



CONFERENCE SERIES

« Exchange to Better Understand »



PRESS RELEASE

Attijariwafa bank Foundation is interested in the future of African contemporary art

Thursday June 13, 2019 - Attijariwafa bank Foundation organized on Thursday, June 13, 2019, in Casablanca, in its Actua art space, a new edition of its conference series «Exchange to better understand» under the theme: «Contemporary African Art: what perspectives for which markets?»

On the sidelines of the «Travel Weast» exhibition co-organized by the Art & Culture Pole of the Attijariwafa bank Foundation and ARKANE association, dedicated to the works of 33 young artists from 18 African countries, Attijariwafa bank Foundation dedicated its 50th edition to African contemporary art.

In a welcome address on behalf of Mr. Mohamed El Kettani, Attijariwafa bank CEO, Ms. Mouna Kably, Head of the Publishing & Debates Division of Attijariwafa bank Foundation, spoke of the need to discuss issues related to the future and the development of the African contemporary art market within its continent. «Faced with the current cultural proliferation of the African art scene and the enthusiasm generated by the works of its young artists, it seems appropriate to look at the reasons for this effervescence led by the growing interest of Western countries. And above all, it is important to analyze the development challenges of the African contemporary art market, which can guarantee an adequate valorization of works, and to ensure the durability of African artistic creation, far from any form of speculation.»

Placed under the chair of Mr. Abdelhak Najib, Art Critic and Editor of VH Magazine, this meeting had two highlights. A first panel brought together Mr. Farid Zahi, Philosopher and art critic; Ms. Syham Weigant, art critic; and Ms. Meriem Berrada, Artistic Director of MACAAL (Museum of Contemporary African Art Al Maaden). A second panel was dedicated to the testimonies of artists and cultural players, namely Ms. Ghitha Triki, curator of the exhibition and Mr. Abderrahmane Ouardane, President of ARKANE association, who initiated the exhibition «Travel Weast» along with two artists whose works are exhibited, Ms. Maya-Ines Touam, Photographer and Visual Artist as well as Mr. René Tavares, Visual Artist.



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In the first panel, the speakers drew up an inventory of African contemporary art, before reflecting on the future of this emerging market within the continent. All recognized the plurality of African arts. This plurality is rooted in the history of the continent, from the period of slavery to post-independence countries, giving rise to a cultural wealth that explains the interest in the works of its artists. In addition, the three panelists emphasized the difficulties of the market in structuring itself due to the lack of adequate infrastructure and skills training. For now, sales of works are mainly concentrated in Paris, New York, and London. But the craze aroused by the African arts is very real and it should lead to the development of an African market. Moreover, several initiatives have multiplied in Africa to enhance the work of its artists.

In the second panel, cultural players and artists shared their respective experiences and expressed optimism about the recent interest in contemporary African art.

Through this conference-debate, Attijariwafa bank Foundation renews its commitment to promote a constructive debate on cultural, economic and social issues that concern the future of Morocco, and Africa.

VERBATIMS

Farid Zahi: «Art is not the identity, but it has an identity. Identity can be universal because it goes beyond the locality.»

Meriem Berrada: «Mediation actions are at the heart of our approach. We accompany early-career artists who do not master the codes of the milieu. To produce is one thing, to understand the system is another.»

Syham Weigant: «Africa is a continent. We forget it too often. 54 countries mean 54 different sensitivities.»

Ghitha Triki: «We have to agree on a common terminology. Contemporary African art and the diaspora would be more accurate. The sensibilities are multiple; there are African arts in the plural.»

Abderrahmane Ouardane: «Why Africa? Africa promotes emotion and passion. It does not leave anyone indifferent. Today, Africa is moving and turning heads, and this is just the beginning.»

Maya-Ines Touam: «Today, I draw my inspiration from the Maghreb. I am in full deconstruction of my Western learning, to build my own perception and my own mediums.»

René Tavares: «Nothing is vulgar in art. Otherwise, it would mean that nature is vulgar.»

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