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CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds
Studies

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Panel 1

Anthropology of the living arts in the Maghreb: fields, approaches, challenges

While anthropological works and performance studies address ritual music and so-called traditional dances, the documentation of contemporary performing arts (theatre, dance, circus, etc.) remains incomplete in the region. However, these arts, which are fundamentally based on and according to the social and perceptive histories of individuals, can provide information on changes in sociabilities and representations, but can also be linked to wider dynamics, and enable us to understand the social, political and cultural recompositions taking place in the Maghreb. We thus propose to approach the multiple aspects that these practices of living arts cover by being interested at the same time in the dynamics of creation, in the performance devices, in the imaginary, in the social and spatial registration of the actors but also in the uses made of the heritages. What are the relational modalities (spatial, sound, physical) that are invented or recomposed during these interactions? Which heritages are invested and/or claimed? If we maintain that they are expressions of the imaginary, what about their vocation to interfere with social realities? What is the relationship between the imaginary and the process of politicization of individuals?

Studying the living arts in the Maghreb requires methodological, ethical and reflexive involvement that this workshop intends to question in a comparative perspective. Researchers from different disciplines are invited to explore the various dimensions of these performative practices to answer these questions, with a focus for this session on the use and reappropriation of local artistic and cultural heritage.

Person in charge : Jaquet Victoire (CREM) and Abdelhak Anne-Myriam (Université de Paris, URMIS)
Discussant : Abdelhak Anne-Myriam (Université de Paris, URMIS)

Program

Azdem Mehdi (Université Hassan II de Casablanca, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines)

Ben Msik (Centre d'études doctorales : Homme, Espace, Communication et Arts)

The turning point of contemporary music in Morocco: between modernity and conservatism

The early 2000s saw the birth of an artistic movement called: «Nayda» in Morocco. A mass of artists and musical bands emerged to give a renewal or a rebirth to Moroccan music. Inspired by traditional and popular Moroccan music, these young artists have chosen to merge Western culture: Rock, Blues, Jazz, Reggae, or Hip Hop, and local culture: Gnaoua, Aissaoua, Chaabi, Hassani and Amazigh. The languages, styles and topics treated in these kinds of music called «contemporary» or «urban» have characterized the poetry written and sung by these young musicians throughout their process of artistic creation. The contemporary musical field in Morocco today is varied by its rich heritage but also by the social realities and political changes that have taken place in Morocco and the MENA region have experienced since

the beginning of the millennium. Several issues have contributed to the development of contemporary music in terms of performances, presentations and influence but also their regression in terms of freedom of expression and creation, censorship and self-censorship. In this presentation, we will present a panorama of the progression of the contemporary music field in Morocco between the years 2000 and 2020.

Fertat Omar (Université Bordeaux-Montaigne, TELEM)

Tayeb Saddiki: When heritage becomes a field of experimentation

In the early 1960s, Arab countries experienced the emergence of a trend that some researchers have called «heritage theater» that deeply marked Arab stage creation for many years. Tayeb Saddiki was one of the great figures of this movement. His works, which he drew inspiration from both Moroccan heritage and Arab-Muslim culture, represent, even today, some of the most beautiful achievements of the genre. After enriching the Moroccan repertoire by adapting into Moroccan Arabic some masterpieces of the world theater, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Game of Love and Chance*, *The Revizor*, *the School for Women ...*, he decided to change register by giving himself the mission to invent an authentic theater in the image of the Arab-Berber-Muslim being that he was. Thus, during the second part of his career, he produced about ten plays from which he drew not only fables but also forms in the Arab-Muslim culture. He even succeeded towards the end of his life, after more than fifty years of practice and experimentation, in creating an original theatrical form that he called *Bsat* entertaining. Through the study of some of Tayeb Saddiki's most emblematic works, we will try to explain his artistic approach and demonstrate how he succeeded in transforming heritage resources into scenic materials to build a theatrical edifice of great originality. We will also try, by contextualizing his achievements, to understand why he and other Arab playwrights chose the path of heritage experimentation.

Guellouz Mariem (Université de Paris, CERLIS)

Cultural policies and national construction: dance as a nationalist issue in Tunisia

The years following Tunisia's independence (1956) were marked by a strong widespread enthusiasm for cultural policies as evidenced by the creation of the first Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1962. The will to preserve the heritage has contributed to the creation of conservatories, ballets and other structures where dance has finally become institutionalized. A national troupe of folk arts was established in 1963 aiming to enhance the cultural heritage and particularly the "traditional" dance practices. How the dancing body is constructed by and through nationalist discourses and what are its agency possibilities against the injunction of state cultural policies? This communication paper starts from a field of research conducted in Tunisia since 2011 to scrutinize the role of state cultural policies in the creation of a dancing body in the service of the state apparatuses and the attempts of resistance transgression of the latter. This paper combines the anthropological approach with the work on archives to rethink dance practices in Tunisia as a place of construction / deconstruction of national memory.

Jaquet Victoire (Université Paris X Nanterre, CREM)

From the Hameddcha ritual to contemporary creation: a risky journey ?

The ongoing research conducted in dance anthropology in collaboration with Taoufik Izzeddiou and the community of dancers that surrounds him in Marrakech, proposes a study focused on transmission and creation practices in contemporary dance.

The choreographer's work is strongly imbued with the spiritual, symbolic and ritual Sufi cultures in whose proximity he grew up in the medina of Marrakech. His practices are also influenced by the choreographic heritage of Bernardo Montet and Susan Buirge, two collaborators who marked his career in France.

From a study of gestures and movements in and around dance, it is an attention to contemporary Morocco, that is to say, to its transformation that we try to grasp; the ethnography documents the danced practices engaged and the specific interactions that the experience brings about.

For this workshop, through the study of several materials, I propose to study the creative practices

implemented in the course of a choreographic piece inspired by the ritual of the Hameddcha. The aim is to understand the issues of appropriation and invention that dancers face to grasp what organizes dance between rhythms, physical and imaginary techniques.