilitate that process, to become the connective tissue between generous donors and deserving artists, allowing the impulse to give and the impulse to create to converge together and become a powerful force for regional change.

At the same time, as an institution dedicated to upholding and promoting the arts, AFAC needs to be responsive, fluid, and adaptable in very organic ways. Producing and disseminating knowledge, creating networks, preserving sustainability—all of these are different forms of flows. They are movements, circulations, cycles, and all of them require maintaining change. And change can only be maintained by asking constant questions, and not taking any answers for granted.

In both of these capacities, AFAC would not be able to function to its full potential without the unrestricted support offered by a number of foundations but also through individual philanthropy. Individuals who understand the value of arts and culture and the role they play in the advancement of Arab society are fundamental to our work, helping bolster us in our efforts to support and sustain. Without their generosity we wouldn’t be able to do what we do, and thus they are also an essential component of a healthy cultural ecosystem.
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In Summary

On the heels of AFAC’s decade anniversary, 2018 marked a year of exponential growth and expansion. Applications reached 1441, and 201 grants (in comparison to 1049 applications and 143 grants in 2017) have been awarded through nine programs, including the first grant to Comoros Islands and Djibouti. This is in addition to 8 curated projects in Germany, under AFAC’s Arab European Creative Platform, bringing the total of funded projects to 209. The total grants amount for 2018 was roughly $3 million (compared to $2.36 million in 2017) for Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Regional Events, totaling a total budget of $550,000. Under AFAC Documentary Program, 23 projects from 9 countries out of 180 applications received a total amount of $1,050,000 in grants. Under the Arab Documentary Photography Program, 9 projects from 7 countries out of 79 applications were supported with a total budget of $45,000 in grants and mentorship. The Research on the Arts Program launched with 9 supported projects out of 84 applications, with a total budget of $160,450 in grants.

The calls for proposals opened twice a year. In Visual Arts, 22 projects from 12 countries out of 208 applications were supported with $325,000 in grants. In Performing Arts, 24 projects from 9 countries out of 147 applications received a total of $301,000 in grants. Under the new Creative and Critical Writings program, 23 projects were supported out of 117 applications. In Training and Regional Events, 25 projects from 10 countries out of 154 applications benefited with a total grant amount of $400,400. In Music, 28 projects from 10 countries out of 148 applications benefited with a total amount of $359,800 in grants. In Cinema, 30 projects from 10 countries out of 292 applications were supported with a total budget of $500,000. Under AFAC Documentary Program, 23 projects from 9 countries out of 180 applications received a total amount of $1,050,000 in grants. Under the Arab Documentary Photography Program, 9 projects from 7 countries out of 79 applications were supported with a total budget of $45,000 in grants and mentorship. The Research on the Arts Program launched with 9 supported projects out of 84 applications, with a total budget of $160,450 in grants.

The 2018 selected projects hailed from 17 Arab countries – Algeria, Comoros Islands, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia/Djibouti, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen – as well as from Europe and North America.

The continued practice of placing grant decisions in the hands of experienced and reputable jurors from all over the Arab region is a pillar of strength and transparency, invoking shared responsibility and auto governance by the arts and culture sector for the sector, and creating a community of practice around quality but also values of diversity and inclusion. AFAC engaged with 40 readers and 32 independent jurors who deliberated on projects of 2018 based on the criteria of quality, innovation, relevance and budget.

Many of the projects chosen provoke diverse narratives about urgent topics through words and images. They interrogate critical thinking and stimulate local economies by cultivating audiences and engaging professionals. Many were encouraged to apply new technologies to make arts and culture more accessible. The testimonies of the juror span to the wealth of applications reviewed and the process that led to the final selection of projects to support.

Arab European Creative Platform (AEP)

2018 propelled the Arab European Creative Platform (AEP) into its second successful year featuring a number of timely initiatives in support of exiled Arab artists in Germany and offering a platform to promote creative expression from the Arab region. All activities were implemented in partnership with German institutions and featured Arab and European collaborations. 2018 was replete with successful events: opening of the 49th Forum of this year’s Berlin International Film Festival with a cine-concert titled “Georges Méliès’ Solitudes”, accompanied by solo musical performances by Khyam Allami, Tony Elieh, Abed Kobeissy, Nada Marzouk and Shairf Sehnaoui; “Against Oblivion” music exhibition by the Foundation for Arab Music Archiving and Research - AMAR in partnership with Humboldt Box in Berlin; a series of Arab artists presentations at the Roter Salon entitled “Unspoken Series” in collaboration with Volkshubere; the Arab Documentary Convention (aDC) in collaboration with DOK Leipzig, IDFA Bertha Fund and the Sundance Institute; a six-month long workshop in Berlin (starting April) titled “Writting Catastrophe” under the mentorship of Egyptian writer Haytham Al-Waradany addressed to Arab writers who have recently immigrated to Germany; a Music and Film Festival that resonated beautifully with local audiences in partnership with Bethanian Haus, bringing together singers/composers and films: Kamelya Janrab, Basel Rajoub and Maika Zara on the music front and Mohamed al Daradji, Fawzy Bensaidi and Mohamed Ben Attia with their films; two symposiums titled “Imagining the Future” and “Revisiting Archive in the Aftermath of Revolution” in partnership with Archive Rahibett and HRV; the highly acclaimed co-production of Sulayman Al Rumayn’s play “Ur” in partnership with Residenztheater in Munich which premiered in September.

AFAC responded with vigor to trends and priorities in the arts and culture sector, ensuring that its programs (grants and professional services) are relevant and responsive. Three new programs were launched in 2018 in response to the recommendations that were generated from the 2016-2017 ten years’ study and that organically complement what and how we support: Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship, Critical and Creative Writings, and Research on the Arts.

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE)

The first new program, Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) builds on our efforts to advocate for support to arts and culture from individuals and the private sector. This three-year program is in partnership with Drosos Foundation, and is also supported by the German Federal Foreign Office. The ACE program is designed to inspire small and medium arts and culture institutions working in the Arab region - with strong connections to their respective communities - in the areas of fundraising, entrepreneurship, communication and leadership. It aims at founding a creative environment where these institutions can reflect on alternative ways to sustain themselves, with the help of experts/mentors, inspiring case studies primarily from the global south, lectures and related readings and exercises. Each cycle comprises three extensive workshops, and on-going mentorship by experts in the field, and culminates with an incentive grant that allows the participating institutions to implement an innovative activity inspired by their learning during the year of the program. The ACE program is that it is not a technical course with pre-set notions of what participants should learn, but rather a collective reflection on sustainability challenges and exposure to diverse options across sectors, including the private sector.

Creative and Critical Writings (CCW)

The Creative and Critical Writings (CCW) grants program benefits a wide range of writers, artists and institutions who collectively will enrich the Arabic library with new, innovative, creative and critical productions. It is an extension of the AFAC Literature grants program (2007-2013) which supported over 95 projects including novels, poems, stories, translations, children’s literature, research and writing workshops; followed by the AFAC Novel Writing Program (2014-2016) which contributed to the completion and publication
ANNUAL REPORT 2018

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

of 27 new novels by emerging writers. CCW reflects an accurate analysis of the conditions under which publishing and distribution of books in the Arab region occur and addresses gaps. It gives special attention to critical writings on literature, as well as on the arts including plastic arts, theatre, cinema and music. It provides a stimulus to writers focusing on under-represented literary genres such as theatre writing, poetry, short stories and graphic novels. Moreover, it encourages children and youth literature by supporting writers and publishing houses specialized in this genre. Being cognizant of the technical developments pervading the publishing field, AFAC through this grant encourages electronic platforms specialized in publishing literary texts, especially that the print media is in crisis today.

Mentorship and Professional Support

Punctual mentorship and professional support that compliment grants in some programs demonstrated a successful strategy to address particular trends and needs of practitioners in under-developed genres and oriented towards younger practitioners: out of 201 grantees, 68 were emerging artists who, through the AFAC grant, were able to make their first step into the professional world of art and cultural production. Special programs such as the Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP) address talents with first projects, while the new program on Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) caters to small and medium-sized structures, boosting their sustainability through a flexibly structured training and mentorship components, coupled with an incentive grant.

Research on the Arts Program (RAP)

The third program, Research on the Arts Program (RAP), is a collaboration with the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS). AFAC aspires to attract researchers from the social sciences, humanities and political studies - hence the choice of a solid partner like ACSS - in addition to those specialized in the arts. Given the lack of research on the arts, let alone cumulative and comparative studies across the region, AFAC spearheaded this initiative to examine the arts as indicators of societal, political and economic manifestations, thus fortifying the connections between the sphere of arts and society and highlighting the purpose of the arts beyond its aesthetics.

Communication

In terms of communication and promotional material, AFAC completed the creative process of the new logo, website and other communication tools that reflect the identity of AFAC and the qualities we wish to affirm – that AFAC is transparent, unbiased, and retrospective; that it is dedicated, professional, and successful; that it is a reference for art and culture production in the Arab region; that it is open, inclusive, and diverse; that it is dynamic, passionate, young and attractive in the sense that audiences will want to be affiliated with our network; and that it is a unique and avant-garde agent both in the region and internationally. The communication strategy including the brand campaign launch of the new AFAC logo and website is expected early 2019 accompanied by a communication campaign. The website’s look and feel follows the new brand guidelines while surfing on the latest web design trends, and the user journey and experience have been carefully studied to optimize visits and ensure returns. The online application forms have also been upgraded for a smoother process.

Partners Acquisition and Cultivation

Along with these three programs, strong partners were brought on board and others were cultivated; four new donors joined in with a total of $7.1 million in new funds (Drossos Foundation, German Federal Foreign Office, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Arab Council for the Social Sciences), committed for the next 3-5 years, allowing AFAC to meet the Open Society Foundations’ challenge matching grant on target. Generous individual donors – both recurring and new - provided nearly $692,583 in individual giving that constitutes around one third of AFAC’s budget for grants. Such engagements are in addition to the general multi-year grant from the Ford Foundation; as well as annual contributions from the Prince Claus Fund, specifically for the Arab Documentary Photography Program. For 2018, AFAC received $6.9 million in contributions. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and DOEN Foundation renewed their support for 2018-2020, with $780,000 and €1,050,000 respectively.

AFAC Reached Out and Spoke Up for the Arts and Culture Sector

With a compact yet dedicated team, AFAC made efforts to be present at key events, forums and festivals, to reach out to new audiences, to remain connected to developments in the sector, but to also profile arts and culture from the region to potential enthusiasts, be they individuals, foundations, corporations or state-funded entities. In 2018 AFAC was solicited by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Pro Helvetia to deliver the keynote speech and participate in a panel at "Crossroads" – a conference, conversations and a cultural program in Basel. AFAC participated in the meeting “Investing in Philanthropy Development” co-hosted by WINGS and “la Caixa” Banking Foundation in Barcelona, on foundations’ role within the philanthropy ecosystem and how contributing to it ultimately benefits civil society as a whole. In April, AFAC participated in a donors’ and partners’ meeting on “Knowledge at Risk: Conflict, Collaboration and Ethics”, organized by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences in Amman. Additionally, AFAC co-organized with the Culture Resource the 11th Informal Arts and Culture Donors Meeting in Brussels on April 21-22. AFAC participated in a panel discussion in the Leeuwen-Wierstrijd 2018 ISPA Congress, Off the Beaten Track, The Netherlands, in June, reflecting on how migration and nationalism have changed the composition of the global landscape and what role can arts and culture leaders play in addressing the situation of refugee artists. AFAC hold its 6th AFAC Film Week program, organized in partnership with Project’heurts, Planete Cinuvers and the ONCI in Algiers, 5-12 September. It comprised 10 films which hailed from seven countries in the Arab region. Parallell to the main program, Four films were showcased at the Cinema Azul in Béjaia as part of
Financial Allocations

Generous contributions from diverse donors enable AFAC to carry out its mandate and ensure a level of sustainability. AFAC is thankful to the 13 individual donors in 2018 in addition to our institutional donors: DOEN Foundation, Prince Claus Fund, Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Drosos Foundation, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Financial allocation in 2018 was as follows:

| Total Amount: | $4,623,313 |
| Grant Activities: | $3,819,690 equivalent to 83% of total expenditures |
| Fundraising and Communications: | $144,946 equivalent to 3% of total expenditures |
| Overheads: | $433,320 equivalent to 9% of total expenditures |
| Difference of Exchange: | $125,146 equivalent to 3% of total expenditures |
| Other Losses: | $100,211 equivalent to 2% of total expenditures |
| Other Losses: | $125,146 equivalent to 3% of total expenditures |

Outlook 2019

From 2019 onwards, we will steer our programs, activities and overall operations into three main axes, that feed into one another and stand interconnected: Knowledge Production and Accumulation; Sustainability Building for an Impactful Discourse; and Interaction and Network Building.

In terms of Knowledge Production and Accumulation, two of our 2018 programs, namely the Research on the Arts Program and the Creative and Critical Writings program, feed into building knowledge around the sector and support outreach of works through research and critical writings, yet a gap remains to be addressed in this area of knowledge and bridging works of arts and audiences: critical cultural journalism. Responding to this need, in January 2020, AFAC will organize a conference on Critical Cultural Journalism in Beirut.

The audit of AFAC, completed in 2018, is built so as to provide an opportunity for small and medium cultural institutions of the Arab region to acquire new skills and capacities to improve their long-term sustainability. Another new program for 2019, the North Africa Cultural Program, is especially designed to empower independent North African artists and culture entities, encourage regional collaborations, and focus on supporting distribution, circulation and dissemination of artistic works in all fields, in view of strengthening their structures, increasing engagement and outreach, and consequently securing their sustainability and continuity. With these programs, we aim to build a support system for sustainability which would allow arts and culture entities and institutions of the region to hold a discourse geared towards impact, and act towards a sustainable future.

The third axis, Interaction and Network Building, closely interconnects with the first two axes, as we strive, with our panoply of programs and activities, to build closely knit communities of artists and cultural practitioners who share a passion for change and network and collaborate for maximized impact. The Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP) and its 50 grantees since 2014 to present, represent such a strongly connected community, as will be shown in the in-house research on the ADPP in the course of 2019. Furthermore, the Arab European Creative Platform represents an ideal platform for exchange, interaction and networking between Europeans and the Arab diaspora. We hope to replicate this experience through yearly convenings in other European countries as well as different parts of the world, whereby critical discourses can be generated and knowledge production, distribution and circulation can be further enhanced, thereby leveraging AFAC’s position as a catalyst in the Arab region.
Recognition of Grantees

January
A Drowning Man by Mahdi Fleifel was nominated for the BAFTA’s Best British Short Film Award. A Drowning Man by Mahdi Fleifel, Poisonous Roses by Ahmed Fawzi Saleh and Muayad Alayan’s The Reports on Sarah and Saleem participated in the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

Spring
Around (Al Gami’ya), Jumana Mannaa’s Wild Relatives and Ziad Kalthoum’s Taste of Cement were screened at the Berlinale.

March
Of Father and Sons by Talal Derki, Room for a Man by Anthony Chidiac, Taste of Cement by Ziad Kalthoum, What Comes Around by Reem Saleh and Anal by Mohamed Siam were screened at The 20th Thessaloniki Documentary Festival (TDF).

April
The third Haifa Independent Film Festival - HIFF 2018 was held with the support of AFAC. "Arab Voices: Stories of Palestine" was hosted by Dar El-Nimer for Arts and Culture in Beirut.

Al Kamandjâti Festival of spiritual and traditional music toured in Palestine.

"Past Disquiet" exhibition opened in Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende - MUSA in Santiago, Chile.

"Evolvê" by Yara Boustany performed as part of Beirut International Platform of Dance – BIPD 2018.

Samar Hazboun and Taseem Sultan were selected to participate at the 2018 Jooop swart Masterclass to which 11 other ADPP grantees were nominated.

Best Director Award went to Tamara Stepanyan for her AFAC-supported film Those from the Shore. AFAC grantee Ziad Kalthoum also received the Best Cinematography award for his film Taste of Cement at the Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston.

Dream Fragments by Bahia BenCheikh-El-Fegoun received Al Ard Award and Ghost Hunting by Raad Andoni won the Sardegna Palestine Award at the 15th edition Al Ard Documentary Film Festival.

The Journey by Mohamed Al Daradji won two awards at the 10th Muscat International Film Festival.

The Day I Lost My Shadow by Soudade Kaadan received the Lion of the Future Luigi De Laurentis Award for a Debut Film at the Venice Film Festival and Movement by Nadir Bouhmouch won the Final Cut in Venice prize for the best film in post-production.

Nuha Innab’s book Traces of Socialism was launched at MMAG Foundation in Amman.

Saray & Ayad Khalîfî released their latest album “Soobia” in Beirut.

The Day I Lost My Shadow by Soudade Kaadan received the Lion of the Future Luigi De Laurentis Award for a Debut Film at the Venice Film Festival and Movement by Nadir Bouhmouch.


Adila Laidi-Hanieh’s Turkish version of her book "Fahrelnissa Zeid: Painter of Inner Worlds" was launched at Dirimart Istanbul.

Algerian artist Ziné Sedîra’s first solo exhibition “Of Words and Stones” opened in Beirut Art Center.

A Decade of MAqam by Maqam ensemble & Maias Alyamani was released.

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Samar Hazboun and Tasneem Sultan were selected to participate at the 2018 Jooop swart Masterclass to which 11 other ADPP grantees were nominated.

La Philharmonie de Paris hosted “Love and Revenge” by Wael Koudah and Randa Mirza and “Lakîifa” by Mostaqel.

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October

The Tiro International Art Festival marked the reopening of Tyre’s Rivoli cinema after 29 years of neglect. The Festival offered a varied program of cinema, music and theater shows.


Syrian Leish Troupe’s physical theater performance “Embraces” opened at the Syrian Opera House in Damascus.

The 4th edition of the International Cairo Comics Festival, Cairo Comix 4, was held in the Mahmoud Mokhtar Museum in El Gezirah.

The International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) 2018 featured Sara Fattahi’s Chaos (Syria), Anthony Chidiac’s Room for a Man (Lebanon), Erige Sehiri’s Railway Men (Tunisia), Mohammad Siam’s Amal (Egypt) and Bassam Jarbawi’s Mafak (Palestine) were awarded at the Cinemed Montpellier Mediterranean Film Festival.

November

Syrian director Feras Fayyad’s documentary Last Men in Aleppo won the News and Documentary Emmy Awards’ Outstanding Current Affairs Documentary award.

Ghassan Halwani’s Erased Ascent of the Invisible (Lebanon), Erige Sehiri’s Railway Men (Tunisia), Mohammad Siam’s Amal (Egypt) and Bassam Jarbawi’s Mafak (Palestine) were awarded at the Cinemed Montpellier Mediterranean Film Festival.

December

The International Cairo Comics Festival, Cairo Comix 4, was held in the Mahmoud Mokhtar Museum in El Gezirah.

The 4th edition of the International Cairo Comics Festival, Cairo Comix 4, was held in the Mahmoud Mokhtar Museum in El Gezirah.

The International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) 2018 featured Sara Fattahi’s Chaos (Syria), Anthony Chidiac’s Room for a Man (Lebanon), Erige Sehiri’s Railway Men (Tunisia), Nazha Anbi’s Freedom Fields (Libya), Ghassan Halwani’s Erased Ascent of the Invisible (Lebanon) and Waal Kadri’s The Way Home (Syria) were awarded at the Cinemed Montpellier Mediterranean Film Festival.

Out of the ten AFAC-supported films selected for El Gouna Film Festival 2018, Talal Derki’s Of Fathers and Sons, Cyril Aris’ The Swing, and Mohamed Ben Attia’s Dear Son received top awards during the closing ceremony.

Mohamed Siam’s Amal (Egypt) picked up the Golden Tanit, while Amal Ramsis’ You Come From Far Away (Egypt) won the Silver Tanit, and Ghassan Halwani’s debut film Erased Ascent of the Invisible (Lebanon) collected the Bronze Tanit Carthage Film Festival’s Official Feature Documentary Competition.

Ahmed Fawzy Saleh was awarded at the Cairo International Film Festival for his film Poisonous Roses.

Ghassan Halwani was also awarded the Fathy Farag Prize for Best Artistic Contribution for Erased Ascent of the Invisible.

Good Morning by Bahij Hojeij received the Best Scenario and Best Male Actor awards at the Rabat International Film Festival in Morocco.

Erased Ascent of the Invisible by Ghassan Halwani secured first prize at the Laceno d’oro Festival in Italy, and special jury mention at Transcinema International Festival in Peru.

Nesrine Khoury launched her book “I Kick the House and Go Out” at the International Beirut Book Fair.
Milestones of 2018

**JANUARY**

January 08
AFAC kicks off 2018 with the launch of the new Creative and Critical Writings program

February 08 + 10
AFAC participates in Crossroads conference in Switzerland

February 16
Opening concert Forum der Berlinale – Cine-Concert: Georges Méliès “Solitudes”, 16 February, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AEP)

February 28
Screening of “Asphalt” at the AFAC Film Night in Sursock Museum

**APRIL**

April 08 + 09
AFAC and DROSOS Foundation launch the new ACE program

April 12 + 14
AFAC organized the 11th “Arts and Culture Donors Meeting in Brussels

April 21 + 22
AFAC and Drosos Foundation launch the new ACE program

April 28 - May 02
AFAC participated in a panel discussion "Investing in Philanthropy Development: Risk: Conflict, Collaboration and Ethics", organized by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) in Amman

May 04
AFAC participated in a donors’ and partners’ meeting on "Knowledge at Risk: Conflict, Collaboration and Ethics”, organized by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) in Amman

May 07 + 08
AFAC Board Meeting

May 08
AFAC and Dar El-Nimer announce Film Tuesdays partnership

May 14
AFAC and ACSS jointly announce the new Research on the Arts Program

May 15
Launch of the “Writing Catastrophe” workshop in Berlin, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AEP)

May 17
May 17
AFAC announced 8 new grantees for the Creative and Critical Writings program

May 26 - 27
AFAC participated in the meeting “Investing in Philanthropy Development” co-hosted by WINGS and “La Caixa” Banking Foundation in Barcelona, Spain

**JUNE**

June 01
Call closed for Music and Training/Regional Events

June 03 + 04
AFAC announced 22 new grantees for Visual Arts

June 09
AFAC and Dar El Nimer announce Film Tuesdays partnership

June 11 - 15
AFAC participated in a panel discussion in the Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 ISPA Congress, Off the Beaten Track, The Netherlands

June 16
AFAC announced 24 new grantees for Performing Arts

June 21 - 24
AFAC announced 23 new grantees for its Documentary Program

**JULY**

July 01
Call closed for Cinema

July 05
AFAC announced 9 new grantees for the Arab Documentary Photography Program

July 06
AFAC announced 23 new grantees for Creative and Critical Writings

July 09
Call closed for Research on the Arts Program

July 10
AFAC announced 25 new grantees for Music

July 14
AFAC announced 24 new grantees for Performing Arts

July 16
AFAC announced 8 new grantees and 5 new arts and culture institutions to participate in the ACE program

July 24 - September 24
Launch of the “Writing Catastrophe” workshop in Berlin, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AEP)

August 01
AFAC announced 25 new grantees for Training/Regional Events

August 03 + 04
AFAC announced 9 new grantees for the Arab Documentary Photography Program

August 06
AFAC announced 28 new grantees for Music

August 10
AFAC announced the 9th Research on the Arts Program (RAP) first workshop in the presence of the program’s 9 grantees, 5 jury members and 2 mentors.

August 16
AFAC announced 28 new grantees for Music

August 21 - 22
AFAC participated in the 13th edition of the Festival Arabesques in Montpellier, France

August 23 - 28
AFAC participated in Al Gouna Film Festival and met with stakeholders in Cairo

September 01
AFAC announced 28 new grantees for Music

September 05 - 12
AFAC held its 8th Film Week program, organized in partnership with Project’heurts, Planète Cinémathèques and the ONCI in Algeria

September 13 - 21
AFAC announced the 8 selected research projects for the first cycle of the Research on the Arts Program (RAP)

September 28
World premiere of “01” by Sulayman al-Bassam, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AEP)

October 06
AFAC announced 3 new grants for Visual Arts

November 11
AFAC announced 30 new film projects for Cinema

November 12
AFAC and ACSS announced the 9 selected research projects for the first cycle of the Research on the Arts Program (RAP)

November 15
AFAC and ACSS announced the 9th Research on the Arts Program (RAP) first workshop in the presence of the program’s 9 grantees, 5 jury members and 2 mentors.
The 2018 General Grants and Programs were launched on February 1st with the open calls of the first cycle of grants, namely Visual Arts, Performing Arts, AFAC Documentary Program, and Arab Documentary Photography Program. With the closure of the three-year special program ANWP, AFAC also launched a new open call for Creative and Critical Writings in the same period, offering grants to a wide array of writers in genres ranging from critical writings on the arts to poetry, novellas, children and youth literature, graphic novels and electronic literary platforms. The calls closed on May 1st. Five readers’ and juries’ committees for the above categories were solicited to evaluate the submitted projects and meetings. Grants announcements were declared during the months of July and August. September with jury meetings and grants announcements in November and December. The research component has been taken out of the RTR category and assigned a separate program - Research on the Arts - given that it is largely underdeveloped and lacking in resources. The Research on the Arts program is in partnership with the Arab Council for the Social Sciences and aspires to attract researchers from the social sciences, humanities and political studies - in addition to those specialized in the arts - to examine the arts as indicators of societal, political and economic phenomena and manifestations thus fortifying the connections between the sphere of arts and society and highlighting the purpose of the arts beyond its aesthetics.

Another new program - Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) – in partnership with Drosos Foundation, was launched not as an open call, but through a nomination process. Nominated cultural institutions were invited to apply as of May 20th until June 25th, and the jury meeting and announcement of selected participants took place in August. ACE comes as a response to the huge challenge that faces arts and culture institutions in the region: that of sustainability. The 3-year program is designed to inspire small and medium arts and culture institutions working in the Arab region - with strong connections to their respective communities - in the areas of fundraising, entrepreneurship, communication and leadership. It aims to foster a creative environment where these institutions can reflect on alternative ways to sustain themselves, with the help of experts/mentors, inspiring case studies focusing on the global south, lectures and related readings and exercises. Each cycle comprises three extensive workshops and culminates with an incentive grant that allows the participating institutions to implement an innovative activity inspired by their learning during the span of the program. The first workshop was held in Beirut between November 2 and 6. The five-day workshop brought together 16 young cultural managers from the Arab region, 5 experts from Lebanon, Syria, South Africa, India and Brazil; 6 figures from the private sector and of course the AFAC team. The workshop program consisted of a series of presentations around topics of Impact Investment, Fundraising, Storytelling, Measuring the Impact of Arts and Culture; global context analysis regarding trends, connections between the public, private and NGO sectors, landscape of wealth; Q&A sessions with stakeholders (business people, philanthropists and entrepreneurs); as well as field work on two case studies and a pitching exercise. Parallel activities included a team-building cooking evening, a tour of Ra3 Beirut area with the Arab Center for Architecture and music and theater performances supported by AFAC. The workshop set-up and design were meant to drag participants out of their comfort zone to reflect on their positioning within a changing global context where existing structures and modes of support are shifting and new schemes are emerging. Within that frame, the participants were challenged and prompted to explore the continuity of their work along the existing and new dimensions. Feedback from the participants was extremely positive and indicative of how timely this initiative is.

The latest program in development, the North Africa Cultural Program, is set to take off in May 2019. It aims at supporting the role of cultural actors in this sub-region and for 2018, AFAC has been preparing the grounds for launching the open calls in 2019. The inception phase in the last quarter of 2018 included field visits and meetings with diverse arts and culture independent initiatives and spaces as well as developing the design and guidelines of the program. Visits to Egypt and Algeria have been conducted, where AFAC met with numerous individual and cultural institutions, and the next scoping visits are planned for Tunisia, Morocco and Libya by proxy. The first phase 2019-2022 includes a Regional Fund covering all of North Africa and a National Fund covering each of the following countries in North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Regionally, the program will support through open call grant schemes, joint artistic projects that are created regionally; the distribution, dissemination and circulation of artistic works and productions to broad audiences; the documentation, archiving and sharing of data, knowledge, and contemporary practices in arts and culture; as well as exchanges on the development of frameworks for arts and culture education and cultural policies. Nationally, support in each of the five countries of North Africa will be mainly through open call grant schemes. Arts and culture institutions will be supported with core funding. Cultural spaces will also be supported for increased engagement and outreach programs, as well training and skil-building initiatives for young artists and emerging professionals.

Applications and Grants

The total applications received under the different categories in 2018 was 1441, in comparison to 1049 in 2017, and the total number of grants in 2018 to date is 201 covering nine categories out of the ten categories, in comparison to a total of 143 grants in 2017. The total budgeted grants amount for 2018 is roughly $3 million compared to $2.36 million in 2017.
Application Statistics

Total Number of Applications Received

1441 Applicants in 2018

1049 Applicants in 2017

Geographic Spread in the Arab region

20 Arab Countries

Non-Arab Geographic Spread

Europe (79)
North America (33)
Asia (1)
Africa (3)

Grants and Programs Applicants 2018/2017

Visual Arts
208/138

Performing Arts
147/100

AFAC Documentary Program
180/98

Arab Documentary Photography Program
79/80

Cinema
287/325

Music
148/112

Training and Regional Events
154/196

Creative and Critical Writings
117

Research on the Arts Program
84

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship
37

Applicants Ratios

81% Individuals
19% Institutions

63% Male
37% Female

Comparative per country 2018/2017

Egypt: 329/243
Lebanon: 247/174
Syria: 163/107
Palestine: 157/111
Morocco: 114/85
Tunisia: 89/66
Jordan: 58/36
Algeria: 58/26
Iraq: 32/17
Sudan: 31/24
Yemen: 18/14
Libya: 9/7
Kuwait: 6/6
Saudi Arabia: 6/9
Mauritania: 4/4
UAE: 3/6
Bahrain: 2/4
Comoros Islands: 1/1
Qatar: 1/2
France: 33/24
USA: 31/17
UK: 17/17
Germany: 18/12
Belgium: 5/3
Netherlands: 4/5
Switzerland: 3/3
Africa: 5/8
Italy: 2/1
Canada: 2/1
Greece: 2/8
Luxembourg: 1/2
Slovenia: 1/0
Asia: 1/0
Australia: 1/0
Grantee Statistics

Total Number of Grantees 2018/2017

201 Grantees

1441 Applicants

Creative and Critical Writings
23
Research on the Arts Program
9
Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship
8

Grantees as per Individuals/Institutions, Nationalities and Grant Amounts per Category

Visual Arts 16/6
Egypt (6), Lebanon (5), Tunisia (2), Algeria (1), Iraq (1), Kuwait (1), Libya (1), Morocco (1), Palestine (1), Sudan (1), Syria (1) and Italy/Israel (1)
Total amount of Grants: $325,000

Performing Arts 15/9
Lebanon (9), Syria (3), Palestine (4), Egypt (2), Tunisia (2), Jordan (1), Morocco (1), France/Syria (1) and USA (1)
Total amount of Grants: $301,000

AFAC Documentary Program 23/0
Palestine (6), Algeria (3), Syria (3), Tunisia (3), Morocco (2), Egypt (2), Jordan (2), Comoros Islands (1), and Lebanon (1)
Total amount of Grants: $350,450

Arab Documentary Photography Program 9/0
Egypt (3), Algeria (1), Lebanon (1), Mauritania (1), Morocco (1), Syria (1), Yemen (1)
Total amount of Grants: $200,000

Cinema 30/8
Lebanon (7), Palestine (6), Egypt (4), Algeria (3), Morocco (3), Tunisia (3), Kuwait (1), Libya (1), Somalia (1), Syria (1)
Total Grants Amount: $500,000

Music 21/7
Lebanon (6), Tunisia (5), Palestine (4), Syria (4), Egypt (2), Jordan (2), Morocco (2), Algeria (1), Iraq (1), Mauritania (1)
Total Grants Amount: $359,800

Training and Regional Events 12/19
Egypt (7), Lebanon (5), Palestine (5), Algeria (2), Iraq (1), Tunisia (1), Yemen (1), Belgium (1), France (1), United Kingdom (1)
Total amount: $400,400

Creative and Critical Writings 19/4
Egypt (8), Syria (6), Lebanon (4), Morocco (1), Palestine (1), Sudan (1), Yemen (1), France/Tunisia (1)
Total amount: $219,200

Research on the Arts Program 9/9
Lebanon (2), Palestine (2), Egypt (1), Jordan (1), Morocco (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Sudan (1), Tunisia (1)
Total amount: $158,450

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship 0/8
Egypt (3), Lebanon (2), Morocco (1), Syria (1), Palestine (1)
Total amount: $200,000

Grantee Ratios

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male                           Female

|          | 58%         | 42%          |

Emerging                Established

|          | 77%         | 23%          |

By Country 2018/2017

Lebanon: 48/36
Egypt: 38/18
Palestine: 24/20
Syria: 19/18
Tunisia: 16/3
Morocco: 12/14
Algeria: 10/5
Jordan: 5/5
Sudan: 3/0
Yemen: 3/1
Iraq: 2/2
Kuwait: 2/0

Libya: 2/1
Mauritania: 2/2
Saudi Arabia: 1/0
Somalia: 1/0
Comoros Islands: 1/0
France: 12/5
Germany: 3/3
UK: 2/4
USA: 2/0
Belgium: 1/0
Italy: 1/0
Arab Spread:
180

Non-Arab Geographic Spread
Europe (19)
North America (2)

Total Number of Individual Grantees:
149 individuals
(out of 201 total grantees),
86 Male and 63 Female

Total Number of Institutional Grantees:
52 Institutions (out of total 201 grantees)
68 Emerging talents, 133 Established talents

Year-round programming for exiled artists in Germany under the framework of AFAC’s Arab European Creative Platform

AFAC-supported projects impact on communities locally, regionally and internationally
100 Local, 82 Regional, 12 International

Geographic spread
155 Region-based
46 Diaspora

Other Project Statistics
Arab-European Creative Platform 8/8
Total amount: $487,995
for 8 projects in Germany with local partners

2018 Granting Schedule

Visual Arts, Performing Arts, AFAC Documentary Program, Arab Documentary Photography Program, and Creative and Critical Writings
Open Call February 1st
Close Call May 1st
Announcement of Grantees July and August

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship – ACE
Application submission based on nomination
May 20th
Close Call June 25th
Announcement of Grantees August 7th

Cinema
Open Call May 1st
Close Call August 1st
Announcement of Grantees December 4th

Music & Training and Regional Events
Open Call June 1st
Close Call Sept 1st
Announcement of Grantees November 23rd and 28th respectively

Research on the Arts Program – RAP
Open Call May 14th
Close Call August 10th
Announcement of Grantees October 25
Visual Arts

"It was exciting to see projects that are positioned at the intersection of storytelling and technology, including augmented reality (AR), virtual reality, digital archives and other new media, noting that most of the projects shed light on pertinent political, social and environmental issues.”

Visual Arts Jury

The 2018 Jury Committee for Visual Arts included Hour Al Qassimi (United Arab Emirates), Alia Sebti (Morocco) and Tarek Abou El Foutouh (Egypt).

Jury Statement

“We were delighted to have taken part in the jury for AFAC’s grants for visual arts and to work together to deliberate upon proposals of a very high quality. The jury went through nearly 100 applications submitted by individuals and institutions of which 22 were chosen. The selected individual artists, both established and emerging, work in a broad range of mediums; many dealing with history, unknown archives and bringing multiple voices to challenge the single narrative. It was exciting to see projects that are positioned at the intersection of storytelling and technology, including augmented reality (AR), virtual reality, digital archives and other new media, noting that most of the projects shed light on pertinent political, social and environmental issues. We strongly believe that it is important to support art institutions to continue their essential work that might not be able to flourish without the backing of funding bodies like AFAC. We would have loved to have seen more applications from the Maghreb region and the Gulf, hopefully more artists will consider applying in the future. We would also encourage AFAC to consider adding the French language to the application system.”

Grantee Name | Nationality | Project Title | Type
--- | --- | --- | ---
Alia Farid | Kuwait | The Space between classrooms | Video & Installation Exhibition
Abdalsalam Alhaj | Sudan | Old wishes | VR and AR with video Exhibition
Aicha El Beloui | Morocco | Alive (living) | Publication and exhibition
Ali Trani | Tunisia | Impersonal/memory | Series of drawings based and video installation
Bassam Al-Sabah | Iraq | Wandering with a sun on my Back | Computer-generated imagery video
Adelita Husni Bey | Libya | Chiron | Workshops and lecture performance
Mohamed Abdallah | Egypt | Let the sea eat me: To perform a ferry | Performance and publication
Roger Anis | Egypt | My dear friends | Photobook and exhibition
Akram Zaatari | Lebanon | Father and son | FIlmic work, performative lecture, reproduction of the sarcophagus and final exhibition
Nasri Sayegh | Lebanon | Lam adma ma tiba inaq ala al hawa / Fragments for an Arab melancholy | Photography, embroidery and video installation
Shirin Abu Shaqra | Lebanon | A thigh over the spy | Mixed-media exhibition
Malek Gnaoui | Tunisia | Yellow as the sky | Exhibition
Doa Aly | Egypt | The end of the world is not tomorrow | Video installation
Lara Baladi | Egypt | Voe Populi (Latin for ‘the voice of the people’) | Online platform
Yasmina Reggad | Algeria | We dreamt of Utopia and we woke up screaming | Lecture performance
Fehras Publishing Practices | Syria | Mapping publishing: 5 Photo-Novels | Research and publication
The Ninth Art | Egypt | CairoComix 4 | Festival
Beirut Art Center Association | Lebanon | Of words and stones (from then and there) | Exhibition, artists talk and workshop

Number of Applicants | 208
Number of Grantees | 22
7 Females & Males
7 Institutions
Countries
Egypt (6) | Lebanon (5) | Tunisia (2) | Algeria (1) | Syria (1) | Iraq (1) | Kuwait (1) | Libya (1) | Morocco (1) | Palestine (1) | Sudan (1) | Italy (1) | Iraq (1)
Total in Grants | $325,000

DARST Projects

| Project Title | Nationality | Type |
--- | --- | --- |
A Kurdish Archive | Italy | Photobook and traveling exhibition
Beirut Art Residency | Lebanon | Public art intervention
Medrar for Contemporary Art | Egypt | Mentoring for young artists & cycle exhibitions
Al Ma’mal Foundation for Contemporary Art | Palestine | Visual arts festival

ANNUAL REPORT 2018
Performing Arts

The 2018 Jury Committee for Performing Arts was composed of Bashar Murkus (Palestine), Hala Omran (Syria) and Khaled Amine (Morocco).

Jury Statement

“We are honored by this opportunity to review such a diversified number of artistic projects, which in turn enrich the Arab art scene and reflect the desire of Arab artists to express themselves through the performing arts. It was a real pleasure to dive into these projects, which are eager to explore broad experimental horizons, in parallel with the current transformations in the Arab region. During the evaluation process, we noticed a real preoccupation with the revocation of boundaries between the cultures of performance. There was a clear inclination towards moving away from scripts in an attempt to challenge the established authority, including that of the dramatic text, thereby transforming the actor into a performer and the viewer into a witness. The proposed projects suggest a new presence for the Arab body through a visual dramaturgy that focuses on research and documentation, on memory and its reconstruction. Our reading of the projects reveals that language fails at times to convey the voice of the Arab artist. This can be interpreted as a kind of escape from oral expression, towards different forms of expression that derive their vocabulary from new media and from the performer’s body in particular. After studying the projects thoroughly and evaluating them individually, we discussed them collectively and selected the projects that strive to go beyond the closed frame of the individual self and adopt a direction of performing arts that leaves a real impact on society here and now. Quality and innovation were central to this selection. Moreover, we made sure to give a particular attention to young artists who are working on their first projects, as we believe that the Arab artistic scene is in continuous need of new and effective Arab voices.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rochdi Belgasmi</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>The Cabaret of Tunis</td>
<td>Dance Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ossama Hâlî</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>The Other Side of the Garden</td>
<td>Theater Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youness Albane</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Untitled 14 km</td>
<td>Dance Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randa Mirza / Wael Kodeih</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Tanab and Arab Modernity</td>
<td>Music and Visual Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawan Bou Khaled</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Dans La Peau</td>
<td>Theater performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wael Ali</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Apocalypse</td>
<td>Theater performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Al Khansa</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>OYUNU</td>
<td>Dance performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghïda Machtcho</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Beyond a Certain Point Movement Itself Changes</td>
<td>Lecture performance with live choreographed movement, a video and spoken text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khouloud Yassine</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Just The Two of US</td>
<td>Dance performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amir Sabea</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Hip Hop Gees</td>
<td>Dance performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana Karam</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Eyelids</td>
<td>Interactive theater performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed Ali Ltsaief</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>The Path of the Sun or the Bare Life</td>
<td>Dance performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamza Haradén</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Demande d’Emploi</td>
<td>Theater performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrystèle Khodr</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Augurs</td>
<td>Theater performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce Raie</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Another Kind of Death</td>
<td>Dance theater performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoukar</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Zoukak Sidewalks - The Festival (2018)</td>
<td>Theater festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Harah Theater</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Palestine International Theater Festival for Children and Youth - Bethlehem 2020 Edition</td>
<td>Theater festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2018 Jury Committee for Performing Arts was composed of Bashar Murkus (Palestine), Hala Omran (Syria) and Khaled Amine (Morocco).

Jury Statement

“We are honored by this opportunity to review such a diversified number of artistic projects, which in turn enrich the Arab art scene and reflect the desire of Arab artists to express themselves through the performing arts. It was a real pleasure to dive into these projects, which are eager to explore broad experimental horizons, in parallel with the current transformations in the Arab region. During the evaluation process, we noticed a real preoccupation with the revocation of boundaries between the cultures of performance. There was a clear inclination towards moving away from scripts in an attempt to challenge the established authority, including that of the dramatic text, thereby transforming the actor into a performer and the viewer into a witness. The proposed projects suggest a new presence for the Arab body through a visual dramaturgy that focuses on research and documentation, on memory and its reconstruction. Our reading of the projects reveals that language fails at times to convey the voice of the Arab artist. This can be interpreted as a kind of escape from oral expression, towards different forms of expression that derive their vocabulary from new media and from the performer’s body in particular. After studying the projects thoroughly and evaluating them individually, we discussed them collectively and selected the projects that strive to go beyond the closed frame of the individual self and adopt a direction of performing arts that leaves a real impact on society here and now. Quality and innovation were central to this selection. Moreover, we made sure to give a particular attention to young artists who are working on their first projects, as we believe that the Arab artistic scene is in continuous need of new and effective Arab voices.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
<th>147</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Grantees</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Females</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Males</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Institutions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Countries</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France/ Syria (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in Grants</td>
<td>$301,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Jury Committee of the Creative and Critical Writings category has reviewed and evaluated approximately 90 creative and critical projects, from which twenty-three were selected. These selected projects ranged from literary writings (poem, short story, theater, comics, stories for the youth) to critical works in the fields of photography, music, theater, the relationship between literature and censorship, graffiti, and others. The Jury Committee has encouraged works which meet on a number of important cultural concerns, while still very diverse with respect to genre and their authors’ interests. Some of the works have focused on the local, national and nationalistic memories through imagery, music, and theater experiments, as well as on the memory of spaces and places with its transformations and architectural layers. Despite the variety of creative literary genres, the Jury Committee members have noticed commonalities among the projects they chose to support. In poetry for example, the supported projects dwelled in the prose poem and its aesthetics, focusing on the day-to-day life, intimacy and the formulation of distinctive poetic traits. The selected short stories, on the other hand, attempted various methods in approaching the details of daily life and the concerns of the Arab citizen through irony, fantasy and dreams. We feel this as well in the theater plays which are daring in dealing with suppressed topics, tackled with an advanced aesthetic vision and an intellectual awareness that turns such topics into issues of common concern. Finally, the critical writing projects were an indication of the growing interest in issues of the individual and their various manifestations. Some dealt with the emergence of the individual self in Arabic music, while others addressed the issue of the body, burdened with the repressive representations of today’s consumerist society. Other critical works touch upon the issues of censorship, writing, ethics and law. The Jury Committee also chose to support electronic cultural platforms, specialized in cinema criticism, the documentation of the artistic memory of theater and music, and the expansion of the network of relations between Arab and Kurdish writers. What distinguishes these various works is that they range from the narrow local to the national with a broad humanistic vision and advanced intellectual and aesthetic approaches that are able to imagine alternative cultures that lie on the margin of the prevailing culture.

The 2018 Jury Committee for CCW comprised of Najwa Ben Shatwan (Libya), Zeina Halabi (Lebanon) and Chokri Al Mabkhout (Tunisia).

Creative and Critical Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mohamad Soueid</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Documenting Lebanon</td>
<td>Critical book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Mahmoud Shalaby</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>The Grand Nights</td>
<td>Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina El Deeb</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Al Hamisheyoun - The Undercommons</td>
<td>Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Najj Saleh</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Haraz Melekom</td>
<td>Critical book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourine Khoury</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>I Kick the House and Go Out</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zain Aladsedine Saleh</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Chaz the Maidly Madam</td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samer Abdelatifah Abdullah</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>The Author Has Another Memory</td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Elak</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Jelly Bird</td>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanne Haj Ali</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>The Dramatheque - Radical experience of HAKAWAT Theatre/ Lebanon</td>
<td>Critical book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayouz Karawyia</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Awoad to tell what i feel</td>
<td>Critical book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohab Mohamed Ali</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Saleh Abdel-Hay: Jockey of Arab Music</td>
<td>Critical book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fadi Daut</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Lebanese pop sex</td>
<td>Critical book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dala Tahia</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Writing and return</td>
<td>Critical book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanadi Zarka</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayman Mohamed Abdulsalam</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Where is my stuff</td>
<td>Short stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feras Hatem</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Shams and the monsters</td>
<td>Youth literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiba Mehrez</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Falling exercise in Irving</td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angad El Sabban</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Sleep thieves</td>
<td>Short stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahab Ismail</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Digital history of British colonial Cairo: media and the potentialities of history</td>
<td>Online platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masrah Ensemble</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Masrah – Theater texts</td>
<td>Online platform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labo Beckett pour les arts  Morocco  The Holocaust of new arts - Critical book  shock and deterritorialization in Arab contemporary art

Archipel Images  France  Essays in cinema criticism  Online platform

Re  Syria  Electronic cultural platform RE  Online platform

Jury Statement

“The Jury Committee of the Creative and Critical Writings category has reviewed and evaluated approximately 90 creative and critical projects, from which twenty-three were selected. These selected projects ranged from literary writings (poem, short story, theater, comics, stories for the youth) to critical works in the fields of photography, music, theater, the relationship between literature and censorship, graffiti, and others. The Jury Committee has encouraged works which meet on a number of important cultural concerns, while still very diverse with respect to genre and their authors’ interests. Some of the works have focused on the local, national and nationalistic memories through imagery, music, and theater experiments, as well as on the memory of spaces and places with its transformations and architectural layers. Despite the variety of creative literary genres, the Jury Committee members have noticed commonalities among the projects they chose to support. In poetry for example, the supported projects dwelled in the prose poem and its aesthetics, focusing on the day-to-day life, intimacy and the formulation of distinctive poetic traits. The selected short stories, on the other hand, attempted various methods in approaching the details of daily life and the concerns of the Arab citizen through irony, fantasy and dreams. We feel this as well in the theater plays which are daring in dealing with suppressed topics, tackled with an advanced aesthetic vision and an intellectual awareness that turns such topics into issues of common concern. Finally, the critical writing projects were an indication of the growing interest in issues of the individual and their various manifestations. Some dealt with the emergence of the individual self in Arabic music, while others addressed the issue of the body, burdened with the repressive representations of today’s consumerist society. Other critical works touch upon the issues of censorship, writing, ethics and law. The Jury Committee also chose to support electronic cultural platforms, specialized in cinema criticism, the documentation of the artistic memory of theater and music, and the expansion of the network of relations between Arab and Kurdish writers. What distinguishes these various works is that they range from the narrow local to the national with a broad humanistic vision and advanced intellectual and aesthetic approaches that are able to imagine alternative cultures that lie on the margin of the prevailing culture.”

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CREATIVE AND CRITICAL WRITINGS

Number of Applicants 117
Number of Grantees 23
6 Females 13 Males
4 Institutions
Countries
Lebanon (4)  Syria (8)  Sudan (1)  Egypt (8)  Palestine (1)  Yemen (1)  Morocco (1)  France/ Tunisia (1)
Total in Grants $219,200
AFAC Documentary Program

"We were in the presence of "Desire": the desire for self-affirmation, for drawing new maps, and the desire to not suffocate by limited geographies, boundaries or taboos. We are witnessing a new momentum in Arab documentary filmmaking, where authors have cut off with the heavy burden of yesterday. When they revisit history, they stand firmly in the moment and head into the future with a unique individuality."

AFAC Documentary Program jury

The 2018 Jury Committee for ADP brought together Carine Doumit (Lebanon), Reda Ben Jelloun (Morocco) and Diana El Jeroudi (Syria).

Jury Statement

"We were in the presence of "Desire": the desire for self-affirmation, for drawing new maps, and the desire to not suffocate by limited geographies, boundaries or taboos. We are witnessing a new momentum in Arab documentary filmmaking, where authors have cut off with the heavy burden of yesterday. When they revisit history, they stand firmly in the moment and head into the future with a unique individuality. Many projects emerged out of sincere self-expression and knowledge of its locale and of the other, where filmmakers are reclaiming the narrative through a creative discourse. We favored those projects that chose to deal with urgent historical and political matters but with critique and a personal approach, and which kept an unsettled distance with their topics and subjects and brought about novelty. We were impressed by those projects that had artistry and craftsmanship, and that were preoccupied with the ordinary and the individual search for meaning in today’s madness. We especially admired that film projects were made with such seriousness, conviction and uncompromising research, each attempting a complete and an integral narrative."

Grantee Name | Nationality | Project Title | Type
---|---|---|---
Nahed Awwad | Palestine | Orthodox Intifada | Development
Cölette Ghimri | Palestine | Traces of home | Development
Sareen Hairabedian | Jordan | Whispers of Artsakh | Development
Omar El-Khairy | Palestine | NAZ | Development
Leila Chaabi | Algeria | Guardian of the worlds | Development
Mahassen Nasser-Eldin | Palestine | We carve words in the earth | Development
Laura Stauth | Egypt | Between walls | Development
Mira Sidawi | Palestine | Al Jidar: the wall | Development
Ahdane Baraka | Morocco | Fragments from heaven | Production
Bassam Mortada | Egypt | Abo Zaabal 1989 | Production
Qutabba Barhamji | Syria | Gevar’s land | Production
Lafla Doghri | Tunisia | Nothing about my mother | Production
Hind Shoufani | Palestine | They planted strange trees | Production
Hamaa Ouni | Tunisia | El Medestansí | Production
Mohamed Said Ouma | Comoros Islands | Red card | Production
Ridha Tili | Tunisia | The color of phosphate | Production
Hind Meddeb | Tunisia | Paris Stalingrad | Post-production
Dina Naser | Jordan | Tiny souls | Post-production
Wael Kaddo | Syria | The way home | Post-production
Lamine Ammar Khodjaïn | Algeria | Une maison pour Buster Keaton | Post-production
Dorothee Myriam Keliou | Algeria | In Mansourah you separated us | Post-production
Wissam Georges Tantios | Lebanon | We are from there | Post-production
Eyas Almokdad | Syria | The final scene | Post-production

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Nahed Awwad | Palestine | Orthodox Intifada | Development
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Wael Kaddo | Syria | The way home | Post-production
Lamine Ammar Khodjaïn | Algeria | Une maison pour Buster Keaton | Post-production
Dorothee Myriam Keliou | Algeria | In Mansourah you separated us | Post-production
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Eyas Almokdad | Syria | The final scene | Post-production

"We were in the presence of "Desire": the desire for self-affirmation, for drawing new maps, and the desire to not suffocate by limited geographies, boundaries or taboos. We are witnessing a new momentum in Arab documentary filmmaking, where authors have cut off with the heavy burden of yesterday. When they revisit history, they stand firmly in the moment and head into the future with a unique individuality."

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Jury Statement

“We were honored to jury the fifth class of the Arab Documentary Photography Program, an initiative that has been transformative in the lives of its participants. It has also been crucial for expanding visual storytelling about the region from within, rather than as told by outsiders. Unlike a simple grant program, this mentored program allows photographers to develop their unique voice and participate in each other’s growth. Our jury reviewed 72 proposals and selected nine finalists and three backups. We were impressed by the range and diversity of the approaches and topics we saw in the applications. We were especially drawn to projects that relied upon a deep and thoughtful knowledge of a particular subject, and a considered approach to translating that subject photographically. In future years, we would strongly encourage more women to apply to the program; only 39% of the applicants were women, a number that has been fairly stable over the years. There has also been a dearth of candidates from Palestine, the Gulf region, and Iraq, and we hope to see more in future years. We would like to thank AFAC for such a thorough and thoughtful jury process; they provided a level of organization and analysis of the applications that enabled a deep and gratifying deliberation.”

Arab Documentary Photography Program

The 2018 Jury Committee for ADPP was made up of Kristen Lubben (USA), Mohamed Somji (Tanzania / UAE) and Rana El Nemr (Egypt).

Number of Applicants 79
Number of Grantees 9
3 Females
6 Males

Countries
Egypt (3)
Lebanon (1)
Mauritania (1)
Morocco (1)
Algeria (1)
Syria (1)
Yemen (1)

Total in Grants $45,000

Grantee Name Nationality Project Title
M’hammed Kelito Morocco Among You
Roger Mokbel Lebanon Describe the Sky to Me
Heba Khamis Egypt Transit Bodies
Elwely Vall Mauritania In the Light of Change
Nadine Al Koudsi Syria Those Who Dance on the Staircase
Abdo Shanan Algeria Dry
Ravy Shaker Egypt Letters to Moses
Shaima Al Tamimi Yemen As If We Never Came

The ninth grantee name is kept confidential due to the sensitivity of the project’s topic.
Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship

"ACE is an incredibly important program at a critical moment in the region. The region continues to develop valuable creative initiatives at a fast pace reflecting the dynamism and aspirations of younger citizens. Yet more than ever, there is an urgency to stabilize and energize arts and culture organizations by enabling them to be more strategic, entrepreneurial in their thinking and projects and better managed to withstand the myriad challenges facing civil society and the creative community.

There are virtually no support opportunities for emerging leaders in the culture sector to sustain themselves intellectually and critically and in terms of skills; and to share and distribute knowledge to ensure continuity, renewal and transitions. Where other sectors have developed opportunities for seeding and incubating new ideas and new ventures and to solidify and re-focus existing structures and institutions, the arts and culture sector still lags behind. Leaders of arts and culture organizations are often left to fend for themselves and it is high time for them to receive the support and know-how they badly need and to build a community of practice in order to expand their reach, develop diverse income streams and anchor their mission and work with broader stakeholders and the grassroots. We felt energized by the diversity, passion, commitment and drive of the applicant pool of organizations – this highlighted the potential that a more sustained, efficient and impactful sector could have on the development of societies in the Arab region.

The opportunity to review dozens of applicants highlighted the alarming fragility and the financial constraints facing many of existing important organizations, as well as emerging new structures. In many instances applicants required a more urgent and holistic intervention that would fall outside the mandate of the ACE program. Our decision-making was not necessarily solely based on the excellence of the organizations nor on their urgent need for support but whether they could fully benefit from the structure, the time frame and the offerings that ACE is designed to produce."
Jury Statement

“The jury members of the Research on the Arts Program by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) and the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS), having met over a period of two days on the 18th and 19th of October 2018 to review and assess the submitted applications, wish to communicate the following general remarks: The jury found that the parameters of this year’s call were generative in foregrounding an important problematic in the relationship between the social sciences and the arts that seems to permeate, to various degrees, all of the submitted applications. The jury clearly saw an imbalance between these two fields, which tends to place the arts in the position of a docile object to be examined and utilized for the production of data. The jury repeatedly noticed how art was employed to illustrate a premise, to justify ends through quantitative data collection or further summoned as a symptom of a socio-political condition. Accordingly, art was made to seem without an internal aesthetic coherence or a compelling materiality that would allow it to resist, inflect and even generate other considerations and alternative criteria. It is the jury’s opinion that in desisting from a utilitarian use of the arts and in avoiding an over-emphasis on conventional quantitative methods, the social sciences can begin to respond to the indeterminacy, untimeliness, even ambivalence, of art with critical and self-reflective projects that can speak with a range of writing strategies and address a variety of audiences. It is the jury’s opinion that such new directions are being initiated and explored in this year’s selected projects.”

Research on the Arts Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adham Selim</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Digital Arabs: A Brief History of Digitally-conceived Architecture in the Arab World During the 1990s</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shama Babiker</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Multiple Spaces, Continued Mobilizations: Conceptual and Stylistic Visual Arts Transformations in Visual and Spatial Arts in Sudan 1980-2010</td>
<td>Urbanism and Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joan Chaker</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>The Muleteer in the Lebanese Novel: Social Transformation in the Era of Global Capital</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara Khalidi</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>A Genealogy of Palestinian Museums and Renegades Objects</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jirmanus Saba</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>We Felt Again That Everything is New: Political Cinema and Social Movement Praxis in 1970s Arab Left</td>
<td>Cinema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widad Adas</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Sayed Darwish and Contemporary Youth Musical Practices in Egypt</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassan El Bakkari</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Sociology of Music; Education in Secondary School in Morocco as a Model</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reema Fadda</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>A Healthy Distrust</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ninth grantee name is kept confidential due to the sensitivity of the project’s topic.

The 2018 Jury Committee for RAP was made up of Dr. Alia Mossallam (Egypt), Dr. Maya Kesrouany (Lebanon), Dr. Ismael Nashef (Palestine), Dr. Omar Fertat (Morocco), and Prof. Walid Sadek (Lebanon).
Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mjema Widad</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>N3rdistan</td>
<td>Electronic and dub step composition recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alija Cheghali</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Ardenes Festival</td>
<td>Women music festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sami Hwast</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Time Has Changed</td>
<td>Folk composition and recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auma Ghanem</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Damaged Brains Music</td>
<td>Experimental music composition + visual art sketches booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feras Shahravan</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Sound from the North</td>
<td>Classic composition with ethnic instrument and recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yacine Bouhatine</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Idrisy</td>
<td>Jazz composition and recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Khaliife</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Hope is the thing with feathers</td>
<td>Jazz album composition and recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imad Alby</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Frigya</td>
<td>Fusion composition and recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasser Hâj Youssef</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Memories</td>
<td>Classic composition for the Viola d'Amore and recording</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abdou Koobeyi</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>The Prosecution of Mustapha al-Agha</td>
<td>Electro-Acoustic album recording</td>
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<td>Adham Zidian</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Baskot Lel Baltageeya</td>
<td>Electro - Pop composition and recording</td>
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<td>Ralph Aweyaz</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Marbarani</td>
<td>Experimental music album</td>
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<td>Rusil Redine</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Electro Zabala</td>
<td>Instrument creation and recording</td>
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<td>Safana Baqia</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Woman Who Adored God</td>
<td>Women Choir and Recording</td>
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<td>Basal Rajoub</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>The River of Lights</td>
<td>Classic and Ethnic Music Album</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samir El Fargani</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Shaheزاده Opera</td>
<td>Oriental Opera Composition</td>
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<td>Raad Yassin</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Archeophony</td>
<td>Experimental Music Album</td>
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<td>Sud Bushnaq</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Original Soundtracks from Independent Arab Cinema</td>
<td>Sound Track and Film Composition Music Album</td>
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<td>Mohamed Zouari</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Electro Brahi</td>
<td>Electro Oriental Music Album</td>
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<td>Abdul Hadi Hashem</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Asfiâ – Al-Hiffah</td>
<td>Rap Music Album</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muriel Khegawi</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Zajal: Between Improvisation and Institutionalization</td>
<td>Archive and Publication of Zajal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2018 Music Jury Committee was composed of Rima Khcheich (Lebanon), Hamd Makhlouf (Tunisia) and Maan Abu Taleb (Jordan).

Jury Statement Highlights

“Means of cultural production in general, and music production more particularly, are scarce in the Arab world today, outside the framework governed by political forces, or market forces that are not restrained by non-profit considerations. This represents a missed opportunity for a large number of artists and musicians to execute their projects. From this perspective, the jury committee values the role of AFAC in creating an essential and valuable space for music that fall outside these frameworks.

This space however is complex, with its own mechanisms, opportunities and risks. Today, as the world has opened up and mixed via the internet, travel and the diaspora, musics have spontaneously intertwined and merged, and new musics have emerged in a constant live operation that occurs every day at a micro scale, that no one can deny or prove exclusively. For this reason, the so-called originality, or herey, a blind tradition, or revival of tradition are merely ambiguous criteria, often arising from concerns that are not related to music.

The jury committee has therefore avoided these criteria, and has opted not to ask/ upon evaluating every application what it is bringing to “Arabic music”, or how Arabic it is, what societal objectives it fulfills... thereby focusing its evaluation on the quality of the proposed artistic project, its appropriateness, its seriousness, its proposition of a convincing budget, in an attempt to extrapolate the kind of concerns that move the project, whether artistic or otherwise. Over the course of works during which the jury committee members have reviewed dozens of applications, and during the 2-day jury meeting during which these applications were discussed, the marked presence of some trends was clear, such as the fusion music as a genre in itself. Numerous applications also aimed to enhance Arabic music, to bring it closer to modern music, or render it more appealing to the new generation. The jury committee was forced to discuss the controversy of these concepts and their oversimplification. Several applications also revolved around specific instruments, whether because of their rarity, or by placing them in unconventional contexts.

Furthermore, the jury committee received numerous applications that used experimentation as a point of entry. The jury committee members attempted to induce whether this experimentation was a stand or actual. In other words, has this experimentation frozen to become a clear pattern with its own equations? Or is it a real experiment that seeks new forms and meanings?

Further to discussions, deliberations and scrutiny, the jury committee members selected projects that stood out from them, and with excitement and enthusiasm for what transpired with their innovation, seriousness and transparency, which they present to you in all confidence with what transpired during the 2-day jury meeting during which these applications were discussed, the marked presence of some trends was clear, such as the fusion music as a genre in itself. Numerous applications also aimed to enhance Arabic music, to bring it closer to modern music, or render it more appealing to the new generation. The jury committee was forced to discuss the controversy of these concepts and their oversimplification. Several applications also revolved around specific instruments, whether because of their rarity, or by placing them in unconventional contexts.

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Cinema

The 2018 Cinema Jury Committee was formed of Adania Shibli (Palestine), Adnen Jdey (Tunisia), and Ahmed El Maanouni (Morocco).

**Jury Statement**

“The disparity in the overall pool of applications received, whether at the level of diversity of originating countries of the applicants, or the subjects treated, did not only instigate appreciation, but optimism as well. Several of the submitted projects were courageous and unrelenting in their addressing of taboos at the societal and political levels. Also, a clear tendency towards experimentation was prevalent, going beyond the conventional approaches to cinematographic treatment and attempting to create different visual and narrative bases. The applications received also included submissions by emerging talents, which confirms the continuous and vibrant interest in this artistic field at the level of the various Arab countries in all their diversity. The number of grantees therefore exceeded the usual number of grants offered in previous years, reaching 30 grants this time.

At the same time, a number of submitted projects converged on topics dominated by the question of memory, the experience of war and violence. Despite the fact that these topics are pressing, as they are present in the daily life of numerous Arab citizens, their treatment in a modern and genuine manner, or from a novel perspective untapped before, was scarce.”
### Training and Regional Events

#### Grantee Name | Nationality | Project Title | Type
---|---|---|---
Mohitar Eldenary | Egypt | Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops | Workshops and Performances
Waghi El Leqany | Egypt | Deaf Film Lab | Short Film Workshop
Toofis Doub | Algeria | DIGI-DZ Digital Art Platform | Digital Art Platform
Shareef Sarhan | Palestine | Workshops and Trainings on Sculpture Techniques | Sculpture Workshop
Hashem Adrian | Lebanon | Oh To End Translation + Play + Publication |
Zaid Atta | Iraq | Hacking Up Baghdad Digital Media and Art workshop |
Dar Alkalima University College of Arts and Culture | Palestine | Bethlehem Students Film Festival | Students Film Festival
Echos Electrik | Tunisia | No Logo Mobile Media Art Events |
Dar Yusuf Nasri Jacir for Art and Research | Palestine | Cultivating Community Ownership of Art and Space | Cultural Space to hold art exhibitions
Sarayet Ramallah | Palestine | Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival | Contemporary Dance Festival
YAZAN | Lebanon | YAZAN Professional Actors Training | Acting Workshops
The Cultural Association for Film and Audio-Visual Production Beirut DC | Lebanon | The 10th Edition of Beirut Cinema Days | Independent Film Festival
Dawar for Arts and Development | Egypt | Arts Risel Promoting Community Cultural Development in Egypt Kairal | Arts Workshops
Editions Snoubar Bayrouz | Lebanon | Forty Years of Creation in Arabic Children’s Literature | Children Literature forum & Publication
Collectif Khawbara | Lebanon | Us, the Moon and the Neighbors Performing Arts Festival |
CLUSTER-Cairo Lab for Urban Studies, Training and Environmental Research | Egypt | Public Inter-Library Online Technology-PILOT Training and Research on Arab Arts Lexicon |
Haifa Independent Film Festival - HIFF | Palestine | Haifa Independent Film Festival - 2019 Independent Film Festival |
Hewar Company for Independent Theater and Performing Arts | Egypt | Theater Is A Must Forum 2019 6th edition “Crossing Over” Performing Arts Festival |
Artist Residency in Algiers | Algeria | Madrassa #3 Curator Residency and Workshop |
Rumooz Foundation for the Arts and Cultural Development | Yemen | Creative Writing Workshop for Yemeni Young Writers Writing Workshop |
Seen Films | Egypt | First Film Forum Training Film Program |
Aflam | France | 6èmes Rencontres d’Aflam Film Festival |
omnes vzw | Belgium | Arab Cartoon Festival Workshop Program Comics and Cartoon Festival and Workshops |
Shubbak: A Window on Contemporary Arab Culture | United Kingdom | Shubbak Festival 2019 Multidisciplinary Festival |

#### Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>19 Institutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algeria (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq (1)</td>
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<td>Tunisia (1)</td>
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<td>Belgium (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (1)</td>
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<td>United Kingdom (1)</td>
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#### Number of Applicants

<table>
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</table>

#### Number of Grantees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25</th>
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#### Females

<table>
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#### Males

<table>
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</table>

#### Total in Grants

<table>
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<th>$400,400</th>
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</table>

"The variety that we saw in the proposed projects delighted us, in terms of mediums, subjects, approaches and execution. This revealed the consciousness of the applicants and their connection with the needs, issues and dreams of their respective communities. Furthermore, we felt their desire to distribute the works of Arab artists and render them available to a wider audience inside and outside Arab countries, to raise voices that have long been marginalized."  

**Training and Regional Events Jury**

The 2018 Training and Regional Events Jury Committee consisted of Maria Daif (Morocco), Rowaida Khulai (Yemen), and Rime Nagub (Egypt).

**Jury Statement**

"The TR jury committee brought us together – three Arab women from the extreme Arab Mashreq to the Maghreb region – to gain the opportunity to evaluate a profusion of artistic and cultural projects. This experience granted us hope and confidence in the great potential in our region, despite all the difficulties and obstacles that the cultural practitioners are faced with in the region. The variety we saw in the proposed projects delighted us, in terms of mediums, subjects, approaches and execution. This revealed the consciousness of the applicants and their connection with the needs, issues and dreams of their respective communities. Furthermore, we felt their desire to distribute the works of Arab artists and render them available to a wider audience inside and outside Arab countries, to raise voices that have long been marginalized."
Arab-European Creative Platform – AECP

2018 was replete with exciting activities in Germany, under the Arab European Creative Platform, supported with a total budget of $407,095:

Opening concert Forum der Berlinale - Cine-Concert: Georges Méliès “Solitudes”
Berlin, February 16
The 48th Forum of this year’s Berlin International Film Festival opened with a cine-concert titled Georges Méliès’ Solitudes, presented in collaboration with AFAC in the framework of the Arab European Creative Platform (AECP). The cine-concert included screening of recently restored archival prints of short films by French film pioneer and illusionist Georges Méliès, accompanied by solo musical performances by Khym Alami, Tony Elieh, Abed Kobeissy, Magda Mayas and Sharif Selhnaou, respectively.

Against Oblivion: [laut] Die Welt hören / [sound] Listening to the World, Humboldt Box
Berlin, March 22
The Foundation for Arab Music Archiving and Research - AMAR opened “Against Oblivion” at the [laut] Die Welt hören / [sound] Listening to the World. “Against Oblivion” is an exhibition that focuses on endangered oral music traditions of the Arab World, whether secular or religious, in dire need of preservation.

Arab European Documentary Convention
Mediencampus Villa Ida in Leipzig, April 12-14
AFAC and DOX BOX e.V., Germany launched the first arab.european Documentary Convention (aDC). An annual meeting of international practitioners and decision-makers in documentary, aDC was designed to foster connectivity, spark critical debate and ignite change. International associate partners of the first edition were DOK Leipzig, IDFA Bertha Fund and the Sundance Institute.

Writing Catastrophe: Writing Workshop
Berlin, May-October
AFAC organized a six-month workshop in Berlin titled ‘Writing Catastrophe’ under the mentorship of Egyptian writer Haytham Al-Wardany. The workshop was addressed to Arab writers who have recently immigrated to Germany, particularly those hailing from Syria, who are grappling with the burdens of complex, painful and bitter experiences endured during the revolution/war, the trauma of escaping the violence and making their way to safety. How can writing approach disaster? Might it be enough to tell what happened? Is writing dystopia effective? Might the personal story be enough, or the documentary chronicle more appropriate? Or might a poetic approach be more significant? Or irony? What is the role of fiction vis-à-vis a catastrophic reality? Does literature carry a moral responsibility, and is it borne by the writer? The workshop explored these and several other questions, in the hope of helping writers with their artistic approach to their experience of disaster. The workshop culminated with public readings of the texts during the AECP Forum: Revisiting Archive in the Aftermath of Revolution (October 26-28, 2018) in partnership with Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW).

Partnership with Warsaw Museum on a residency for a Syrian filmmaker
The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and AFAC are supporting Reem Al-Ghazzi as a first fellow with a grant for a filmmaker from Syria. The mission of the six-month residency is to provide the institutional and creative framework for a filmmaker to progress in her/his project, benefit from the museum’s network of affiliations with other institutions, access to archives and experts in order to enrich her/his film project. Reem’s project is a documentary on the making of Iphigenia, supported by AFAC as part of AECP.

FORUM: Imagining the Future Forum in partnership with Archive Kabinett and EUME
Berlin, June 9-10
This Forum was organized by AFAC in partnership with the Archive Kabinett and Europe in the Middle East - The Middle East in Europe (EUME) and curated by Khaled Saghreh. The surge of counter-revolutions, the stepping up of mechanisms of internal repression, compounded by the active intervention of international powers in the aftermath of insurgencies in the Arab world have caused tremendous material and immaterial damage. Whereas science fiction, comics, and creative writings continue to enable imagining the unimaginable and unveiling horizons for better tomorrows for some, it invited others to delve into deeper levels of despair. The Forum explored the following questions by looking at the new literary and artistic forms in the Arab world, in which “the future” is represented or incarnated: Has dystopia become a fount for intellectual and artistic production? Are we to relinquish the very idea of a future carrying promises for betterment and bliss? Or, on the contrary, should we hang on to the notion of utopia as the harbinger of a future for all? Does the moment of the Arab uprising still allow us to conceive of such utopic futures? If this is indeed possible, how do contemporary imaginations compare with those that the generations of the 1960s carried, or even those...
of the modernist pioneers of the turn of the last century?

The Dwarfs of East Agouza: A European Tour

Following their acclaimed first album Bas (2014), The Dwarfs of East Agouza (from Egypt) embarked on a European tour after the release of their long awaited new album, titled Rats Don’t Eat Synthesizers, which came out in April on the label Akuphone in collaboration with AFAC. Supported by AFAC in the framework of its Arab-European Creative Platform, the tour included Cappadocia, Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Birmingham, Lärz, Berlin and Roskilde.

The second Music and Film Summer Festival, titled “Wish You Were Here”

Berlin, August 24-26

The Festival, held in partnership with ALFILM, opened with a concert featuring Malika Zarra, an inspiring new voice, accompanied by Amen Viana (Guitar), with a concert featuring Malika Zarra, an inspiring new voice, accompanied by Amen Viana (Guitar), and a performance by virtuoso Matthias Lohner, followed by the screening of The Journey (al-Rihlah) directed by Mohamed Ben Atta

The Festival continued at Silent Green Kulturquartier, with a concert by saxophonist Basel Rajoub and virtuoso Matthias Lohner, followed by the screening of Hedi (Hneebek Hedi) directed by Mohamed Ben Atta.

Ur theatrical piece in partnership with Residenztheater

Munich, September 28

Acclaimed British-Kuwaiti playwright and stage director Sulayman Al Bassam’s latest theater production Ur: a co-production between the Residenztheater, Sabab Theater and AFAC premiered at the Residenztheater in Munich and registered full house for the first four shows (144 seats each). It was the first ever co-production of this sort bringing together a rich and dynamic cast of Arab and German actors. Ur springs from an interpretation of the tragic story of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur, one of the first cities in the history of humanity, recorded on stone tablets in cuneiform signs, in one of the Sumerian languages, dating back to 2000 BC. The play traverses time with a captivating agility. The drama moves back and forth between the eve of Ur’s destruction in 2000 BC and the year 1903, which marks the arrival of European archaeologists to Mesopotamia, then forward again to our recent present, the year 2015, marking the brief, yet destructive passage of ISIS, to finally jump to the year 2035 with a coup de théa'tre in the finale.

The play brought together an ensemble of accomplished Arab actors with members of the Residenztheater ensemble, including: Lara Allo (Nin Gail), Tim Werths (Elamite/Women in 2035), Haia Omran (Priestess), Dalia Naous (Diyala), Marina Blankas (Photographer/Woman in 2035), Mohammed Al Rashi (Nanna/Ram/Deem), Gunther Eckes (Friedrich Delitzsch/Deash Solidar/Man in 2035), Bijan Zamani (Robert Koldewey/Khaled Al Asaad), Ensemble (Skarabäus/ ISIS Soldier/Kaiser Wilhelm II).

Un-Spoken Series in partnership with Volkbune

Berlin, February-November

Un-Spoken is a series of conversations, presentations and performances with Arab artists and filmmakers, based in Germany, Europe and the Arab world, that proposes to explore practice, process, and language based on the artist or filmmaker’s on-going works-in-progress project. Inverting the conventional artist or filmmaker talk, the encounter offers a roundabout approach looking at un-making, un-veiling and un-speaking. Guests included filmmakers Khaled Abdulwahed, Mahdi Fleifel, Avo Kapraaelan, and artists Philip Rik and Maha Maamoun.

FORUM: Revisting Archive in the Aftermath of Revolution in Partnership with Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW)

October 26-28

In the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, artists, activists and others have reverted to archives digging through a past buried under several layers of cultural, political and psychological repression to rediscover country and society. The relationship between archiving and political events is multi-faceted, as the future seems contingent on archiving the present and revisiting the past. In documenting revolutions and their unfolding, the first impetus was to interrogate iconographic and representational languages, new functions of social media and the new role of citizen journalism. Documenting present-day disastrous realities - in the aftermath of revolutions - is a more complex undertaking that raises questions about memory, mourning and the formal and psychological choices artists make to capture these realities. The artistic and intellectual practices and articulations of archiving as personal and political practice were explored within this three-day forum. It gathered academics, writers, artists and filmmakers from the Arab world and Europe to reflect on and enact the multifold practices and approaches in lectures, discussions, a reading and screenings.

*Several of the submitted projects were courageous and unrelenting in their addressing of taboos at the societal and political levels. Also, a clear tendency towards experimentation was prevalent, going beyond the conventional approaches to cinematicograpic and attempting to create different visual and narrative bases.*
about their context, their success stories and challenges with each other as well as with the program’s specialists from the region, Mouhitar Kocache and Oussama Rifahi, and those form India (Arundhati Ghosh), South Africa (Mike van Graan) and Brazil (Carla Fonseca). The workshop evoked the relevance of cultural institutions’ work to their communities, sustainability of their operations, audience cultivation tools and practices. It also explored the latest trends in storytelling and development/fundraising. The experts shared the specificities of their geographical areas and representatives of the corporate world talked about their priorities, requirements and visions. There were reflections as a group on the acceptance and relevance of sustainable development goals and creative economy methodologies in a global context and how the diversity and inequality debate is shaping/distorting work on the ground. The participants interacted with representatives from the private sector, and engaged as a group with two local peer institutions in Beirut as case studies. The workshop concluded with a fun competitive exercise focused on project development and pitching in front of a three-jury member.

Research on the Arts Program

AFAC and ACSS kicked off the newly launched Research on the Arts Program’s workshop on December 14 and 15 in the presence of the program’s 9 grantees, 5 jury members and 2 mentors. Participants presented their research proposals which were then thoroughly discussed with the jurors and mentors. The valuable insights and enriching discussions shared during the 2-day meeting will be carried through by the grantees during their research work. The RAP 2018 grantees will present their updated research projects in April 2019 in Beirut within the 4th Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) Conference.

“It is the jury’s opinion that in desisting from a utilitarian use of the arts and in avoiding an over-emphasis on conventional quantitative methods, the social sciences can begin to respond to the indeterminacy, untimeliness, even ambivalence, of art with critical and self-reflective projects that can speak with a range of writing strategies and address a variety of audiences.”

Research on the Arts jury

Arab Documentary Photography Program

Between April 4 and 8, AFAC hosted the second workshop for the group of nine 2017 ADPP grantees who, for the past 8 months, have been paired with distinguished mentors to develop their projects and benefit from one-on-one discussions. The nine photographers worked on finalizing their photo stories and presenting them to their peers and mentors for an open discussion and feedback. The participating projects from six countries were: Djinni Diaries by Btihal Remli (Morocco), Live With It by Sema Aljaymi (Syria), Hoshmar by Mohamed Al toum (Sudan), In Their Place by Rawan Mazeh (Lebanon), The Cult of Souls by Fethi Sahraoui (Algeria), Room With Seven Roses by Tarek Haddad (Lebanon), The Living Dead by Ahmed Gaber (Egypt), Moon Dust by Mohamed Mahdy (Egypt), and The Way to Hell by Hesham Elsherif (Egypt).

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship Program

The first workshop of the first cycle of ACE 2018-2019 was held between November 2 and 6 in Antwork (a co-working space) in Beirut, involving 8 institutions (16 participants) from Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. It was a chance for the participants to meet and exchange first ideas professional support
Outreach and Cultural Advocacy

AFAC carried out the following activities in 2018 in its efforts to promote arts and culture from the Arab region; whether by initiating or participating in forums and events, or establishing partnerships and collaborations that benefit its diverse grantees:

AFAC participated in Crossroads - a conference, conversations and a cultural program organized by Pro Helvetia and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in partnership with the University of Basel and Kaserne Basel, February 8-10. The conference focused on culture in an international context and the role of art and culture play in the process of social change. It brought together cultural practitioners from Switzerland, India, the Arab region and Southern Africa. Rima Mismar, Executive Director of AFAC, delivered the opening speech at the University of Basel where the conference was held, and Heba Hage-Felder, Senior Programs Manager of AFAC, participated in the panel discussion ‘Conversations’ at the Kaserne Basel. The conference touched on cultural rights under pressure and a reflection on the relation between arts and development policy. It brought up issues related to shifting identities, colonialism and post-colonialism, vulnerability and solidarity. A number of recommendations were invoked: not to instrumentalize art, so as to avoid it becoming propaganda; that art should be integral to development strategies and not simply a cherry on the top; to recognize the intimate relation between art and money and reflect on power dynamics to avoid conditional support.

AFAC continued its collaboration with Sursock Museum and initiated a partnership with Dar El-Nimer for the organization of Film Nights featuring AFAC-supported films Asphalt and Chalait of Tunisia were screened at Sursock Museum in February and March respectively, while the “Film Tuesday” series featured AFAC-supported films such as Hedhi, As I Opened My Eyes, Until the Birds Return and The Sea Is Behind every Tuesday during the months of June and July 2018 at Dar El-Nimer.

Dunyana program (Arabic BBC Service) featured AFAC and its Arab Documentary Photography Program female participants from the 4th cycle March 12. During the show, discussions about the cause of Arab women and the role of photography in relaying these causes were undertaken.

AFAC participated in the meeting “Investing in Philanthropy Development” co-hosted by WINGS and “la Caixa” Banking Foundation Barcelona, March 26-27. This meeting was meant for funders and potential funders of philanthropy infrastructure to engage in discussions around foundations’ role within the philanthropy ecosystem and how they can better contribute to it, ultimately benefiting civil society as a whole. This includes activities and policies that strengthen the sector, a legal framework that empowers them, a tax structure that provides incentives for giving, an accountability system that builds confidence in philanthropy and civil society, sufficient institutional capacity to implement effective activities and sufficient resources to undertake these activities, and a strong culture of giving to grow philanthropy. This positive environment is what is referred to as philanthropy infrastructure. The meeting provided examples of the impact of infrastructure organizations from different regions of the world. Discussion revolved around how to develop grassroots philanthropy for long term development; how can we build local resources for local communities; how to adapt to a changing global landscape of support to philanthropy; how to develop and strongly and locally-relevant philanthropy support ecosystems; beyond foundations, who are the unusual suspects in infrastructure funding; and evaluating philanthropy infrastructure’s impact.

AFAC participated in a donors’ and partners’ meeting on “Knowledge at Risk: Conflict, Collaboration and Ethics”, organized by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) Amman, April 4. The fourth ACSS meeting took place in conjunction with the ACSS Research Forum, a biennial gathering of ACSS grantees, selection committee members and Board of Trustees. The meeting was meant as a forum for discussions among sister organizations around topics of mutual interest as well as to enhance institutional cooperation across the region and internationally. Discussions focused on the Arab regional context within which knowledge production and research takes place. What impact do contexts of conflict, violence and population displacement, have on civil society and on research communities? How do different organizations (universities, NGOs, donors etc.) help create and protect spaces of innovation and creativity? How can collaboration, mutual learning and cross-regional interconnections be enhanced? How are increasingly complex legal and financial landscapes to be navigated?

What is the current state of freedom of expression and research in the region today? What ethical considerations come into play both on individual and institutional levels?

AFAC organized the 11th Arts and Culture Donors Meeting Brussels, April 21-22. The meeting took place in parallel with the EU-UN organized conference on “The Future of Syria and the Goethe Institute initiative Syria Art Space. In addition to the sessions on donors’ exchange and update and the future of arts and culture in the region beyond philanthropy, the meeting included a full day session on the role of Arab arts and culture institutions in pushing for arts and culture to be on the agendas of external policies, mainly the EU external policy. A working group, led by AFAC, was assembled as such to work on a list of recommendations to be suggested to the EU by the advocacy body More Europe.

AFAC participated in a panel discussion in the Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 ISPA Congress, Off the Beaten Track The Netherlands, June 11-15. The mission of the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) is to strengthen the performing arts globally through the advancement of leadership, the exchange of ideas and by fostering a diverse and engaged membership. There were 310 delegates from 46 countries. AFAC spoke on the panel “The New Human Landscape” which examined how migration and nationalism have changed the composition of the global landscape and what role can arts and culture leaders play in addressing the situation of refugee artists. It also looked at how government agencies and institutions are coping with this challenge and how migrant artists are facing as they search for a new stage.

AFAC collaborated with Sursock Museum to hold a new edition of Past Disquiet which was curated by Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti Beirut, July 26 - September 24. Past Disquiet is a documentary and archival exhibition centered on research conducted on and around the story...
of the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, which opened in the spring of 1978 at the Beirut Arab University. Past Disquiet displays, mediates, and incarnates themes and questions that have guided the curators’ research, using montaged video of archival material and film as well as contemporary interviews and writing, in addition to reproductions of documents. It maps constellations of artists and collectives bound by political affiliations and solidarities, beginning with solidarity with Palestine and expanding to the rest of the world.

AFAC held its 6th AFAC Film Week program, organized in partnership with Project’heurts, Planète Cinévers and the ONCI.

Algeria, September 5-12

It comprised 10 films which hailed from seven countries: Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, and Syria. Six films were featured in the fiction selection: 1000 Nights by Mai Masri and A Drowning Man by Mahdi Fleifel both from Palestine, Ali, the Goat and Ibrahim by Shirin El Baydary from Egypt, L’âge d’or by Hervé Léger from France, andPhone by Antoine Proux from Algeria. Six films were featured in the documentary section: Headbang Lullaby by Hicham Lasri from Morocco, In the Last Days of the City by Tamer El Said from Egypt, and The Last Men in Aleppo by Feras Fayyad from Syria. Parallel to the main program, four films were showcased at the Cinema Azul in Béjaïa as part of the 16th Rencontres Cinématographiques de Béjaïa special program AFAC Carte Blanche.

AFAC participated in the 13th edition of the Festival Arabesques

Montpellier, September 21-22

The aim was to discuss the opportunities for emerging Arab artists and how they can be supported. The panel included Kamliya Jibril (presenting her recent AFAC-funded project Zamkana), Kamel Dafri from festival Villes des Musiques du Monde, Habib Achour from Sacem, Stéphane Krausowski from Zones Françaises and Camel Zekri (Algerian French Composer). The acts showing at the festival included Dhafer Youssef, Souad Massi and Trio Jibril, as well as emerging artists like N3rdistan, Amel Chebbi, and Bachar Mar Khallef.

AFAC participated in Al Gouna Film Festival

Cairo, September 23-28

Out of the ten AFAC-supported films selected for the different competitions at El Gouna Film Festival 2018, three received top awards during the closing ceremony. Of Fathers and Sons, directed by Talal Derki (Syria), picked up the Silver Star in the Feature Documentary competition, as well as the Gold Star for Best Arab Documentary Film. In the same category, The Swing, by Lebanese director Cyril Aris, collected the Bronze Star after having received an honorable mention at the Open City Docs Festival in London, where it played as the closing night film. In the Feature Narrative competition, Mohamed Zaff was awarded Best Actor for his role in Dear Son by Tunisian director Mohamed Ben Attia.

AFAC met with stakeholders

Cairo, September 26-28

AFAC met with individual and institutional grantees at CLUSTER to brief about the SDC-funded North African Cultural Program and receive initial feedback. Three key issues were communicated: core support should be thought of with sustainability in mind so that supported institutions are not left in the void when the funding ends. It was also emphasized that partnership should not be conditional but allow for organic interactions. A third suggestion was that institutional strengthening should cover mentorship and consultations. In addition to meeting with grantees, AFAC was solicited by the Ford Foundation to present its work to their staff from across the region.

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**Institutional Strengthening**

**Organizational and human resource manuals**

Draft manuals have been developed to document existing procedures and processes at AFAC and to add new practices for strengthening the organization and the performance of responsibilities among staff. This dynamic document is meant to be updated on a regular basis and is also a reference for applying internal compliance. This document has been organically developed following the staff-wide reflection on strengths but also priority areas for improvement using the Organizational Mapping Tool (OMT) as part of the BUILD Grant offered by the Ford Foundation in 2017. AFAC’s lawyer was consulted to provide advice on all legal obligations of AFAC and to make recommendations for standardizing practices and procedures.

**Five-year strategic plan**

Based on the ten years’ study of AFAC, in-depth focus group recommendations on programs and recommendations of the Board of Trustees, the 5-year internal plan (2018-2023) has been reviewed with priorities on key areas that propel AFAC organizationally and programmatically. It includes a set of objectives, targets and time plan on diverse aspects: mission and strategy revisiting; new programs; learning and evaluation; philanthropy advocacy; outreach and engagement; external communications; governance; financial management; fundraising and donor relations; human resources; safety and security; organizational culture; and leadership and management. Apart from looking ahead, the plan also helps us keep track of progress throughout the year.

**Expanding capacities**

Three new team members have joined AFAC. Rana Kobeissi is the communication officer who brings to AFAC extensive experience from the private sector, having worked in different marketing and communication capacities in Europe and the Gulf. Reda Al Houchaimi is the grants coordinator whose recent experience was with a humanitarian NGO and who is trained in documentary film. Most recently, Maha Kays, a researcher and visual artist professor at ALBA, has come on board to mainly work on the extensive database and knowledge at AFAC’s disposal after 12 years in operation and produce analytical papers that inform on trends and topics in specific categories and across disciplines.

**Fundraising**

13 individuals generously contributed a total of $692,593 to AFAC (a number of donors prefer to remain undisclosed). AFAC is currently supported by six foundations: DOEN Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Ford Foundation, Prince Claus Fund, Drosos Foundation, Arab Council for the Social Sciences; and three governments: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The major highlight of 2018 is the CHF 5.5 million SDC bid which AFAC won to implement Phase I of the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP) starting May 2019 and until the first quarter of 2022. This propels AFAC into a longer-term investment in support of the role of cultural actors in the sub-region of North Africa. It builds on our huge body of work, knowledge and networks, and allows for an intervention at a more infrastructural and development level with longer-term engagement that is key to creating change and to making impact. It responds adequately to the recommendations made in AFAC Ten Years’ Study and focus group discussions, namely to reinforce AFAC’s presence in North Africa; to increase its efforts in institutional strengthening, engaging public programs and beyond big cities, and to build on common concerns as well as common heritage through co-productions.

**Communication**

AFAC issued over 30 press releases, news stories and flashes including highlights such as the open call announcements of AFAC’s 9 grants programs and the announcement of the selected grantees for each program respectively. During 2018, AFAC issued six bi-monthly newsletters featuring the latest events and opportunities, as well as email blasts when AFAC grantees won prestigious awards such as the Oscar nomination of Feras Fayyad for his film The Last Men in Aleppo. Furthermore, a special end-year newsletter entitled "Hits 2018... Hints 2019" featuring the highlights of 2018 and a sneak-peek into 2019 activities were disseminated.

In 2018, Stories Boldly Told revealed 15 projects from 2017 that have challenged various social, political and economic contexts throughout the Arab region and placed arts and cultural institutions and spaces within countries as well as common heritage through co-productions.

Besides SDC, three new institutional partners were brought on board this year including German Federal Foreign Office with $200,000 over one year and likely to be renewed as the Foreign Office support scheme does not allow for multi-year support; Drosos with $976,000 over three years, and ACES with $190,000 over three years. All funds will be matched by OSF under the scheme of the challenge grant (2016-2019) until mid-2019 and up to $10 million. For 2018, the target was $7.8 million, out of which AFAC obtained $7.24 million in contributions and commitments. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and DOEN Foundation renewed their support for 2018-2020, with $780,000 and $1,055,000 respectively.

As part of an engagement plan developed for 2018 for different categories of donors, efforts were made to engage individual donors in some activities. The top 20% of existing individual donors were targeted with the idea to involve them more in AFAC as advisors in specific processes and observers behind the scenes, but also to create opportunities for them to interact with grantees through events held around the year. This was tried out on a small scale this year through organizing a special preview of an AFAC-supported exhibition at the Sursock Museum as well as through our ACE program where we created a slot for some donors to engage with the participants and to explain their motivations and expectations when supporting artistic ventures. Parallel efforts to mobilize individual donors are ongoing through consistent one-on-one meetings, personalized e-updates and postal packages containing key AFAC publications. New persons have taken interest in AFAC’s work, and renewed interaction with previous individual donors prompting a few to revive their contributions to AFAC.
and spanning diverse critical areas of the region, were captivating and awe-inspiring in their boldness and fervor. A documentary film camp in war-torn Yemen mentors 12 aspiring filmmakers from different walks of life in Yemen over 6 months, who unfold their stories in 12 compelling short films that are touring the world. One photo documentary from Syria portrays the utter Abnormal that has turned into Normal in the day-to-day life of refugees. Another documentary photographer from Egypt presents the suffering of Wadi El Qamar residents and mobilizes the global community in their support. A Palestinian laboratory of visual innovation launches an “Impact Data Lab” for the generation of infographics and info pods that tell arresting action-driven narratives. In cinema, a Moroccan filmmaker sheds the light on marginalized yet vanguard Moroccan filmmaker, poet and writer Ahmed Bouanani, in an active attempt to revive collective memory in Morocco. Another film, the award-winning debut film of a Lebanese director, literally scratches beyond the surface of the current reality in Beirut, searching for the thousands of people who disappeared during the Lebanese Civil War. A young Palestinian alternative rock band crosses borders with their music and challenges Arab youths to take a stand against oppression, corruption, displacement and travel restrictions.

Members of the 2018 jury committees were interviewed after the programs’ jury meetings in Beirut, capturing their impressions on the trends of the arts and culture scene in the region. The six video interviews were published on social media.

In terms of new communication material, AFAC’s Annual Report 2017 was released both in English and Arabic, in online and offline formats. As part of ACE, one trailer entitled “The Story on India”, featuring the expert and director of India Foundation for the Arts, Arundhati Ghosh was released as was the ACE workshop trailer. T

Towards the end of 2018, AFAC finalized its new communication strategy, which comprised a completely revamped brand identity and website. AFAC’s iconic calligraphy-based logo was replaced with a sleek, modern and revamped new logo that reflects the rootedness of the institution, its youthful spirit and dedication to enhancing contemporary creative expression and knowledge production across the Arab region. The new logo carries the touch of Lebanese artist, critic and poet Samir Sayegh, a master and innovator of Arabic calligraphy, and was designed by Studio Safar in Beirut. Furthermore, the website was completely redesigned according to the new brand guidelines, and enhanced with a more user-friendly navigation and upgraded application forms for a smoother process. A launch campaign is planned for early 2019, comprising of a social media teaser and revealer campaign as well as an offline campaign at the regional level.

On the media front, AFAC partnered with The Daily Star (local newspaper) to talk about ACE and its first workshop with planned sequels for the remaining two workshops. It also participated in Dunyana (Arabic BBC service) featuring discussions with ADPP participants and AFAC staff. Tribe Magazine issued an article about the role of AFAC in promoting Arab documentary photography.

“The was exciting to see projects that are positioned at the intersection of storytelling and technology, including augmented reality (AR), virtual reality, digital archives and other new media, noting that most of the projects shed light on pertinent political, social and environmental issues”
Creative expression has the power to inspire new visions for our region, provoke important questions, and re-invent Arab societies that are open, self-sustained and have the power to produce their narratives.

AFAC is about conveying broad geographies of the mind and imagination from the Arab region. We proliferate diverse narratives about urgent topics through words and images. We instigate critical thinking to create more open societies. We stimulate local economies by cultivating audiences and engaging professionals. We spur on new technologies to make arts and culture more accessible.

In twelve years, we invested in 1,350 talents and independent voices from the Arab region and in diaspora. Join to expand the creative space for many more emerging artists and established practitioners through performing arts, visual arts, documentary photography, documentary film, cinema, music, creative and critical writings, arts and culture entrepreneurship, research on the arts, and training and regional events. AFAC supports Arab artists in exile through local collaborations, such as our active engagement in Germany through the Arab European Creative Platform.

If you are not yet an AFAC supporter, join our circle of supporters by making your first contribution. If you are already an AFAC supporter, renew your esteemed support to scale up opportunities for artists and cultural practitioners from the Arab region.

Write to us on support@arabculturefund.org or visit our Support page: www.arabculturefund.org/support

Why Invest in Arts and Culture?
PHOTO CREDITS


pp. 54-55: Shaima Al Tamimi, "As If We Never Came", ADP, Yemen, 2018.
p. 64: Scoping visit to Egypt, 2018.
p. 65: First workshop at the Arabesques Festival, Montpellier, 2018.
p. 67: Field Visit to Algeria, 2018.
p. 70: AFAC team.
p. 76: Elwely Vall, "In the Light of Change", ADPP, Mauritania, 2018.
pp. 80-81: Shaima Al Tamimi, "As If We Never Came", ADP, Yemen, 2018.

Annexes
Grant & Programs

Visual Arts

Project Descriptions

Alia Farid
Kuwait

THE SPACE BETWEEN CLASSROOMS

"The Space Between Classrooms" is a short film that looks at the public schools in Kuwait designed in the 1960s by Swiss architect Alfred Roth. Originally envisaged as secular spaces and 'optimum learning environments', these buildings have been altered to match current views and attitudes.

Abdalsalam Alhaj
Sudan

OLD WISHES

"Old wishes" is a multimedia project that revives the wishes of the Friends of Al-Sibyan magazine, the first magazine of youth in Sudan and the Arab world. The project monitors the written wishes that kids sent to the magazine from 1946 to 1975. The project registers a visit to these children - adults - after more than sixty years to ask them about their wishes at that time. And were they accomplished?

Aicha El Beloui
Morocco

ALIVE

"A7ya2" is a graphic project offering an illustration of 12 neighbourhoods of Casablanca that aims to create images of the city from its reality as lived and experienced by its own inhabitants, and open up the city for exploration.

Questions about belonging, governance, urbanism, transport, and freedom of movement will be important to the work, leading to the creation of a representation of Casablanca through and for its own people.

Ali Tnani
Tunisia

IMPERSONAL MEMORY

"Impersonal Memory" is a project mixing drawing and video in a documentary approach where the artist confronts his memories with those of others, to transform personal memories into an impersonal collective memory. The documentary will be built from one place to another in various regions of Tunisia, places which carry a trace, a memory waiting to be dusted off by making the inhabitants voices resonate in their respective spaces.

Bassam Al-Sabah
Iraq

WANDERING WITH A SUN ON MY BACK

As a child (at the age of 9), the artist experienced the Iraq/USA war. This CGI (computer-generated imagery) film project will look at the experience of war and violence from the perspective of that child and how this traumatic experience manifests itself over time. The work will imagine a surreal world where human representations live in closed spaces surrounded by environments that will oscillate between utopian and post-apocalyptic landscape.
Chiron is a video resulting from a workshop that explores how secondary trauma shapes the life of those involved in immigration proceedings from the perspective of lawyers based in New York, and how trauma related to immigration represents a collective question.

Fehras Publishing Practices
Syria

MAPPING PUBLISHING: 5 PHOTO-NOVELS

This project addresses the publishing practices of the 1950s and 1960s in the Middle East, through the publication of illustrated stories that will appear in magazines to be presented in exhibitions in Berlin and Beirut. These stories are inspired by real personalities who were active in the cultural realm during this period, combining business relations, friendship and love, financing and political discord. They have operated in international institutions and publishing houses that practiced cultural policies in the transmission of their ideologies.

Fathers and Son
Lebanon

The project consists of a text-based performance and a book, staging the sea and reflecting the relationship between mankind and the water, through examining a particular phase of this relationship, namely the waves of immigrants in the Mediterranean, and the history of fugitive performance in the Nile river. Other relations to the water such as sports, rituals and legends are also portrayed.

Let the Sea Eat Me: To Perform a Ferry
Egypt

The project builds on the story of two archeological excavations that took place in Salda (Lebanon) and leads to the discovery of the sarcophagi of two Phoenician kings: Tabnit (excavated in 1887, now at the Istanbul Museum) and Edmunazar (excavated in 1855, now at the Louvre). The project involves 3D recording of sarcophagi, a film, photographic components and an exhibition.

A THIGH OVER THE SPY
Lebanon

This project is an off-site and on-site solo exhibition in an old factory questioning physical and moral decay due to the implication of the pollution caused by factories in Gabès-Tunisia. Micro and macro repercussions, both personal and observatory, are its starting point.

My Dear Friends
Egypt

“My Dear Friends” is a collaborative exhibition set to take place in Istanbul in January 2019, to present contrasting yet intertwined bodies of work by Roger Anis and Bryon Dunne, based on Egypt’s Giza Zoo and the Suez Canal. The two artists’ work examines the complexities of the 125-year-old zoological garden, as a meaningful social space and an unsettling historical enterprise.

Father and Son
Lebanon

The project consists of an immersive mixed media exhibition that will take the audience back to the 19th century through Ahmed Fares al Shidyaq’s rhymes and trips. Shidyaq, a Lebanese linguist, translator, journalist and poet, lived and worked in more than seven countries, spoke six languages, changed religions three times and held two nationalities.

A THIGH OVER THE SPY
Egypt

The project is a multiple-channel video installation adapted from two literary sources, with a voiceover narration and an original soundtrack. The sources are: the memoirs of 19th century French magician Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin “Memoirs of Robert-Houdin: Ambassador, Author, and Conjurer,” written in 1859; and Albert Camus’ novel “L’Etranger” (The Stranger), written in 1942.

LETTING THE SEA EAT ME
Lebanon

This project takes the words of Egyptian poet Ahmed Shawki - interpreted among others by Nour El Hoda – as source/ inspiration. It is an investigation, an attempt to reexamine, an ‘encyclopedic embrace’ that runs through the thread of Arab musical passion, within the depths of the Arab night, the “Layy”, that is host to poetry, sensuality and melancholy.
Medrar for Contemporary Art

ROZNAMA - STUDIO PROGRAM

Al Ma’mal Foundation for Contemporary Art

THE JERUSALEM SHOW IX

Visual Arts Jurors

Hoor Al Qasimi, President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, is a curator and practicing artist who received her BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London (2002), a Diploma in Painting from the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2005) and an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, London (2008). In 2003, she was appointed curator of Sharjah Biennale 6 and has since continued as the Biennale Director.

Al Qasimi is President of the Africa Institute and serves on the Board of Directors for MoMA PS1, New York; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Ashkal Alwan, Beirut; Darat Al Funun, Amman and the Sharjah Architecture Triennial. She is President of the International Biennial Association; Chair of the Advisory Board for the College of Art and Design, University of Sharjah, and member of the Advisory Board for Khoj International Artists’ Association, New Delhi.

She is currently a member of the Prince Claus Award Committee (2016–current) and is a member of the jury for the 5th edition of PinchukArtCentre’s Future Generation Art Prize (2018).

Al Qasimi has served on the juries and prize panels for the Bonnemanet Award for Contemporary Art (2018), Maria Lassnig Prize (2017), Mediatious Seoul Prize (2016), Hemworth Wakefield Prize for Sculpture (2016), Berlin International Film Festival among others.


Co-editor of the book Pas de Deux following the program of residency she curated at Villa Romana (Florence, 2014), she has written and lectured extensively on art and the public sphere. In 2016, she was teaching a curatorial class On Curating, translating the polyphony of Voices at the Salzburg International Academy.


Alya Sebti is the director of the ifa-Galerie Berlin, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.

She is guest curator of the Dakar Biennale 2018 and was the artistic director for the Marrakech Biennale V (2014).

Her recent curated exhibitions include: Solo show with Pascale Marthine Tayou (ifa Galerie Berlin 2017), Solo show with Hicham Berrada (Wentrup Gallery, Berlin, 2015), Carrefour / Treffpunkt (ifa Galerie Stuttgart, Berlin, 2015), Casablanca, black energy (Mons, European Capital of Culture 2015); Now eat my script with Mounira Al Solh (KW, Berlin, 2015); Equilibres / Ausgleich with Hicham Berrada and Felix Kiegessig (Wentrup Gallery, Berlin, 2014). She co-curated the exhibition In the Carpet (2016 ifa Galerie Stuttgart, 2017 ifa Galerie Berlin) with Mouna Mekouar and Salma Lahlou. From 2012 to 2014, she created a cycle of online exhibitions and publications on contemporary art in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia with ArteEast.

She is board member of the Cabaret Voltaire (Zurich).

Tarek Abou El Fetouh is an independent curator born in Cairo who lives and works in Brussels.

Abou El Fetouh’s curatorial projects include Durub Al Tawaya, the annual performance in Abu Dhabi (2013–2017); Captive of Love, Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing (2017); The Time is Out of Joint, Sharjah Art Foundation and Asian Culture Complex, Guangju (2016); Lest the Two Seas Meet, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2015); Home Works 6, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut (2013); Sharjah Biennale 9 (2009); Roaming Inner Landscapes, Alexandria (2004); Windows (a multidisciplinary festival of contemporary arts), Mina and Cairo (2004); DisORIENTati, House of World Cultures, Berlin (2003); and It’s Happening in the Garage, Jesuits Cultural Center, Alexandria. He was a member of the curatorial committee of the Amman International Festival (1997-2001).

He initiated the Meeting Points Festival of Contemporary Arts (MP) in 2001 and curated the first four editions (MP 1–4), which took place in several cities in the Arab world. He served as the artistic director of MP5 with curator Frie Leysen (2007–8), MP6 with curator Okwui Enwezor (2011/12) and MP7 (2013/14) with the Zagreb-based collective WHW.

Beglasmi delves into, and questions, the universe of the singing cafes, its sounds, its lights, its dances, its songs. In this project, Beglasmi invites a living myth: El Khadhr, a popular dance figurehead of the 1980s and 1990s, who has left the dance world around twenty years ago.

Ossama Halal

„A Kurdish Archive“ entails the research, study and dissemination of the photographic archive of an Iraqi photographer Twana Abdullah who, between 1974 and 1992, tirelessly photographed the everyday life and the society in northern Iraq. With the production of a book and a traveling exhibition, the aim is to shed light on a rare, precious and essential record of Iraqi visual history.

Al Ma’mal Foundation for Contemporary Art

Palestine

Roznama – Studio program is an evolving version of the Roznama exhibition that started in 2006. This edition comes in the context of a lengthy and intensive project to support contemporary visual arts by young Egyptian artists. The project offers a working space as well as production and knowledge-related context for a group of artists over a period of 6 months.

Beirut Art Residency

Lebanon

LA VITRINE

‘La Vitrine’ demonstrates how each artist interprets a constricted area available to the public from the sidewalks of Beirut. Primarily serving as a street-level exhibition space, ‘La Vitrine’ promotes experimental and non-commercial work by Lebanese artists.

DARST

Italy

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Beirut Art Center

Lebanon

OF WORDS AND STONES

Of Words and Stones will be Zineb Sedira’s first solo show in Beirut and will host a large body of work starting with her first films from the late 1990s until present day. Sedira is known for her use of film, photography, and other media, through which she confronts the poetics and politics of Algeria’s recent history.

ROZNAMA – STUDIO PROGRAM

The Jerusalem Show is an art and culture festival that is comprised of art exhibitions, performances, workshops, and creative encounters (talks, film screenings, guided tours, symposiums), taking place in the old city of Jerusalem, in Ramallah and in towns and villages in Palestine in collaboration with partner institutions.

THE CABARET OF TUNIS

Tunisia

Rochdi Belgaïmi

Performing Arts

Project Descriptions

Rochdi Belgaïmi

The OTHER SIDE OF THE GARDEN

This performance revolves around loss, sacrifice and death. It presents “The Story of a Mother” by Hans Andersen, about a mother who seeks the king of death to bring back her son. During her journey, she loses her voice, her hair and her eyes, and fails to rescue her son. This radical transformation of the mother during her journey reminds us of the transformation of humans during war.

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Youness Atbane
Morocco
UNTITLED 14KM

“Untitled 14km” addresses the notion of contemporariness, and its connection to identity, through an artistic dialogue between two fictional characters. An Andalusian poet and the director of a contemporary art museum attempt to define contemporariness in arts by analyzing Andalusian poetry as well as a selection of contemporary Arab art pieces.

Sawsan Bou Khaled
Lebanon
DANS LA PEAU

“Dans la peau” is a solo performance about a gender-queer dancer, struggling with his identity as he goes through a discovery phase fueled by performances of intimacy, insecurities, morals, beliefs, Sufism, oppression, and borders. The show is a contemporary Middle Eastern sonic journey featuring Middle Eastern avant-pop music, heart-throbbing rhythms, dance choreography, aerial arts, singing, poetry, and interactive live visuals.

Mohamad Al Khansa
Lebanon
OYUNU

OYUNU is a post-modern interdisciplinary performance about a gender-queer dancer, struggling with his identity as he goes through a discovery phase fueled by performances of intimacy, insecurities, morals, beliefs, Sufism, oppression, and borders. The show is a contemporary Middle Eastern sonic journey featuring Middle Eastern avant-pop music, heart-throbbing rhythms, dance choreography, aerial arts, singing, poetry, and interactive live visuals.

Randa Mirza/Wael Kodeih
Lebanon/Syria
TARAB AND ARAB MODERNITY

Tarab music archives and historical photographs from the Arab world are at the center of this performance, reflecting on Arab modernity (Nahdah). The revival of these archives into a dynamic live music and video performance allows for the appropriation of self-representation and the unmasking of the wealth of diversity, history and experience of the Arab world with modernity.

Wael Ali
Syria
APOCALYPSE

“Beyond a Certain Point Movement Itself Changes” is a solo performance about the artist’s experience of living in a country where there is no access to contemporary art institutions and spaces. The artist navigates this reality through a process of self-discovery and redefinition of personal identity.

Ghida Nachicho
Lebanon
HIP HOP GEES

Hip Hop Gees dance performance addresses the Palestinian citizen and his/her suffering in the current restrictive situation with continuous violations of land and humanity. The show reflects an intellectual space where an attempt is made to present the life of the Palestinian through dance, with the struggle for freedom at its core.

Khouloud Yassine
Lebanon
JUST THE TWO OF US

The performance space morphs into a confrontation zone: two bodies facing each other and facing their audience, fighting, loving, and negotiating and all this in front of an audience: an audience that knows well the rules of the confrontation and agrees, an audience/ witness. An audience that has power, or thinks that it owns it and is capable of manipulating the image and distributing roles.

Amir Sabra
Palestine
THE PATH OF THE SUN OR THE BARE LIFE

The Path of the Sun or the Bare Life is a visual and choreographical performance. It is a melodrama inspired by “Sonnenallee” street in Berlin. The street was once a part of Berliner Mauer and eventually became the meeting point for the Arab diaspora. Crossing Berlin-Neukölln, separating North and South, “Sonnenallee” brings together cafés, popular restaurants and shops, distinguished by an oriental/ orientalist outlook.

Mohamedali Ltaief
Tunisia
AUGURS

Two actresses and an actor come back to their journey in theater, from the moment they have decided to work in theater in the early 80s during the civil war. Their testimonies reconstitute the memory of Beirut, at the time where the city was divided between east and west. They retrace through their personal and professional souvenirs the map of the theaters and venues that no longer exist. The project questions the theatrical activity during a decade of war — since 1980 until 1991: the year of the signature of the amnesty law that ended 15 years of fighting in Lebanon — and the relation of these actors to their profession today.

Joyce Raie
Jordan
DEMANDE D’EMPLOI

In life, we experience death every day and everywhere in all its different forms. Through the characters we will watch our lives unfold, see the effect of our surroundings and the consequences of our decisions, leaving us to decide what it is that we want to contribute to; life, or death?

Hamza Hamadeh
Lebanon
DEMANDE D’EMPLOI

The project is a theater performance staging the script “La demande d’emploi” by French writer Michel Vinaver, adapted to the Syrian-Lebanese reality. The characters in “Demande d’emploi” (namely a father, a mother and their daughter, as well as a recruiter in a firm) undergo the pressures of daily life. The dialogue is based on a plot in which the speech of each character intertwines with the rest, transforming language into a violent tool.
Inclusion of persons with special needs in the Arab world, Europe and Asia. Through artist talks, masterclasses, conferences and debates, the festival introduces renowned international artists, and allows the audience to discover local emerging talents.

The festival builds equitable relationships and innovations site-specific performances in collaboration between international and local artists, and the Lebanese collective Kahraba join forces to develop awareness towards the importance of the democratization of art and its accessibility, along with the significance of professional exchange and development of performing artists and the use of public spaces in the region.

This unusual fashion show will be created by a fashion designer out of the garbage collected through 5 clown attacks staged on public beaches.

The project aims to highlight the garbage/political crisis in Lebanon by combining garbage collection, street performance, online videos and a “Trashion Show”. “Trashion show” will be performed by professional clowns on the streets of Lebanon, in 20 different locations.

The performance festival and public discourse on borders-national borders, international borders, internal borders, and the borders of the body. By presenting artists from cultures currently deemed a “threat” to U.S. national security, the meaning of making political art that transcends protest to pose difficult questions and advances the importance of making art more accessible and responsible, will be explored.

The project presents the issue of disability as one of the concepts of alienation, through the path of the two main characters in the performance: a psychiatrist and his female patient.

During the festival, the audience will discover local emerging talents while being entertained by renowned international artists, and allows the audience to discover local emerging talents.
Orthodox Intifada
Palestine
Director: Nahed Awad
Producer: Marsia Tivara

Traces of Home
Palestine
Director: Colette Ghunim

"Traces of Home" is a 60-minute film documenting the harrowing past of filmmaker Colette Ghunim’s parents, immigrants from Palestine and Mexico respectively. Forced to escape decades ago, they embark on a journey to find their original houses, discovering what home means along the way.

Whispers of Artsakh
Jordan
Director: Sareen Hair Abedian
Producer: Azza Hourani

"Whispers of Artsakh" follows the footsteps of three Armenian 10-year old children, who were brought to this world by the footsteps of three Armenian 10-year old children, who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world by the footsteps of Palestinian women who were brought to this world.

Guardian of the Worlds
Algeria
Director: Leila Chaibi
Producer: Ghazi Ghazouani

One night, at the foot of a tomb, Hassan fell dead asleep. As early morning came, he decided to live among the graves. For forty years, on the hilades of Jelaz, Tunisia, he has watched over the departed and observed the living. Through passing days and nights, seasons and encounters, we discover his singular world.

We Carve Words in the Earth
Palestine
Director: Mahasen Nasser Eldin
Producer: Emile Dudognon

The story takes us back to the 26th of October 1929 when approximately 200 Palestinian women converged into the city of Jerusalem from major cities, towns and larger villages in Palestine, to inaugurate their feminist movement. “We Carve Words in the Earth” is a journey in the landscape of Jerusalem following the footsteps of Palestinian women who moved between what today represents the “West” and the “East” sides of the city in protest of British colonial rule. Drawing on pre and post Nakba narratives and aesthetics, connectivity between past and present Palestinian women’s political and feminist experiences are highlighted throughout this journey.

Between Walls
Egypt
Director: Laura Amna Stauth

Two Egyptian domestic workers from the outer districts of Cairo clean in upscale neighborhoods and compensate as sole breadwinners in the absence of men, social justice, and financial stability. In the film they are not only “subject” but also active participants reflecting upon the footage they partake in as actors and as co-editors forming an “image” of themselves in negotiation with the director. Both storylines interlace and create two temporalities: moments of action are disputed and interrupted by the two characters.

Al Jidar: The Wall
Palestine
Director: Mira Sidawi
Producer: Amie Williams

Four teenage refugees, training as journalists in a Lebanese camp, hatch a crazy plan to make a film that will convince an international aging rock band to reunite and play a concert in their camp. The film follows their hilarious, sometimes dangerous adventures, uncovering the complex layers of living as a refugee in the pulsing city of post-war scarred Beirut.

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They Planted Strange Trees  
Palestine
Director: Hind Shoufani  
Producer: Ossama Baawardi

A secular Palestinian filmmaker from the diaspora returns to the Galilee, after 20 years of absence and her parents’ death, to embrace the members of their Arab Christian community. She asks difficult questions on faith, erosion of identity, allegiance, citizenship and communal memory in 70 years of living under Zionism. Will she find solace for her mourning in her homeland?

El Medestansi  
The (disqualified)  
Tunisia
Director: Hamza Ouni  
Producer: Erige Sehiri

This is the story of twelve years of Mahrez’s life. Mahrez is 36 years old, a rebellious man attached to his home, friends and life in the camp. As the years go by, Marwa gets constrained by the high walls and barbwires of the camp. Until one day, a rumor regarding her camp, until one day, a rumor regarding her

The Color of Phosphate  
Tunisia
Director: Ridha Tilli  
Producer: Soumaya Bouallegui

In Comoros, three sportswomen from national teams saw their last international experience, the 2015 Islands Games, lead to failure. The Comorian delegation withdrawal and boycott of the Games reactivated historical tensions between Comoros and France. While sport is hostage to politics, these exceptional women, bounded by friendship and solidarity, play the game of life, for its beauty and cruelty.

The Way Home  
Syria
Director: Wael Radio  
Producer: Nadim Tanios Daybes

This film strives for an understanding of family/civil wars, through the tale of the director’s, his brother’s, childhood and youth, which spring from a family feud and feed into the Syrian civil war. It is a family journey that addresses these family and civil wars, and searches for the reasons that stand in the way of genuine reconciliation.

Unfinished Stories  
Tunisia
Director: Mohamed Said Ouma  
Producer: Berangere Condomines

As are many pieces of a broken mirror, are all memories knocking into each other, as on artists’ projects. She teaches unique and innovative cinematic practice, including Silvered Water in 2014 (Cannes Séance Spéciale). In 2007, she cofounded DOX BOX festival in Syria. In 2014, Diana co-founded DOX BOX e.v. in Berlin, and has been heading it since then, empowering the documentary film scene from the Arab World, a heir to the pioneering documentary film festival she originally co-founded in Syria under the same name. For her overall work, she has been awarded the EDN Award and the Catherine Kartlidge Award. She was repeatedly seated as a juror, most distinctively as Cenus “L’œil d’or”. She is currently working on her next feature-length documentary Republic of Silence as a director.

Tiny Souls  
Jordan
Director: Dina Naser  
Producer: Palmyre Badinier

Dust swallows the city. People float in a grey existence defined by the rhythms of the phosphate mine. In Redeyef, Babylon of Tunisia, beauty is an act of resistance. LAID, the clown and the mine worker, struggles against marginalization and debasement through theatre, flowers, and a clown costume.

Une Maison Pour Buster Keaton  
Algeria
Director: Lamine Ammar-Khodja  
Producer: Rebecca Houzel

Jamil and Mlad, two middle-class Christian Syrian brothers in their mid-20’s, with contrasting personalities, escape their war-wom country to seek a better future. Jamil is a carpenter, Mlad is a trumpeter. They both decide to flee illegally to Europe, at different stages, in the hope of regaining their long-lost sense of home.

The Last Scene  
Syria
Director: Eyas Almokdad

A filmmaker in a park on the edge of Paris, receives an unusual letter written by himself. Thinking of a joke at first, he is quickly overtaken by this other self, and has to give in and to respond. This opens the way to a self-portrait that does not let his close ones on the side.

We Are From There  
Lebanon
Director: Wissam Georges Tanios  
Producer: Christian Eid

Jamil and Mlad, two middle-class Christian Syrian brothers in their mid-20’s, with contrasting personalities, escape their war-torn country to seek a better future. Jamil is a carpenter, Mlad is a trumpeter. They both decide to flee illegally to Europe, at different stages, in the hope of regaining their long-lost sense of home.

AFAC Documentary Program Jurors

Diana El Jeiroudi is an awarded documentary filmmaker and promoter. In 2002, she co-founded Proaction Film in Syria and produced highly-acclaimed documentaries, including Silvered Water in 2014 (Cannes Séance Spéciale). In 2007, she cofounded DOX BOX festival in Syria. In 2014, Diana co-founded DOX BOX e.v. in Berlin, and has been heading it since then, empowering the documentary film scene from the Arab World, a heir to the pioneering documentary film festival she originally co-founded in Syria under the same name. For her overall work, she has been awarded the EDN Award and the Catherine Kartlidge Award. She was repeatedly seated as a juror, most distinctively as Cenus “L’œil d’or”. She is currently working on her next feature-length documentary Republic of Silence as a director.

Carine Doumit is an independent film editor and writer based in Beirut. Her work includes a variety of feature documentaries, film essays and experimental videos, shaping unique and innovative cinematic forms. She is also involved as a consultant with filmmakers as well as on artists’ projects. She teaches at the audio-visual department of the Université Saint-Joseph since 2007. She intervenes regularly in workshops and university programs for young filmmakers.

Reda Benjelloun is a Paris-Sorbonne graduate. In 1995, he embarked on a career in journalism in TV 2M (Morocco). He worked as a reporter, news presenter, and producer of news broadcasts. He is currently the director of news broadcasts and documentaries at 2M. In 2011, he produced a weekly documentary TV program, Des Histoires et des Hommes.
Transit Bodies is a visual story about transgender persons in Egypt. It follows a transgender couple while both of them go through transition. This project is an attempt to recognize the intimacy of the transition, the relationship between the two people, and their struggles through their journey.

Ravy Shaker
Egypt

LETTERS TO MOSES

This documentary project reflects an ongoing discussion between Ravy and his wife regarding the kind of education to choose for their son Musa (Moses), more particularly the dilemma they are facing between Islamic education at Al Azhar—where both Ravy and his wife graduated—and a secular education. Through his project, Ravy calls on the public to send their children to a secular education. Through his project and a secular education. Through his project, Ravy and his wife graduated—between Islamic education at Al Azhar—choose for their son Musa (Moses), more particularly the dilemma they are facing between Islamic education at Al Azhar—where both Ravy and his wife graduated—and a secular education. Through his project, Ravy calls on the public to send their children to a secular education.

Abdo Shanan
Algeria

IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGE

Heba Khamis
Egypt

TRANSIT BODIES

With the increasing impact of climate change in the world, Mauritians find themselves in a struggle for survival. This conflict has serious consequences on the social, economic and environmental identities of Mauritania. The project explores and documents the stories of this conflict and reviews its impact. The project goes beyond health and environmental problems to shed light on social implications.

Ewely Vall
Mauritania

How could an environment influence our identity? Between a land where we live and a land or lands that we have a history with, where and how can we identify ourselves? This project questions the relation between humans and the environment where they live (or have lived), how it shapes their identity and how they define the concept of “home”. Dry is a photo-essay that has Algeria as a common land between different subjects from mixed races and nationalities.

Roger Mokbel
Lebanon

DESCRIBE THE SKY TO ME

Sunlight is this powerful element that affects our mood; it triggers birds to migrate and plants to blossom. But what happens when a bridge is built on top of your balcony, rendering any ray of light a scarce resource given in small doses? Here starts the painful adaptation of Bourj Hammoud’s residents to this alienation, rendering any ray of light a scarce resource given in small doses? Here starts the painful adaptation of Bourj Hammoud’s residents to this alienation.

M’hammed Kilito
Morocco

AMONG YOU

This project represents a reflection on the choice of a personal identity for Moroccan youth based on a selection of powerful portraits of young people who take their destinies into their own hands.

Rana ElNemr

THOSE WHO DANCE ON THE STAIRCASE

Through this project, Nadine explores the different dimensions of nostalgia among Syrisans currently living in Lebanon, and the complexities of the return ‘home’, which, in Nadine’s case, comes to document a real struggle.

Nadine Al Koudsi
Syria

AS IF WE NEVER CAME

This project is inspired by Shaima’s family’s journey and her personal struggle to understand the identity complexities of the Yemeni diaspora, punctuated by travels and immigration.

Shaima Al Tamimi
Yemen

AMONG YOU

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Mohamed Somji

DOCUMENTING LEBANON

This project proposes a documentation of Lebanon, starting with the first cinematic shot by the Frenchman Alexandre Promio in 1897. Moving from this shot to cinema journals, touristic tapes, propaganda films, then further to broadcasting recordings and cassettes that were exchanged between residents and expatriates as well as video and digital material, this project seeks to write a new story of Lebanon, including the nations and peoples that crossed its lands.

Mohamad Soueid
Lebanon

Writings

Projects Descriptions

Mohamed Somji is a Dubai-based photographer specialized in architecture, interiors and editorial photography. His commercial and editorial work is heavily influenced by the reportage style and approach that lends a unique perspective to his subjects be it interiors or editorial assignments.

Arab Documentary Photography Program Jurors

Kristen Lubben is the Executive Director of the Magnum Foundation, a New York-based nonprofit organization that expands creativity and diversity in documentary photography. She is a writer, curator, and editor whose work explores the intersections of photography, art, and politics. Prior to joining the Magnum Foundation in 2016, she was a curator at the International Center of Photography for seventeen years. She is also the author and editor of numerous publications, including Magnum Contact Sheets (Thames & Hudson, 2011).

Rana ElNemr is a visual artist based and working with Cairo’s art scene and larger urban environment. Her artistic practice moves from formalist explorations of photography as a medium to genre-bending visual essays of her surroundings in Egypt. Her practice is anchored in questioning what it means to live and experience the city, through recording, describing and reflecting on this experience via photography, film, texts and conversations. Rana’s artistic process incorporates formal image-making techniques with contemporary artistic practices and it strives to integrate various forms of collaborations in different constellations, such as interdisciplinary collaborations and alternative pedagogical practices among many others. She was one of the founders of the Contemporary Image Collective (CIC) in 2004 and remains an active board member.

In addition, he runs the Seeing Things photography and video agency based in Dubai.

Mohamed Somji is also co-director of Gulf Photo Plus, a Dubai-based photography organization dedicated to advancing the medium of photographic expression and to being a resource for aspiring and established photographers in the region through its expansive education and arts program.

The project consists of the publication of a book titled “The Grand Nights”, which includes 20 poems in colloquial Egyptian dialect. Every poem is named after one of the popular mawlid of Islamic and Christian traditions in Egypt. Every mawlid

Arab Documentary Photography Program

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Creative and Critical Writings

Grants & Programs

Mohamad Soueid
Lebanon

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This project proposes a documentation of Lebanon, starting with the first cinematic shot by the Frenchman Alexandre Promio in 1897. Moving from this shot to cinema journals, touristic tapes, propaganda films, then further to broadcasting recordings and cassettes that were exchanged between residents and expatriates as well as video and digital material, this project seeks to write a new story of Lebanon, including the nations and peoples that crossed its lands.

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The project consists of an accomplished collection of poems, which are in the form of prose and diaries. Topics vary, between self and public, springing in its vision from the writer’s own self-experience.

Zain Alabedein Saleh
Syria
CHEZ THE MAIDENLY MADAM

"Chez the Maidenly Madam" is a contemporary theater project, taking as location Damascus in present days, inspired from the play "The Maids" by Jean Genet. The scenario involves two uneducated young brothers, who work in a garage in war times. Their mother, authoritarian with a strong character, is a prostitute who goes out every night. In her absence, one of the two brothers dresses in her clothes and plays the role of the mother, thereby addressing issues of gender, power and family.

Charles Elakl
Egypt
JELLY BIRD

"Jelly Bird" is a comic strip that tells the story of a group of musicians who are passionate about music but lack talent. In the middle of Cairo’s noise, pollution and explosion of population and waste, and due to a biological defect, a new society rises, competing on ground, air and audio space. Suddenly the primitive technologies and limited music tricks, which are everything the heroes of the story know, become useful.

Dina El Deeb
Egypt
AL HAMESHEYOUN - THE UNDERCOMMONS

This project revolves around a book about writing and reading inside Egyptian prisons and their respective libraries. Ahmed Naji relies on his personal experience, as he spent one year in jail due to the scandal caused by his novel “Using Life”. Naji seeks to analyze the ambiguous relation between law, literature and morals, through looking at previous literature trials and the legal proceedings inside prisons.

Nesrine Khoury
Syria
I KICK THE HOUSE AND GO OUT

"The Author Has Another Memory" is a play which follows a playwright during his theater script writing process. The script overlaps with the playwright’s crisis, illustrated by his life crisis and the loss of a friend. The play consists of two acts; the first act presents the playwright as he sets to choose where he will begin writing the play that has been plaguing him. He calls the characters on stage to perform, and writes down the characters’ performance. His memories of his deceased friend and the life he lived start to overtake the mood of the play. In the second act, we witness an explosion of the playwright’s memory as he recollects what happened to him.

Samer Abdulfttah Abdullah
Yemen
THE AUTHOR HAS ANOTHER MEMORY

This project aspires to contribute to the documentation of the history of Lebanese theater using a variety of ways that allows current and future generations to delve into it, to take note of its course and its effects, to question its problems and to interact with it. The "Radical experience of HAKAWATI THEATRE/ LEBANON" is a digital audio-visual as well as printed archive of Lebanon’s leading theater experiences, which left a deep mark on Lebanese and Arab theater and continue to impact the contemporary theater. This project envisages to take a preliminary step in the technical documentation of Lebanese theater, paving the way for the archiving and circulation of the most important theatrical experiences in Lebanon.

Hanane Haji Ali
Lebanon
THE DRAMATHEQUE - RADICAL EXPERIENCE OF HAKAWATI THEATRE/ LEBANON

“The Author Has Another Memory” is a book written with critical writing about the only visual display of sexual life in Lebanon, namely consisting of videos published on pornographic sites, filmed by citizens during their love-making sessions in intimate places. This reading focuses on the various facets of sexual life, stressing that it is an arena for the promotion of conflicts between bodies, species and identities that revolve around society.

Hanadi Zarka
Syria
AFRAID TO TELL WHAT I FEEL

"Afraid to Tell What I Feel" is a book based on research and critical writing, that addresses the formation of the concept of self in contemporary Arab songs, from the 1920s and 1930s till present day. The book examines and explores a variety of Arab musical works set in different periods of time, and seeks the concept of self and its expression through singing, music and poetry.

Roger Outa
Lebanon
LEBANESE POP SEX

"Lebanese Pop Sex" is a book of critical writing about the visual display of sexual life in Lebanon, namely consisting of videos published on pornographic sites, filmed by citizens during their love-making sessions in intimate places. This reading focuses on the various facets of sexual life, stressing that it is an arena for the promotion of conflicts between bodies, species and identities that revolve around society.

Dalia Taha
Palestine
WRITING AND RETURN

"Writing and Return" is a rumination on writing, life and the Palestinian condition. Working across a disparate textual terrain, wrought from nationalist graffiti, personal diaries, magic amulets and NGO reports, the book asks how re-engagement with writing as a form of encounter may help us understand and renew the shape of the political present - this notion, at once intimate and abstract, more wood than moment, which Palestinians call the situation (al wada3) - and what it might in turn tell us about the relationship between writing, love, history, and the shapes of The Possible.

Ayman Abdulsalam
Sudan
WHERE IS MY STUFF

"Where Is My Stuff" is a collection of ironic stories that consists of more than 50 short stories addressing political issues, religious matters and other topics related to the citizen and his/her aspirations.
Between the one who exited for lack of also addresses the notion of balance Syrian youth today, who left their country Istanbul. Marwan and Kifah represent Syrian men, who seek to cope with life’s rewrite a chapter of the life of two young The project is a text that attempts to

“Shams and the Monsters” is a collection of children’s stories that address concepts such as honesty, harmony with one’s surroundings, acceptance of differences, cooperation and others.

Hiba Mehrez Syria Failing Exercise in Living

The project is a text that attempts to rewrite a chapter of the life of two young Syrian men, who seek to cope with life’s circumstances between Damascus and Istanbul. Marwan and Kifah represent Syrian youth today, who left their country in the hope of a better life somewhere else, only to find that the burden continues to follow them wherever they go. The project also addresses the notion of balance between the one who exited for lack of other solutions, and the one who exited out of desire for self-improvement.

Amgad El Sabban Egypt Sleep Thieves

In the strange settings of “Sleep Thieves”, occur events that engulf man in a metaphysical reality that forces him to return to his primitive instincts. It is required to change his identity or to search for it, or to try to survive amidst bureaucratic and arbitrary regimes that are invisible and random in order to reach a goal that does not exist or cannot be achieved.

Shehab Ismail Egypt Digital History of British Colonial Cairo: Media and the Potencies of History

The project aims at developing a site to publish electronic articles that use various audio–visual media to reconstruct an understanding of the history of Cairo under British occupation. It is based on the employment of media and maps in order to achieve two objectives: 1) overcome publication barriers that prevent the optimal use of the possibilities of Digital Media, 2) provide a new style of critical historical writing about Cairo to readers in Arabic.

Masrah Ensemble Lebanon Marsha – Theater Texts

“Marsha” is an electronic and interactive platform of literature and theater, which publishes original Arab theatrical works as well as works translated into Arab from various cultures, and promotes them through a creative and varied interface. The project aims at creating a different experience of reception to theater texts, reaching a wider audience. It encourages the movements of content creation, translation and reading in the Arab world and opens another door for interactions and discussions around theater.

Labo Beckett pour les arts contemporains de la scène Morocco The Holocaust of New Arts - Shock and Deterioralization in Arab Contemporary Art

The project is a joint book by Fatima Zahra Sghir and Youssef Rihami about the transformations that contemporary art witnesses in Arab societies. Some of these societies have lost their traditional leading positions, and have been replaced by new cities that have become oases of contemporary arts in the world. The project also addresses the experiences of new artists as well as the new structures of arts management and the role of independent institutions in this transformation.

The project sets the foundations of a new platform for cinema criticism in Arabic, to analyze films and contribute to the development of the discourse of critics. The project is based on the capacity to capture current productions and criticize them, as well as Arabize international texts on cinematic theories, relying on critics well-versed in Arab cinema affairs and capable of evaluating Arab cinema in the international cinema context. It also aims at providing the conditions for upcoming generations of critics to develop their capacities and skills through training workshops.

The project aims at establishing RE electronic cultural platform with weekly updates according to a publication schedule agreed upon by the editorial board. The project will focus on publishing outstanding translations and works in the field of professional cultural journalism, by inviting well-known Arab and international writers to contribute with their writings on the electronic platform, in addition to the introduction of videos about Arab and Kurdish literary achievements, translated into different languages.

Chokri Al-Mabkhout is a Tunisian academic, critic and novelist. He earned his PhD in literature from the Arts College of Manouba. He has written several works of literary criticism and sits on the board of several literary journals. Professor at the University of Tunis, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Arts and Humanities of La Manouba before becoming president of Manouba University (2011-2017). Director of the 33rd and the 34th edition of the Tunis International Book Fair, he is also a member of the editorial board of several refereed journals, including Ibla magazine (published by the Institute of Arabic Literature in Tunis) and Romano Arabica (published by The Centre for Arab Studies in Bucharest).

His novel Etyalenn (The Italian), published in 2014 won the prestigious “International Prize for Arab Fiction”.

Cinema

The Meursault Investigation Algeria

Haroun is an old bachelor who has been living in Oran. A retired civil servant, he leads the life of a recluse until the day he meets Kamel in a bar, a journalist to whom he tells an incredible story: he is the brother of the “Arab” killed in the story of the famous novel, The Stranger by Camus.

Projects Descriptions

Archipel Images France/Tunisia Essays in Cinema Criticism

The project is an investigation on cinematic theories, relying on critics well-versed in Arab cinema affairs and capable of evaluating Arab cinema in the international cinema context. It also aims at providing the conditions for upcoming generations of critics to develop their capacities and skills through training workshops.

Najwa Bin Shatwan is a Libyan academic and novelist, born in 1970. She is the author of two novels: The Horses’ Hair (2007) and Orange Content (2008), three collections of short stories and a play. In 2005, The Horses’ Hair won the inaugural Sudanese al-Begrawiya Festival prize, in the same year that Sudan was Capital of Arab Culture. She was chosen as one of the 59 best Arab authors under the age of 40 by the Beirut39 project and her story “The Pool and the Piano” was included in the Beirut39 anthology.

Zeina G. Halabi is Assistant Professor of Arabic Literature at the American University of Beirut. She specializes in modern Arabic literature with particular interest in questions of loss, mourning, and disidence in contemporary literature and visual culture. She was a 2012-2013 EUME fellow at the Forum for Transregional Studies in Berlin, where she began working on her first book titled The Unmaking of the Arab Intellectual: Prophecy, Exile, and the Nation (Edinburgh University Press, 2017) that examines the depiction of Arab intellectuals in post-1990s fiction and film. She has authored articles on the shifting notion of political commitment in the writings of canonical and emerging Arab writers in journals including the Journal of Arabic Literature and Middle Eastern Literatures. As a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship (2018-2020), she is working on her second book project provisionally entitled Excavating the Present: History, Power, and the Arab Archive, which explores archival practices in contemporary literature.
Rambo, Hassan’s dog and only friend, is unjustly involved in a dangerous incident. He suddenly becomes hunted by the government and Karem, Hassan’s neighbor, which forces Hassan to find an unofficial secure way of exiting Rambo out of the country, and saving him from the unknown.

A sci-fi film in three parts that explores notions of body’s needs, demands and disruptions. A female scientist works in the Museum of Obstetrics and Gynecology that possesses the rarest specimens obtained from her own operations on female bodies. Together with a fellow scientist, they embark on an experiment to create a mothership that stems its energy from mother’s own body.

The Vel is a dichty film made up of two mid-length films by different directors. Both chapters tell the story of a family fleeing their country’s apocalypse. The first chapter is set in Russia, 1991, months before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The second chapter is set in an imagined post-capitalist Syria, 2050 after the fall of the Assad regime.

Combining home-shot video tapes, narrative scenes, dreams and hallucinations, the story of middle-class Egyptian Coptic family that suffers from memory loss.

K arrives in his native Jaffa after the sudden death of his uncle, from uncertain causes, in an Israeli mental hospital. K learns that his uncle, who was interned for 25 years, used to make occasional furtive visits to the family home, like a ghost. The reconstruction of K’s uncle’s wanderings frames a melodic mosaic of recollections and reflections, spanning 70 years.

The project revolves around NIMA, a young artist and admirer of the Syrian poet Al-Maliki. In response to the decapitation of the statue of this poet by fanatics, Nima meets the ghost of the poet and then decides to adapt “The Epistle of Forgiveness” into an animated film, that he titled “The Return of the Epistle”. Unfortunately, NIMA is faced with the same censorship.
Mica
Morocco

Mica, 10, lives in Melkas’ slums. An old man brings him to Casablanca to be a handyman in a tennis club. Mr. Slimani, owner of the club and member of the Moroccan nomenclature, dreams of making his son, a tennis champion. Therefore, he hires Sophia, ex-tennis champion, as his trainer. Sophia ends up noticing Mica instead and his remarkable rising talent.

Under the Concrete
Lebanon

Ibraheem Ramadan
Producer: Julia Bruton

Under the Concrete
is a film that investigates the Palestinian war or fear in Syria. The economic situation is in meltdown. The sounds of sirens looming over the city progressively usher the intrusion of visions, alluding the existence of an invisible place on the frontier of myths and reality.

A Forgotten Filmmaker
Algeria

Zineb Sedira

A Forgotten Filmmaker
is a film that explores the identity of a forgotten filmmaker, Tawaseef, who decides to take his destiny in hand and will have to overcome numerous obstacles to succeed.

Curfew
Morocco

Karim Souissi
Producer: Yassine Benjamama

Curfew
is a film that tells the story of a Syrian refugee camp. The director of the crew had promised Tawaseef, a young mischievous girl from the camp, to take her and her friends to swim. As he deceives her, Tawaseef decides to sabotage the crew’s work.

Tawaseef
Lebanon

Ali Shiran
Producer: Fourato Chahal

On the Longing to Be Devoured by a Shark
Egypt

Louly Seif
Producer: Fuad Halwani

On the Longing to Be Devoured by a Shark
is a film that explores the life of a Syrian refugee camp. The director of the crew had promised Tawaseef, a young mischievous girl from the camp, to take her and her friends to swim. As he deceives her, Tawaseef decides to sabotage the crew’s work.

Strong Girls
Tunisia

Ines Arsi
Producer: Mehdi Hmili

El Najm
Lebanon

Valentin Noujaim
Producer: Orane Gibier

El Najm is a film that explores the life of a Syrian refugee camp. The director of the crew had promised Tawaseef, a young mischievous girl from the camp, to take her and her friends to swim. As he deceives her, Tawaseef decides to sabotage the crew’s work.

The Greatest Wait
Palestine

Razan AlSalah
Producer: Emile Dudognon

The Greatest Wait
is an experimental film that investigates the Palestinian exilic condition in the story of impossible and eternal return to Palestine through virtual reality. Zei, a passport-less third-generation refugee, travels the world through Streetview VR to trace her family’s forced migration. Geographies collapse, histories too, as she experiences interconnected events between Haifa, Beirut and Montreal in the 1940s, 90s and 2000s.

The Man only speaks Arabic, the Woman French – while the Son speaks both. One night, he resembles the unknown’s appearance in the sky and speaks to them, changing their respective worlds.

J’ai Le Cafard
Kuwait

Maysaa Almumin
Producer: Eiman Mirghani

Grants & Programs

The Bath
Tunisia

Lotfi Achour
Producer: Anissa Daoud

The Bath
is a film that explores the life of a Syrian refugee camp. The director of the crew had promised Tawaseef, a young mischievous girl from the camp, to take her and her friends to swim. As he deceives her, Tawaseef decides to sabotage the crew’s work.

Prisoner and Jailer
Libya

Muhammad Lamin

Prisoner and Jailer
is a film that explores the life of a Syrian refugee camp. The director of the crew had promised Tawaseef, a young mischievous girl from the camp, to take her and her friends to swim. As he deceives her, Tawaseef decides to sabotage the crew’s work.

Cinema Jurors

Adania Shibli
has been writing novels, plays, short stories and narrative essays, which were published in various anthologies, art books, and literary and cultural magazines in different languages. She has twice been awarded the Qattan Young Writer’s Award–Palestine in 2001 for her novel Massaas (translated into English as Touch. Northampton: Clockroot, 2009), and in 2003 for her novel Kulluna Ba’d Bethal al Miqdar aan el-Hub (translated into English as We Are All Equally Far from Love. Northampton: Clockroot, 2012). Her latest novel is Tafsil Thanawi (Minor..."The Greatest Wait" is an experimental film that investigates the Palestinian exilic condition in the story of impossible and eternal return to Palestine through virtual reality. Zei, a passport-less third-generation refugee, travels the world through Streetview VR to trace her family’s forced migration. Geographies collapse, histories too, as she experiences interconnected events between Haifa, Beirut and Montreal in the 1940s, 90s and 2000s.

A Forgotten Filmmaker
is a film that explores the identity of a forgotten filmmaker, Tawaseef, who decides to take his destiny in hand and will have to overcome numerous obstacles to succeed.
Ahmed El Maanouni is a writer, director, cinematographer and producer born in Casablanca. He studied economics at Paris University Dauphine, cinema at INSAS Brussels and theater at the University of Theater des Nations in Paris. His works include one of the most emblematic titles of Moroccan cinema ALYAM ALYAM (1978), first Moroccan film selected in Cannes Film Festival and receiving the Grand Prize at Mannheim (Germany). He caught international attention with TRANCES (Al Hal) restored and presented by Martin Scorsese at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival—Cannes Classics. ALYAM ALYAM and TRANCES were restored by The Cinema Foundation Project and have entered prestigious collections such as The Criterion Collection and Eureka, The Masters of Cinema. His film BURNED HEARTS (2007), and the Grand Prize at Mannheim (Germany) also won the Young Theater Competition. He directs study on cinema and TRANCES were restored by Eureka, The Masters of Cinema. His work has entered prestigious collections and has been awarded the Best Director’s Prize at Mannheim film festival.

Adham Selim is a researcher at the University of Paris. He teaches film history at the Higher Institute of Humanities and Languages in Tunisia. For years, he has been working on the records of the Contemporary Western Philosophy and Aesthetics. He is the author and editor of numerous books, including: Archi-Cinema Theory: Deconstruction and Film (Paris, 2019); The Method of Scene: Conversations with Jacques Rancière (Paris, 2018); Image Policies (Brussels, 2014); Deleuze ‘Styles: Between Aesthetics and Philosophy (2011, Brussels); Derrida and Aesthetics in Deconstruction (2011 Paris). He serves as the art critic for Nawaat.org.

Projects Descriptions

Digital Arabs: A Brief History of Digitally - Conceived Architecture in the Arab World During the 1990s

Sudan

Researcher: Shama Babiker

The research addresses the political, social and geographical implications of the political movements of Central Sudan region from 1980 to 2010 in the fields of visual arts and architecture, both conceptually and stylistically. It also aims at rethinking the interpretation of the course of modern art’s development in Sudan. The prevailing view tries to understand modern art in Sudan based on the idea of multiple modernities of the West, thus restricting it to mere reflection of the transformations of methods and concepts in the field of art, and to clarify the connection between the practice of visual arts in Sudan and the different social contexts, work as the artist’s contribution to the movement of cultural change, given the role of the artist as a producer of symbols and collective imagination, able to provide the community with tools to understand and change it.

Multiple Spaces, Continued Mobilizations: Conceptual and Stylistic Transformations in Visual and Spatial Arts in Sudan 1860-2010

Egypt

Researcher: Adham Selim

This research addresses the political, social and geographical implications of the political movements of Central Sudan region from 1980 to 2010 in the fields of visual arts and architecture, both conceptually and stylistically. It also aims at rethinking the interpretation of the course of modern art’s development in Sudan. The prevailing view tries to understand modern art in Sudan based on the idea of multiple modernities of the West, thus restricting it to mere reflection of the transformations of methods and concepts in the field of art, and to clarify the connection between the practice of visual arts in Sudan and the different social contexts, work as the artist’s contribution to the movement of cultural change, given the role of the artist as a producer of symbols and collective imagination, able to provide the community with tools to understand and change it.

The Mulsteer in the Lebanese Novel: Social Transformation in the Era of Global Capital

Lebanon

Researcher: Joan Chaker

Over the past few years, there has been a proliferation of museum buildings in Palestine. While a few institutions have managed to open, others are still struggling to do so. These projects are paradoxical; they assume the existence of an autonomous Palestinian State, yet the struggle for emancipation is ongoing. The aim of this project will be to write a critical genealogy of museums in Palestine, as well as to contextualize and theorize these efforts in museum and exhibition history and theory; to add them to these debates as exceptional but also integral and more broadly relevant case studies.

Joan Chaker

Researcher: Lara Khaldi

Lara Khaldi will attempt to collect and investigate this genealogy in relation to changing forms of the struggle for emancipation. Using a Foucauldian perspective on genealogy, as well as the power structures underlying Palestinian museum-building, she will ask: how do these museums, artworks and objects relate to the various projects for either a two-state–based solution: a Palestinian nation state, or a one-state solution, or forms of internationalism.

A Genealogy of Palestinian Museums and Renegade Objects

Palestine

Researcher: Lara Khaldi

We Felt Again That Everything is New

Lebanon

Researcher: Mary Jimmanus

What was the nature of the relation between leftist and progressive cinema production and social movement activity emerging from 1970s and 80s Lebanon? How did cinema serve simultaneously as a political critique and symbol of national identity? What was the nature of the relation between leftist and progressive cinema production and social movement activity emerging from 1970s and 80s Lebanon? How did cinema serve simultaneously as a political critique and symbol of national identity? How did cinema serve simultaneously as a political critique and symbol of national identity?
of distribution and circulation for the cinematic works, and to what extent did these contribute to a critical local dialogue on movement practice from the grassroots. This proposal is an analytic-artist study of Arab militant cinema of the 1970s and 80s in relation to the social movements in Lebanon and beyond with which they interacted. The book actively maps a constellation of films, filmmakers, workers, organizations, allies, ideas and practices that together comprised a distinct moment of political possibility. Taking an ethnographic-historical approach, combined with close-reading of films, and direct written interventions by the study’s participants, the text aspires to be useful for artists, scholars and activists alike.

Sayed Darwish and Contemporary Youth Musical Practices in Egypt
Jordan
Principal Researcher: Widad Adas
Co-Investigator: Hazem Chahine

Music Sociology in Morocco: Music Learning in Secondary Education as a Model
Morocco
Researcher: Hassan El Bakkari

This research addresses the issue of the impact of musical education on youth and learners in respect of young individuals endowed with high artistic and aesthetic characteristics, and able to take positive actions in the development and improvement of the society. Based on the premise that music is the foundation of the aesthetic, cultural and civilizational attributes of a society, it reflects the awareness of both individuals and groups, as well as the nature of their social relations and the level of their artistic taste in general and musical taste in particular.

In this context, we take as a starting point the multiple factors that prevent the positive influence of music in the educational and social educational context within the Arab family. Are they factors related to the cultural composition of the human being in the Arab society and to his or her social affiliation? Or is it related to religious, cultural and historical heritage, regarding, specifically, the sullying and foreboding of music? And how can the schools be able to enhance the musical education towards a better formation of children and youth generation in Moroccan society?

This will lead us to the assumption that the cultural heritage of the family has an influence on the artistic and aesthetic taste of the learner, and on the formation of a balanced and effective personality in the society, given that music has a close connection with the social factor. Starting from this idea we can talk about the relationship between what is music and what is social.

These questions will lead us to research the process of integrating musical education in the educational system in Morocco, and to investigate its condition as well as the qualifications of teachers and assimilation of third-year preparatory students whether in public or private Moroccan schools. In addition to this, we will study the level of student’s interaction with the modules and the acquisition of singing skills (solfege), and the ability of adjusting to different rhythmic forms.

A Healthy Distrust
Palestine
Principal Researcher: Reema Fadda
Co-Investigators: Nadim Mishlawi and Rachel Dedman

A Healthy Distrust is a research and curatorial project that looks at disease as a generative metaphor and theoretical model for understanding contemporary exigencies in the Arab world. Taking the Arab city as a starting point, and using artistic and interdisciplinary practices as tools, Nadim Mishlawi and Rachel Dedman seek to highlight the political and social complex of disease, to understand how notions of health and sickness are tied to regimes of governance. In the examination of the shifting articulations of disease and their consequences in urban environments, their research considers the spatial construction of the city and its role in ordering publics, as well as its physiological and cultural impact on (post)settlement and trans-regional contexts. By looking at histories of sanitation, infection and illness as urgent concerns of regional conflict, the project addresses structures of power through the lens of the body and its health.

Omar Fertat is a theater researcher and a Faculty member and lecturer at Bordeaux-Montaigne University. He currently lectures on Arab cinema and theater in the Arab Studies department and the Performing Arts department, where he supervises the scientific program “L’autre et ses représentations dans la culture arabo-musulmane” at the TELEM research center in the university. Several international conferences were organized as part of this program in which numerous university researchers, writers and artists took part.

His research interests include modern literature and performing arts in the Arab world.

Research on the Arts Program Jurors

Ismail Nasher is an associate professor at the anthropology and sociology program, Deba Institute for Graduate Studies. He held academic positions in different universities in the Arab World and beyond. In addition to his academic career, he is a literary and art critic, and curator. He has been part of different cultural and academic initiatives and projects in the academia and elsewhere.

His research focus is on materiality, language, and ideology. He explores these notions as they are expressed in literature and plastic art. His current research is on art and literature in the colonial contexts, with special attention to the Arab Islamic societies, generally, and the Palestinian one in particular.

His latest publications include: Arabic: A story of a colonial mask (2017); Jut’s Childhood: Dar al Fata al Arabi and the genres of tragedy (2016); Images of the Palestinian Death (2015); On Palestinian Abstraction: Zohdy Qadry and the Geometrical Melody of Late Modernism (2014).

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Omar Fertat manages the French theater magazine “Horizons/Theatre”, which addresses world performing arts news and is issued twice a year. He also co-directs the collection “Monde Arabe/Monde Musulman”.

Walid Sadek is an artist and writer living in Beirut. He is Professor and currently chair of the department of Fine Arts and Art History at the American University of Beirut.

Maya Issam Kesrouany, is an assistant professor of Modern Arabic Literature at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD). Her book manuscript Prophetic Translation: The Making of Modern Egyptian Literature is forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press (December 2018). Her current project investigates cultural production in the Levant as a form of civil mobility. Her research interests include nationalism and political imaginaries; civil society formations and the public sphere; critical translation theory; the politics of language, literary form and genre. She has taught at New York University (New York), Emory University (Atlanta, GA), the American University of Beirut (Beirut, Lebanon) and the American University of Sharjah (Sharjah, UAE).

Alia Mossallam is interested in songs that tell stories, and stories that tell of lesser known struggles behind better known events that mark World History. Her PhD dissertation explored a popular history of Nasserite Egypt through stories told and songs sung by people who contributed to milestone events of the 1952 revolution (the building of the
Asma Ghanem
Palestine

**DAMAGED BRAINS MUSIC**

Experimental music album and art-book, the project is an auto-fictional study on damaged brains cases from all refugee camps in Palestine (12 camps). How can we explain the condition of a damaged brain case by producing experimental music pieces made by 12 female musicians from Asia and the Middle East? The scientific research will get transformed into an auto-fiction musicology.

Feras Charestan
Syria

**SOUND FROM THE NORTH (NORTH OF SYRIA)**

The project unites Sami Hawat with a number of young musicians who got to know him and his social and political ideals during their childhood in the times of the Lebanese civil war.

Today, Sami Hawat, who belongs to a generation that saw its dreams and thoughts get shattered, meets with these young musicians in a project that addresses the new reality in a sarcastic way.

Asma Ghanem
Palestine

**FRIGYA**

IFRIQIYA is a musical exploration of the West African roots of Tunisian music with an ensemble mixing a Jazz quartet and Tunisian percussion ensembles. In a collection of all original material, Tunisian rhythmic traditions will be bridged to the language of modern jazz, connecting Tunisian music and its sub-Saharan African roots via the Jazz idiom as an attempt to reinvent an Afro-Tunisian musical identity.

Frigya means “Africa” in old Tunisian dialect.

Yacine Bouloures
Tunisia

**IFRIQIYA**

IFRIQIYA

This project will be the culmination of several years of research and creation. Frigya is come back to the sounds of Africa and the Tunisian rhythms linking the African Arab worlds with percussions and voice.

Jasser Haj Youssef
Tunisia

**MEMORIES**

The project works on a disc that is unusual in terms of the very high quality of the sound, and the focus on Viola d’amore which was used chiefly in the baroque period. The project will involve Buddhist priest singer Lama Gyurme and a Rhodes piano artist, and will address symbolic texts in Aramaic and Arabic. Moreover, modern techniques as well as live voices will be used, in cooperation with international professionals.

Natif Awayez
Iraq

**THE PROSECUTION OF MUSTAPHA AL-AGHA**

The project consists of a musical album by the duo “Two or the Dragon” of Abed Kobeissi and Ali Hout, springing from Nahda music (1798-1939) according to Albert Hourani) as an art based on the sound identity of the cities of the Levant at the time. The study also stems from the importance of identifying oriental musical accents that adopt the current sound identity of Levant cities in local aesthetics, and expressing them artistically without causing a rift with the roots of Arabic poetic music.

Rafik Rezine
Algeria

**ELECTRO ZEBALA**

“Electro Zebala” consists of the recording project brings together Natik Awayez as composer and singer with 9 Arab independent musicians. Their mission is to produce a musical album that addresses the state of “Oriental Takht” and goes beyond it to reach a contemporary music audience and trigger debate around contemporaneity. The project aims to launch the album as a modest addition to this key debate, and documents a musical journey stretching across multiple musical spaces.

Adham Zidan
Egypt

**BASKOT LEL BAL TAGEYYA**

Baskot LeL Baltageyya is an audio-visual music project with a strong live-performance aspect that playfully attempts to bridge the gap between experimental music and the pop music landscape. The final outcome of this project includes a series of shows across Egypt, a series of music videos, and an album that will be produced and released in various formats.

Natif Awayez
Iraq

**MABARANI**

The project unites Sami Hawat with a number of young musicians who got to know him and his social and political ideals during their childhood in the times of the Lebanese civil war.

Today, Sami Hawat, who belongs to a generation that saw its dreams and thoughts get shattered, meets with these young musicians in a project that addresses the new reality in a sarcastic way.
of an open source musical album in Luxor (Egypt) using musical instruments made out of material recycled from garbage, and based on the sounds of Luxor city and suburbs (Luxor “identity”) as well as on the popular artistic heritage of Upper Egypt. Shadi Rabab will produce the recycled instruments and use them to perform. Raff will record and distribute the album electronically.

Safana Bakleh
Syria
WOMEN WHO ADORED GOD

The project aims to gather poems by Sufi poetesses who did not receive their worth of criticism and documentation throughout history, and transform those poems into songs composed and distributed for a female choir accompanied by a number of musical instruments. The material will then be recorded in studio and produced as an album that will be launched in Damascus.

Basel Rajoub
Syria
THE RIVER OF LIGHTS

The project aims to produce a musical album entitled “The River of Lights” in cooperation with the Austrian musician Matthias Loffner. The album comprises 9 pieces of instrumental music composed by Basel Rajoub and written for saxophone and “Hurdy Gurdy”. The latter is a 14th century instrument from Andalusia which was first used in ancient Iberian music, and afterwards in classical music where Mozart and Hayden composed some works for it.

Samir Ferjani
Tunisia
SHÉHÉRAZADE OPÉRA

The book “One Thousand and One Nights” represents a great challenge for any creator across artistic fields. Despite its strong presence in theater, music and drama and across the world, it remains a fascinating subject for the researchers and artists. Based on a profound study of this work of literature and an analysis of numerous artistic works inspired by Shéhérazade stories, the project will produce a contemporary Arabic opera piece.

Suad Bushnaq
Jordan
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACKS FROM INDEPENDENT ARAB CINEMA

The project is a recording of a soundtrack album based on Suad Bushnaq’s original compositions for award-winning independent Arab films that explore issues of migration, identity, war, loss, home, family, and diaspora. The compositions blend Middle-Eastern maqam and rhythms with diverse musical genres and harmonic colors, in cinematic orchestrations that reflect the stories being told on screen and the universal human emotions connected to them.

Mohamed Zouari
Tunisia
ELECTRO BTAIHI

Electro Btaih is a project halfway between traditional Tunisian music and underground music. It is born out of the need to explore new sonorities able to express oral tradition in Tunisia. The artist develops for this aim a contemporary language conveyed by the desire to put Tunisian rhythms at the service of Indian or Jazz polyrhythm.

Abdul Hadi Hashem
Palestine
ASIFEH - AL-HIFFEH

Al-Hiffeh will be an album created by Asifeh, featuring artists from Ramallah and abroad. Al-Hiffeh builds on the sound aesthetics of the last album “Datura”, with a minimal approach and vocals about topics related to life under occupation and life as a foreigner abroad, and how these experiences have shaped us and taught us about the future of humanity.

Festival Arabesques
Morocco/ France
FESTIVAL ARABESQUES - 6TH EDITION

“Festival Arabesques” aims to encourage the visibility of the Arab artists and to promote dialogue and cultural diversity in Europe. It presents an opportunity to explore the Arab cultural diversity through music, from its traditional heritage to contemporary creations. Arabesques aspires to become a platform for emerging Arab musicians and to create a professional encounter.

Hannibal Saad
Syria
GLOBAL WEEK FOR SYRIA

Global Week for Syria is an annual live and online event aimed at raising awareness, creating platforms and stimulating artistic co-creations between Syrian, Arab, and local/international musicians in their host communities. The event includes over 340 Syrian and international musicians in over 50 locations, with a music festival, conferences, and workshops in Lebanon and the Netherlands.

MahraJazz
Palestine
MAHRAJAZZ - ALTERNATIVE JAZZ FESTIVAL

MahraJazz is an annual alternative jazz festival, the first-ever Palestinian music festival to take place in Haifa (Palestine). It aims to break geographical and mental borders through diverse music and conversations. Organized and formed in 2017 by an independent group of young individuals working in various fields of culture, production, and social change/activism, it plays a role in contributing to and pushing the efforts further at reclaiming Haifa as a center for cultural production.

Hannibal Saad
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The 6th edition of Beirut & Beyond International Music Festival will take place from 6 to 9 December in different venues in Beirut. During the 4 days, an eclectic program of concerts will be presented to the audience and international professionals, along with a full program of workshops, round tables and residencies accessible for professionals and musicians.

Music Jurors

Rima Khcheich, one of the talented Lebanese singers of the uprising generation, is well known for having given rebirth to the Andalusian form Muwashah, as well as to the traditional Arabic repertoire of the 19th and 20th Century that she both teaches and explores. A graduate of the Lebanese American University in Beirut and the National Conservatory of Music where she taught for twelve years, Khcheich has performed live throughout the Middle East, Europe and the USA specializing in Arabic traditional vocal repertoires. She released 6 albums so far: “Orient Express” (2001), “Yalalali” (2006), “Falak” (2008), “Min Sihir Ouyounak” (2012), “Hawa” (2013), and “Washwishni” (2016). She is currently working on a new album that will be released in January 2019.

Hamdi Makhlouf is a Tunisian musician, composer, lutenist and singer. He holds a PhD in music and musicology from Sorbonne University. He is a lecturer at the Higher Institute of Music (ISM) at the University of Tunis and was the director of the JMC (Carthage Music Days) from 2015 to 2017. He lived in Paris from 2003 to 2010, where he discovered a great musical diversity that enabled him to study ethnic music and to be influenced by many genres and styles. He has also performed in many international concerts and has long worked with various artists from several countries. He recorded his single, "Nocturnal Pages", at EMI Music which was released in 2008. He was also invited by the artist Gad El Maleh to record the oud parts of the music of his film "Coco". Moreover, he has recorded many albums of musicians from Tunisia, France, Hungary and others. Makhlouf released an experimental style album “7 + 1” with the American artist Kevin Blechdom. This music was played and remixed by many musicians from different countries. He participated in a number of conferences about musical and cultural issues and coordinated the publication of some scientific books on music. Several of his works were published in France, Lebanon and Tunisia.

Maan Abu Taleb is a Jordanian novelist, essayist and cultural editor. He is the founding editor of Ma3azeef, the Arab world’s leading online music magazine. He holds a Master’s degree in philosophy and contemporary critical theory. His debut novel, "All the Battles", was released to critical and popular praise in 2016.

Training and Regional Events

Projects Descriptions

Mokhtar Eldenairy

**Workshops + Theater of the Oppressed**

The 2018 graduates of Nahda Arts School (NAS) for social theater strive to take a workshop about the Theater of the Oppressed techniques, with special emphasis on the Forum Theater techniques. This workshop would enhance their experience in street performances, in view of presenting social issues that concern diverse sections of society within Egypt.

Waguih El Laqany

**Deaf Film Lab**

The project consists of a professional workshop for deaf youth on the different stages of short film production. The workshop will result in a number of short films. The work will start from the development of the idea to the script-writing, production, filming and editing, etc.

 Toufic Douib

**DIGI-DZ**

DIGI-DZ is a two-week festival dedicated to digital arts from the Maghreb. The first of its kind to be held in Algeria, it highlights the results of the mapping research platform that Toufic Douib developed with Egyptian co-curator Elham Khatbab, DIGI-MENA. DIGI-MENA aims to list and liaise between short films. The work will start from the development of the idea to the script-writing, production, filming and editing, etc.

Hashem Adnan

**OH TO END**

“Oh to End” is a multidisciplinary event that reflects on five short works by Samuel Beckett through several angles: performance, visual art, sound and translation. The project will bring together the work of theatre makers, visual artists, sound artists, scenographers and translators for four days in one of the iconic apocalyptic post-war spaces of Beirut.

Zaid Atta

**HACKING UP BAGHDAD**

“Hacking Up Baghdad” is a series of workshops offered by the German design and research studio THE CONSTITUTE to bring new technologies like 3D printing, CNC machining, Virtual Reality and Coding to young Iraqi artists and designers to broaden their work scope. The first workshop in 3D printing is a kick-off to set up an art and technology center in Bait Tarkib.

Shareef Sarhan

**Workshops and Trainings on Sculpture Techniques**

This project is one of the activities within the training and development program at Studio Shababik in Gaza, designed to train artists on the use of sculpture as a contemporary art tool to address their artistic projects and daily issues. This training also aims at encouraging artists to use sculpture in artistic works in the public realm, so as to facelift cities in the long-term, thereby uplifting citizens’ morale through arts.

BEIRUT & BEYOND INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL 2018

THE PALESTINE NATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITION

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music is organizing the Palestine National Music Competition 2019, within its 25th anniversary festivities. The competition will consist of 3 parts: solo (piano, guitar, string section, brass, Arabic music); singing (choirs and band performances); and the Marcel Khalifeh competition for young musical composers. The event will witness the participation of approximately 1,000 music students and young musicians from Palestine and the Golan Heights, who will be evaluated by an independent jury of Palestinian, Arab and Western musicians.

Beirut & Beyond

**Palestine**

**Lebanon**

**Regional Events**

Grants & Programs

Dar Alkaima University College of Arts and Culture

**Palestine**

**Egypt**

**Algeria**

**Tunisia**

**France**

**Israel**

**Grants & Programs**

**OH TO END**

**DIGI-MENA**

**Echos Electrik**

**NO LOGO**

**BETHLEHEM STUDENTS FILM FESTIVAL**

Bethlehem Students Film Festival is the first international cinema festival in Palestine specialized in films produced by cinema students around the world.

**Projects Descriptions**

**MOKTHAR ELDENARY**

**EGYPT**

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An intensive acting training program tailored to professional and amateur actors, YPAT offers acting techniques based on classic and contemporary theater texts and their dramaturgical analysis. With international professional artists as trainers, the training consists of three independent cycles, each given in one language: Arabic, English and French.

The Cultural Association for Film and Audio-Visual Production Beirut DC

THE 10TH EDITION OF BEIRUT CINEMA DAYS

The 10th edition of Beirut Cinema Days will run throughout 2019 in Beirut and other regions in Lebanon. As the ultimate meeting place for independent Arab cinema, this edition will feature a diverse program of Arab contemporary films, African films, LGBET films, retrospectives, and off-festival activities, aiming to build new audiences through partnerships with organizations from all over Lebanon.

Editions Snoubar Bayrout

FORTY YEARS OF CREATION IN ARABIC CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

The project revolves around the Arabization of “Le Poussin N’Est Pas Un Chien”, by French writer Mathilde Chlevre, which addresses the contemporary launch of Arabic children’s literature, describes it and archives it. The book release will be accompanied by educational children activities, namely an exhibition of the drawings from the book and training workshops on writing and reading for children.

Collectif Kahrama

US, THE MOON AND THE NEIGHBORS

Nehna Wel Amar Wel Jiran (Us, the Moon and the Neighbors) is a free outdoor festival, in its 6th edition, that creates an international collaborative platform utilizing theatre, dance, puppetry, circus, visual installations and music as a gateway to reconnect with our multiple identities and our heritage, connect communities, audiences, artists and professionals and encourage intergenerational collaborations and encounters.

CLUSTER-Cairo Lab for Urban Studies, Training and Environmental Research

PUBLIC INTER-LIBRARY ONLINE TECHNOLOGY-PILOT

This project expands CLUSTER’s regional library project, PILOT, a bilingual (Arabic/English) platform that allows art, culture and architecture and related organizations to manage and provide free public access to their collections. The project expands trainings on the PILOT system to new organizations and cities in the MENA region, in tandem with translation workshops developing a regional critical Arabic lexicon for related subjects in architecture, urbanism, art and design.

The purpose is to create a festival that would bring all people together and represent culture from the entire Arab world, thereby making Haifa celebratory for a week involving Palestinian venues and small businesses.

Haifa Independent Film Festival (HIFF)

HAIFA INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL – 2019

Haifa Independent Film Festival (HIFF) is a festival aiming to present films from Palestine and the Arab world and to encourage the film industry in Palestine. The purpose is to create a festival that would bring all people together and represent culture from the entire Arab world, thereby making Haifa celebratory for a week involving Palestinian venues and small businesses.

Contemporary Image Collective - CIC

POPULAR NARRATIVES

The project proposes different forms of public cultural engagements with two key configurations from which the possibility of another society was imagined in Egypt in the 1960s: the construction of the Aswan High Dam and the Office for African Liberation Movements in Cairo. Taking libraries and personal collections as a point of departure, the project intends to inquire what we can learn from those histories today.
The program will choose authentic works written by the participants. Male and female participants from all over Yemen will learn and develop together, discuss and cooperate to produce a joint collection of short stories.

**Arab Cartoon Festival Workshop Program**

**Ommes vzw Belgium**

**Arab Cartoon Festival**

The project comprises a series of satellite workshops that span over a period of one year, in alignment with the Ommes flagship initiative, The Arab Cartoon Festival. Artists from the Arab world will work very closely with international artists to unfold ways through which artistic forms of expression can challenge the existing perceived lack of cultural identity.

**Shubbak: A Window on Contemporary Arab Culture**

**United Kingdom**

**Shubbak Festival 2019**

Shubbak is the UK’s largest festival of contemporary Arab culture. Taking place on a biennial basis, the upcoming festival will take place in London and across the UK in July 2019. An ambitious multi-art form program will showcase some of the best work by Arab artists, including premieres, new commissions, free public realm events and community engaged collaborations.

**Training and Regional Events Jurors**

**Maria Daif** was born in 1972 in Casablanca. She graduated in French literature and in psychoanalysis applied to the literature. She spent more than 15 years in Moroccan Medias as a journalist and chief editor, specialized in feminism, art and culture.

Eager for innovative adventures, she began in 2005 to accompany artistic projects in council and press relations. She was a member for more than 5 years of Young Arab Theater Fund’s selection committee as well as of the Art Movises Africa’s selection committee.

Her professional adventures have a common engine: the conviction that the access to art and culture is a human right. From December 2015 to November 2018, she brilliantly was the Head Manager of the Touria Abdelaziz Taizi Foundation, a private fund dedicated to support art and culture in Morocco and its multidisciplinary cultural space L’Uzine, in Casablanca, Morocco. The two institutions are now considered among the most important cultural operators in the country. Maria is one of the most respected and loved cultural operators in Morocco.

**Rowaida Al Khulaidi** Currently the British Council’s Country Manager in Yemen, Rowaida leads the operation in the country at one of its most difficult times, building relationships and engaging with networks of Yemenis.

Prior to her current post, and as a Project Manager, Rowaida led on youth and women programs encouraging the use of arts as a mean of social development.

Currently living in Yemen, Rowaida’s passion in the arts and social development has led to the establishment and continuity of successful life-changing projects that benefit Yemeni artists, youth and women alike and cultivating art at times of conflict to share untold stories and show Yemen that most people do not know, in contrast to the one appearing in news headlines.

**Rim Naguib** holds a PhD in Sociology from Northwestern University (Illinois, USA), and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS). As an academic, she is interested in analyzing the mechanisms of cultural hegemony and the roots of nationalist imaginations, but also tracing exceptional and counter-nationalist trajectories.

Beside academic research, she has a passion for comics, and has co-translated two graphic novels into Arabic (Zahra’s Paradise and Les Meilleurs Ennemis). She has also contributed in a forthcoming collection of graphic interpretations of four women’s experiences in the Egyptian uprising of 2011. Wishing to combine socio-historical research with her love of visual literature, she is now in the process of producing her own graphic novel about counter-nationalist trajectories in interwar Alexandria.

Rim has taught in various initiatives aiming to take the critical social sciences outside the closed and conventional academic institutions, such as Moftda, a project targeting high school students in Egypt, and the Cairo Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CILAS).

As an alumnus of the United World Colleges (UWC) and a believer in its educational mission, she has been heading the Egyptian UWC National Committee for nine years, conducting yearly selections of Egyptian high school students to receive scholarships and enroll in the schools of this global educational movement.

**Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship**

**Institutions Descriptions**

**Damascus Theatre Lab**

**Syria**

**Field of Work:** Performing Arts

Management team: Oussama Ghanam and Dima Abazah

Damascus Theater Lab (DTL) is an independent artistic entity that was founded in 2010. Its objective is to work towards establishing a theater that is based on creative and artistic research into the modern trends in theater production, the relation between dramaturgy and acting, and the current relationship that links theater to social reality. It organizes workshops with theater and cinema professionals in Syria and motivates young people to produce their own shows.

**Photopia**

**Egypt**

**Field of Work:** Photography

Management team: Marwa Abou Leila and Reham El Sheimy

Photopia is founded on the basis of Pyto (Korba, Heliopolis) since 2012 in Cairo. Photopia is an independent full-fledged school for photographers operating since 2012 in Cairo (Korba, Heliopolis). Photopia is founded on the basis of bridging young talents in photography with more established ones. Its objectives are to offer unmatched photography education by photography masters in each genre; to raise the standard of photography in the region; to expose local photographers to regional and global markets; and to publish photo books that document powerful photography on a non-digital form.
Minwal Theatre Company was founded in Beirut in 2014 as a result of the need to combine efforts in strengthening, researching and developing frameworks for theatre productions and programs. It aims to contribute to an increase in Lebanese theatrical productions that has high artistic quality; to create artistic opportunities and practice that activate the role of local youth to defend their social cultural rights; and to create a platform for private and public schools in different regions in Lebanon. For Minwal theatre is the typical space to exercise democracy. Contributing to the Lebanese theatrical scene reinforces theatre as a profession, and Minwal’s work also tackles identity and memory.

Beirut Art Residency
Lebanon
Field of Work: Visual Arts
Management team: Hicham Bouzid and Amina Mouri

Established in 2012, the Beirut Art Residency (BAR) is a non-profit association that is committed to creating opportunities for international and local artists through residencies, local exhibitions, and public interventions. By collaborating with like-minded cultural institutions, BAR continues to pursue the stimulation of the country’s intellectual and cultural climate. With a core focus on the professional growth of artists from all disciplines, the residency encourages artists to venture beyond their usual practice and to create links with local residents of Beirut to engage on a wider international discourse surrounding contemporary art.

Zawya Cinema and Distribution
Egypt
Field of Work: Cinema
Management team: Youssef Shazli and Ahmed Sobky

Minwal Theatre Company launched Zawya in March 2014 as one of Egypt’s first fine art-house cinemas, located in Downtown’s Cinema Odeon in Cairo. Zawya’s mission is to provide a platform which encompasses emerging film experience in Egypt and to celebrate and promote the artistic elements of the medium, thus catering to an increasing demand for local and international art house films. It provides a platform for emerging local and Arab filmmakers with a focus on local independent films to encourage. Having organized screenings in multiple venues outside of Cairo, Zawya aims to eventually grow into a series of cinema screens spread out across the country.

SJ Productions
Palestine
Field of Work: Music
Management team: Samer Jaradat and Ehab Haniyah

Established in 2012, SJ Productions began as a music production company and eventually became one of the longest and only standing entities that is specialized in music production in Palestine. They believe that independent music is one of the most important means of liberation, independence and respect for others; a tool that can bring people together and uplift communities. In addition to developing a new system for selling albums and products of bands, artists are accompanied by a dedicated media campaign to promote them to more than 30 sale points distributed throughout the West Bank, the 1948 territory (Occupied lands) and Gaza Strip.

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship
Jurors

Ahmed El Attar, an Egyptian independent theatre director, translator, playwright and cultural manager. He is founder and General Manager of Studio Emad Eddin Foundation. A unique project, offering rehearsals and individual workshops to independent artists in the field of performing arts in Egypt. El Attar is also the founder and the artistic director of Orient Productions, the Temple Independent Theatre Company and the D-CAF (Downtown Contemporary Arts Festival) and the Arab Arts Focus. El Attar has a BA in Theatre from the American University in Cairo (1992) and an MA in Arts and Cultural Management from Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle (2001) and is a Chevening scholar and a Clore Leadership Programme alumnus (UK–2009), a CEC Artlink resident (USA – 2013) and a National Arts Strategies (NAS), Executive directors program alumnus (USA–2014/15). His theatre work includes: Life is beautiful or waiting for my uncle from America (2000), Mother I want to be a millionaire (2004), F**K Darwin or how I have learned to love socialism (2007) and On the importance of being an Arab (2009), The Last Supper (2014) Before the Social Revolution (2017), and ‘Mama’ (2018) and has been performed in the most prestigious theatres and festivals around the world: Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Sweden, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Holland, France, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, Montenegro, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Russia and the UAE.

Khadija El Bennouai is a cultural practitioner and consultant working at the intersection of artistic practice, cultural policy and civil society with focus on the global south. She collaborated with international development agencies in Africa, the Arab world and Cuba for which she implemented various missions in those regions. El Bennouai played a major role in developing support for the mobility of cultural practitioners within Africa, as the director of Art Moves Africa (AMA) mobility fund. She was also consultant to the Young Arab Theatre Fund (YATF), convening and managing four successful and important symposia for members of independent arts and culture spaces in Middle East & North Africa (MENA). El Bennouai is the author of the chapter “Surviving the paradoxes of mobility” commissioned as part of the 2018 Global Report monitoring the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Moukhtar Kocache is an independent advisor and consultant with expertise in curatorial practice, media, philanthropy and cultural and civil society development. His most recent partners and clients include Open Society Foundations, International Media Support, Danish Center for Culture and Development, Salzburg Global Seminars, Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network, Art Omi, Hivos, Sundance Institute, StoryCorps, A.M. Qattan Foundation and The Drosos Foundation. From 2004 to 2012 he was Program Officer at the Ford Foundation’s regional office in Cairo. During his tenure he worked on the development and sustainability of arts and culture spaces, networks and service infrastructure. He also programmed and managed a cluster of grants that supported alternative and emerging media platforms and media reform initiatives, as well as grants that supported the development of local philanthropy in the MENA region. He led strategy designs and programming in support of Palestinian civil society and gender equity regionally. Towards the end of his term at Ford, he oversaw over $15 million of investments in active grants to dozens of organizations in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Europe and the United States. From 1998 to 2004 he was Director of Programs and Services at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council in New York, a leading arts council in the US where he developed residency programs, arts in the public realm initiatives, exhibitions, publications, conferences and seminars as well as workshops and resources for individual artists and small arts organizations. During his tenure at LMCC, he directly supervised and nurtured the creative processes of hundreds of artists, media producers and organizations. He is the co-founder of Rawwa: Creative Palestinian Communities Fund, a participatory initiative that supports Palestinian grassroots to creatively solve community development challenges. Moukhatar has served on the board of the Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement at the American University in Cairo since 2012 and has been a board member of the Open Society Foundation’s Arab Regional Office since 2017. In 2018, he joined the board of International Media Support. He is the author of Creation Out of Crisis, A Historic Moment to Leverage Arts & Culture’s Contributions to Social Change in the Arab Region and several other reports on arts and culture and social justice philanthropy; he is also a regular lecturer and keynote speaker at educational institutions and arts and civil society fora. His current interests include the sustainability of independent creative platforms, cultural and social justice philanthropy, political philosophy and policy, alternative institutional structures, memory, film and material culture. He holds a BA in International Relations with a focus on diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean and an M.A. in Art History & Nonprofit Management.
AFAC Board of Trustees

AFAC is privileged to have an esteemed Board of Trustees made up of the following members:

Dr. Ghassan Salame, Dr. Nabil Qaddumi, Dr. Suzanne Wettenschwiler, Hani Kalouti, Sawsan Al-Fahoum Jafar, Abla Lahoud, Amr Ben Halim, Olfat Al-Mutlaq Juffali, Elias Khoury, Farouk Mardam Bey, Roxane Zand, and Oussami Rifahi

Convening twice per year, the Board has continued to offer guidance and support in promoting AFAC within their own networks and communities.

2018 Jurors


2017–2018 Readers

AFAC Team

AFAC’s operational team is made up of eleven members, based in Beirut.

Rima Mismar
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rima was appointed Executive Director of AFAC in 2016 building on her extensive experience within AFAC as Deputy Director. Rima completed her studies in Communication Arts (Radio/TV/Film emphasis) at the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut in 1998. Prior graduation, she began writing for local newspapers and cultural supplements, focusing on cinema and pursuing her professional career as a film critic as of 1999. She had participated in several festivals as jury member or as a member of the selection committee, contributed to serious critical writings on Arab cinema, moderated panels and wrote for several regional media. She worked briefly in television, writing and producing several episodes of “The Arabic Lens” (Al Adasa Al Arabiya), a series on Arab cinema produced and broadcasted by Al-Jazeera channel between 2005 and 2008. She also wrote and researched a number of feature documentaries produced by and broadcasted on Al-Arabiya channel. Rima has joined the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) in June 2011 as the Film Programs Manager and in 2015 was appointed Deputy Director.

Heba Hage-Felder
SENIOR PROGRAMS MANAGER

Heba joined AFAC end 2016 and is responsible for institutional development and overall management of new initiatives and programs. She has twenty years of experience in development and institutional capacity building. Heba worked with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for ten years – first at headquarters in Bern between 2006 and 2011, supporting humanitarian aid and development efforts in the Middle East, and then as director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Lebanon (2011-2016). Her work experience between 1996 and 2006 covered initiatives in peace building, youth and community initiatives, production of knowledge resources, as well as eco-tourism. She worked with diverse local and international organisations such as Search for Common Ground in Washington DC and in Jordan, Save the Children in Lebanon, Arab Resource Collective in Lebanon, and UNOPS in Geneva supporting a peace building program in Rwanda, as well as being a co-founder and volunteer coordinator of Mada, a local NGO in Lebanon. She has conducted independent consultancy work with UN and international donor agencies. Heba has a Master’s degree in International Conflict and Peace Studies (University of Notre Dame, Indiana), and a Bachelor’s in International Affairs (Lebanese American University, Byblos). Heba was born in Ghana, raised in West Africa and has lived in several countries. She is fond of discovering diverse artistic works from the region and internationally and personally enjoys writing and visual storytelling.
Cathy Khattar
GRANTS MANAGER

Cathy joined AFAC in July 2012. She completed her studies in Economics at the University Saint Joseph in Beirut in 2001. She worked as the financial coordinator in ASSABIL, Friends of Public Libraries and now she is a member of the administrative committee and treasurer of the association. Since 2006 she started writing books for children and to date has published 9 books. Cathy also animates creative writing workshops in Arabic for children.

Soleil Gharbied
GRANTS MANAGER

Soleil graduated with a B.A. in French Literature (2008) from the Lebanese University. She joined AFAC as a Grants manager before that she worked at CIEL, ebook distribution company, from 2008 until 2014. As Ciel’s Catalogue Manager and then Book Buyer, Soleil focused on promoting literature in Lebanon and at regional and international book fairs. She was especially focused on supporting the development of the literature scene in Lebanon by providing opportunities for new and upcoming Arab authors. In 2014, Soleil married and moved to Egypt where she became heavily involved in the local independent music scene there. As Programs Manager for the Cairo Jazz Club Agency (CJC Agency), she worked on developing and managing new programs to support the growth and development of young musicians. Her projects included the 15 Minutes of Fame showcase at the bi-weekly Fel Park, an event that fused family-centered picnics and live concerts, and Mawaweel, the annual Ramadan festival at Cairo’s Darb 1718 which combined culture, music and handicraft arts. Through her role at CJC Agency, Soleil has also consulted on various music-related projects in Egypt. In 2016, she was accepted in Goethe’s Kulturakademie and spent six weeks in a specialized training program aimed at connecting Arab cultural managers with arts scenes in Berlin, Leipzig and Hamburg.

Rachad Chamoun
CONTENT MANAGER

Rachad joined AFAC in March 2011 to develop and manage the content of the initiatives’ website. He has worked as a freelance facilitator and trainer for civil society organizations including The Youth Advocacy Process and The Social Movement. He also worked as a compliance officer/ internal auditor for the Belgium NGO ACTED. A graduate of the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut with a BA in Economics/ Political Science, Rachad worked at UNESCO as a project assistant for the “Youth empowerment and participation project” in Lebanon where he drafted the youth policy briefs and project reports, translated related policy papers, documented roundtables and workshops, and managed the website for the project. Most recently, Rachad was a research assistant at UNDP where he helped building and managing the Program of Governance in the Arab Region’s online library database.

Rana Kobeissi
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Rana Kobeissi has joined AFAC as Communications Officer in July 2018. Armed with more than 15 years of experience in communication in the UAE, Belgium and Lebanon, Rana has managed the advertising campaigns and communication needs of iconic brands such as Nivea, Mercedes and Nescafé. Rana graduated from the American University of Beirut with a BA and an MA in Political Studies, before embarking on a career in marketing and advertising in 2003. She has occupied senior client servicing roles in major advertising agencies, such as Viola Communications, DRAFTFCB Belgium and Ogilvy Brussels. In 2014, she returned to Lebanon and joined GlobeMed Group as Communications Manager, managing the communication needs of GlobeMed’s 12 operations in the MENA region until 2017.

Nada Bou Antoun
ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Nada joined AFAC as an Accounting Manager in August 2016. She is a Certified Public Accountant from the State of Colorado since 2010, with a BA in Accounting & Auditing from the Lebanese University. She has more than 10 years of experience in Accounting and Lebanese taxes. Before joining AFAC, Nada worked with a group of companies that specialized in trading commodities and agriculture, operating outside Lebanon.

Julie Terzian
OFFICE MANAGER

Julie joined AFAC in November 2015. She graduated with a Baccalauréat Technique (BT) degree in Administration and Accounting at the Polyglot Technical Institute in Beirut. She worked as an accountant at the Lebanese Embassy in Lagos, Nigeria, and then for several years, she worked mainly in the hospitality sector, focusing on administration and finance in addition to setting up three restaurants in Lagos and Yerevan.

Imad Roumi
FINANCE COORDINATOR

Imad joined AFAC in December 2018. He studied Business & Finance at La Sagesse University, and obtained a certification in Financial Accounting from the Institute of Management Accountants (USA) in 2014. Imad possesses more than 7 years of experience in the accounting/finance, including corporate, NGO and freelancing.

Maha Kays
PROGRAM MANAGER

Maha Kays is a Visual Artist and Associate Professor at the School of Visual Arts at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts ALBA. She obtained a national higher diploma in plastic arts from the Beaux-Arts School of Paris (2014), a Master’s degree in cinema studies from the Saint-Joseph University of Beirut (2012) and participated in several courses on art preservation and restoration at the École du Louvre in Paris (2019). Her work has been exhibited at several institutions in Lebanon, France, Greece and Japan and her writings and work have been featured in numerous catalogues and publications. Before joining AFAC, Maha was the Associate Curator of a two-year cultural program in partnership with the Beaux-Arts School of Paris, the Higher National School of Architecture of Versailles, La Maréchalerie Contemporary Art Center in Versailles and several Lebanese institutions including the Matfa Foundation and the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts ALBA. During her career, she has worked as a Researcher at Centre Pompidou Paris as well as Fund Manager at several cultural institutions in Lebanon and abroad. As Program Manager at AFAC, she is responsible for research and critical analysis.

Julie Terzian
OFFICE MANAGER

Julie joined AFAC in November 2015. She graduated with a Baccalauréat Technique (BT) degree in Administration and Accounting at the Polyglot Technical Institute in Beirut. She worked as an accountant at the Lebanese Embassy in Lagos, Nigeria, and then for several years, she worked mainly in the hospitality sector, focusing on administration and finance in addition to setting up three restaurants in Lagos and Yerevan.

Reda Elhouchaimi
GRANTS COORDINATOR

Reda is a filmmaker and a script writer. She collaborated with many script writing collectives in Syria and Lebanon. Reda holds a bachelor degree in Law and has a rich experience in both social and cultural fields. She’s a field coordinator at Intersos – an Italian NGO funded by UNHCR - where she followed-up the awareness and protection efforts targeting vulnerable children and gender based violence survivors. Most recently, Reda worked as a community manager at Sadeem competition for Arab influencers before joining AFAC as a grants coordinator in 2018.
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