



# Nafas

## Mohamed Arejdal in Le Cube

Interview with the Moroccan artist about his works at the summer's lab 2012 of Le Cube, Rabat.

By Elisabeth Piskernik | Nov 2012



8 Photos 

>> French original / En français

The independent art space Le Cube was founded in 2005 by Elisabeth Piskernik, an Austrian who lives in Rabat, to offer young artists from Morocco and other countries a platform for artistic experimentation. This can articulate itself in conceptual works as well as in installations, video art, photography, performance, or painting. From the beginning, it sought cooperation with foreign institutions and creators of art and set up a residence program that promotes international exchange.

Mohamed Arejdal, born in 1984 in Guelmim, lives nomadically in Tangier, Rabat, and other places in Morocco and abroad.

- also interesting -



Elisabeth Piskernik (EP): You completed your studies at the Institut National des Beaux Arts in Tétouan in 2009. You then carried out several projects, most of them in public space. In the summer of 2012, you were invited to reflect on your mode of work and to experiment in the framework of the project *summer's lab* of the art space Le Cube in Rabat. What experiences and conclusions did this pause to think bring you?

Mohamed Arejda (MA): The invitation came at just the right moment so I could withdraw and charge my batteries for further projects. I started my artist's residency without any prepared concept; I let my mind wander and realized most of the works only very late. In my considerations, the site of Rabat as an administrative capital with the parliament and the demonstrations that had been going on for so long seemed to fit my needs. For me, this scenario is the backdrop Morocco. It represents everything that is hidden behind the beautiful façade and is the polar opposite of the theater that is generally presented to the audience.

EP: During the *summer's lab*, you first created a sculpture, *Crank*, a globe made of sandstone cut into two halves. What led you to create this work?

MA: The sculpture depicts a traditional mill with which the Moroccan women grind flour. The title *Crank* refers to a detail on the globe, the crank, which is small but essential for setting

the globe in motion. It was quite consciously placed where the USA is, in order to underscore its political and economic supremacy. *Crank* is the metaphor for a world in which the balance, the distribution of goods, food, and education, is not right.

EP: During the *summer's lab*, you produced two other works: *Greenislam* and *Azro N'Tmazert*. What is the meaning of *Greenislam*?

MA: The object *Greenislam* is a star consisting of two warning triangles. This is the star on the Moroccan flag, and the color green named in the title is holy in the Islamic value system. With this work, I want to point to the ideology that exploits Islam for its political purposes.

EP: And how should we understand *Azro N'Tmazert*, an impressive installation made of stones?

MA: *Azro N'Tmazert* is an expression in the Berber language Amazigh and means something like "The Stone of the Homeland". The history of the architecture of the apartment in which the art space Le Cube is housed, with the traces of the former French presence, brought the memory of my father's words back to mind: "Only with the stones of one's homeland can one build one's homeland!"

The installation *Azro N'Tmazert* consists of a wall of stones that block the door to a room. In this room, invisible to the viewer, is *Greenislam*,

but a small camera projects the object (a star) onto a wall in the main room. What does one really see? Is it what is hidden behind a stone wall and is not visible? Is the projection reality or subjective interpretation? It remains a game with the interior and the exterior, the local and the global.

EP: Before the *summer's lab*, you and other Moroccan artists of the young generation took part in the project *PLPAC* at the Institut français de Rabat. This wasn't the first time that you have worked together as a group. Do you define yourselves as an artists' collective, comparable to the *Collectif 212* founded in 2005? Do you see special synergy effects in such a close collaboration with artist colleagues?

MA: No, we don't call ourselves a collective. We work together to reach certain goals that we can't achieve alone. We should be seen more as a loose group that works temporarily like a collective. We give mutual support, but each takes his own artistic path.

Indeed, the project *PLAPAC* was not our first experience as a group. We – Mohssine Haraki, Mohamed El Mehadaoui, Otmane Fikraoui, and I – founded *Reseau domestique* (domestic network). It was a kind of "residency program" in which the participating artists lived with families in the countryside in order to explore the differences between the city and the village.

During the project period, we built a library, a movie house, a hotel, and a hamam – a temporary urban infrastructure, so to speak.

EP: How do you see the current situation of artists in Morocco?

MA: There is no real framework for culture and for us artists, because the state invests hardly anything in this area. Art and culture bring no mentionable profit; Morocco has other priorities.

As I see it, we artists work in the dark, in front of a black wall through which a small ray of light penetrates; it is our hope for a better future as Moroccan artists.

Elisabeth Piskernik

Founder and director of Le Cube - independent art room in Rabat, Morocco. Diploma in art history of the University of Vienna, Austria.

(Translation from German: Mitch Cohen)

---

summer's lab 2012:

**Mohamed Arejda**

Open studio - work in progress  
27 September - 23 October 2012

**Le Cube**

Independent art room

2, rue Benzerte, 1er étage

Rabat – ville  
Morocco

Website | Email



8 image pages, more info

More in UiU:

Mohamed Arejdal

Share:

Morocco

Nafas Art Magazine

Also interesting in UiU:



Art Destination  
Jordan



Venice Biennale  
2022



documenta 15,  
2022

Photo tours and information:  
Contemporary arts, cultural heritage, archaeological sites

59th International Art Exhibition: The Milk of Dreams, 23 April - 27 Nov. 2022. Curator: Cecilia Alemani.

18 June - 25 September 2022. Artistic Direction: ruangrupa, artist collective