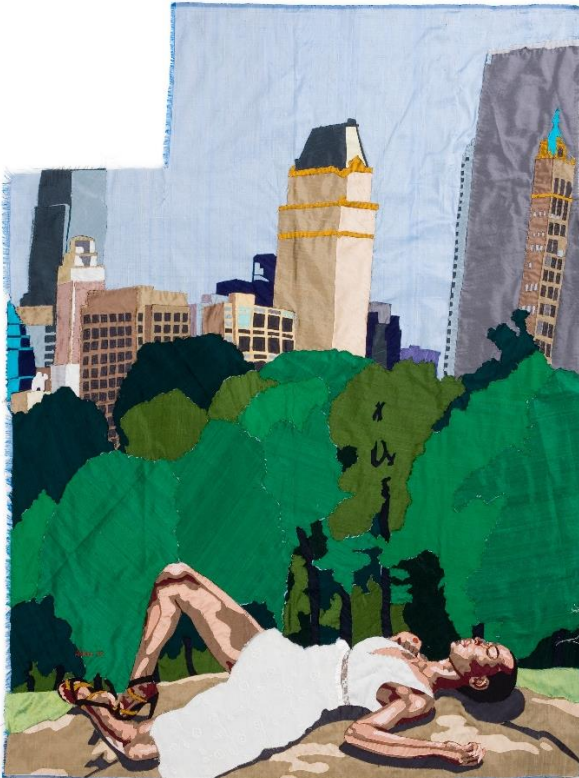




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Inaugural collection exhibition at MACAAL, Marrakech showcases a century of contemporary African arts

- Opening to the public on 2 February 2025, *Seven Contours, One Collection* marks the first permanent collection exhibition of MACAAL's world-leading collection, featuring over 150 multimedia works that reflect the cultural richness and global influence of contemporary African arts.
- Thematically organised across a series of galleries, it will explore seven main topics such as decolonization, ecological matters, spirituality and Afro-diasporic movements, offering new perspectives and dialogues.
- The exhibition bridges modern and contemporary artists such as Malick Sidibé, Hassan Hajjaj, Farid Belkahia and Kapwani Kiwanga, launching alongside new site-specific works by Salima Naji and Aïcha Snoussi and a temporary solo exhibition of Sara Ouhammadou.
- These coincide with the re-opening of MACAAL following a wider series of transformations and new developments, supported by Fondation Alliances to enhance public access and education around contemporary African arts.



The Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL) will re-open on 2 February 2025 with its first-ever collection exhibition, *Seven Contours, One Collection*. Featuring over 150 works from the museum's rare and comprehensive collection of over 2000 artworks – built up by the Lazraq family (founders of MACAAL) for over forty years – it will explore the vast creative legacy of African arts across paintings, sculptures, photographs, textiles, video art, installations and other multimedia works from the past century to the present day. Set to evolve over time, the exhibition reaffirms MACAAL's ongoing mission since 2016, to provide a dynamic, educational and accessible platform for contemporary African art.



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Housed in a dedicated space in the museum, *Seven Contours, One Collection* is organised dynamically across a series of seven themed rooms, along with an additional room presenting a timeline of African art developments from the era of independence to the present day. It will celebrate the creative and artistic innovation of Africa and its diasporas, while also exploring many of the social, political and historic narratives that have shaped the continent. The exhibition is curated by **Morad Montazami** and **Madeleine de Colnet** for Zamân Books & Curating in collaboration with **Meriem Berrada** (Artistic Director, MACAAL), with scenography by **Franck Houndégla**.

Each room will be themed around a key verb, prompting visitors to engage, interpret and connect with the artworks on display. *DECOLONIZE* will confront the legacy of colonial imagery while celebrating artists who reframe these narratives, such as **Ayana V. Jackson** and **Sammy Baloji**. It will also feature a work by **Nidhal Chamekh**, who redraws colonial iconography to imagine alternative histories, which will be juxtaposed alongside a 1934 colonial period drawing by American artist **Louis John Endres**.

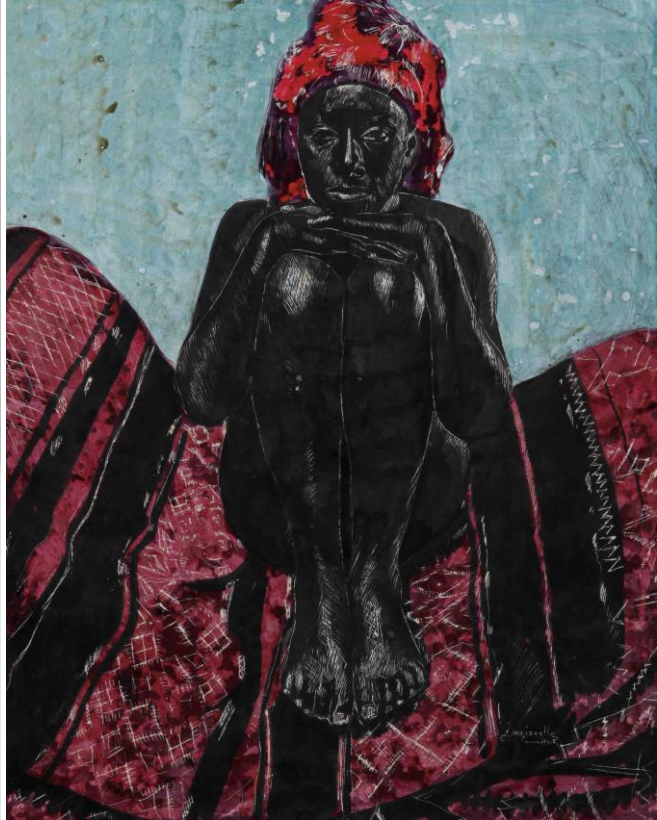


Language, memory and history converge in *TRANSCRIBE*, which will highlight the transformative power of written signs and visual alphabets. **M'Barek Bouhchichi's** poetic installation of engraved wood sticks referencing nomadic Saharan communities, will be displayed alongside works by **Frédéric Bruly Bouabré** who developed his own writing system mixing Bété, French and imaginary pictograms. Meanwhile *INITIATE* will delve into spiritual practices and rituals, creating a dialogue between the sacred and the modern, such as **Kwame Akoto's** works examining Ashanti heritage from pre-colonial eras.

Another room, *COHABIT*, will reflect on ecological issues and humanity's evolving relationship with nature and the environment. Alongside figurative works by **Billie Zangewa** and **Rahma Lhoussig** depicting men and women in natural and urban landscapes, it will feature a mural-like work by **Said Afifi**, evoking seismic landscapes associated with climate risks.

CONVERGE looks at Afro-diasporic dialogues and movements between the continent and other areas of the world. The gallery will showcase iconic black-and-white photography by **Malick Sidibé**, which captures the vitality of 1960s Mali, alongside a work by **Eric van Hove** (a Belgian, Cameroon-raised artist living in Marrakech), who creates art in cross-cultural collaboration with

artisans, craftspeople and factory workers. *PROMISE* will offer a tribute to Marrakech's role as a global creative hub, evoking its historic influence on western and African artists. This will include bold, vibrant works by Moroccan luminaries like **Hassan Hajjaj** and **Mohamed Melehi**. Additionally, it will also feature photography by **Daoud Aoulad-Syad**, capturing everyday life and the rich textures of Marrakech's streets, as well as a selection of figurative and whimsical paintings by **Abbes Saladi**, whose work was inspired by the city's Arab-Muslim heritage and its profound artistic and spiritual legacy.

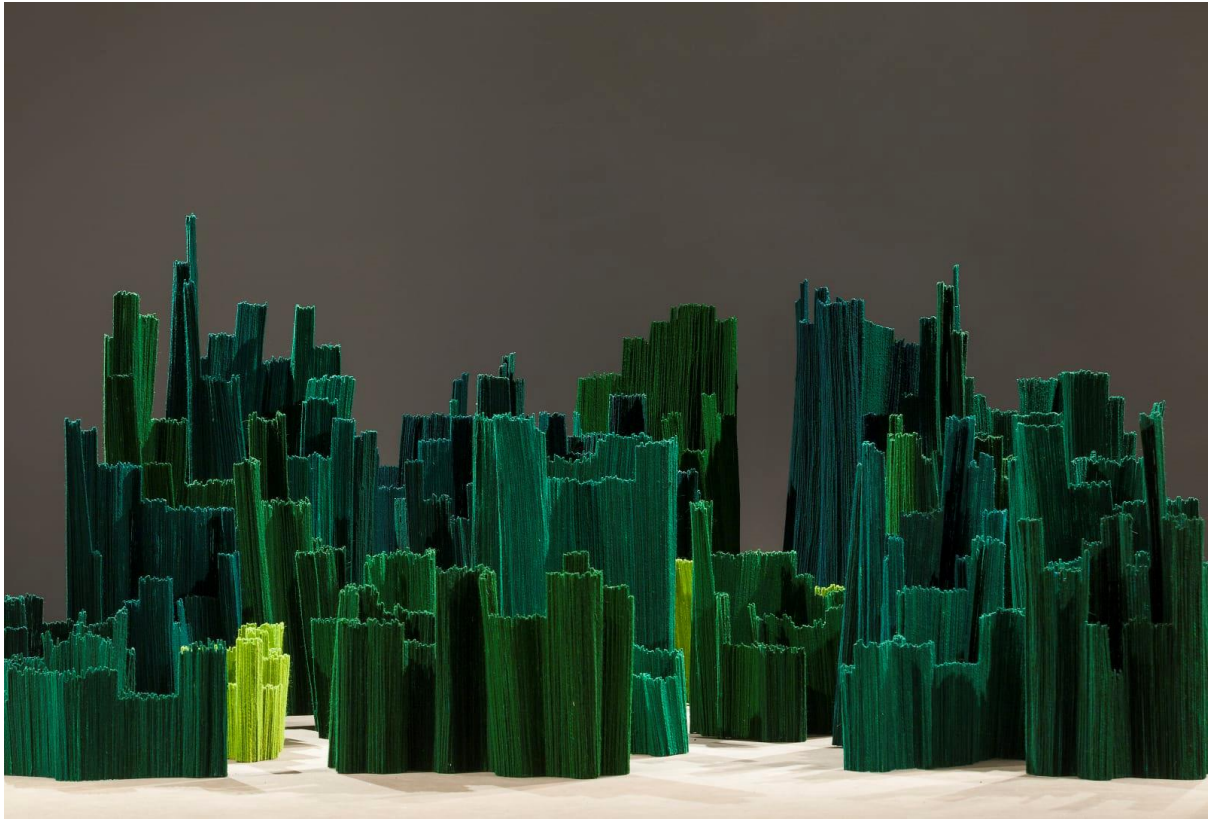


The final room, *WEAVE* will celebrate the continent's extraordinary artistic tradition of textile, craft and recycled materials – long championed by the museum – featuring major installations by **Serge Attukwei Clottey**, **Amina Agueznay** and **Mohamed Kacimi**.

Highlighting the exhibition's aim to create fresh dialogue and exchange, each room will be enriched by the perspective of prominent academics and intellectuals from the African continent and its diaspora, presented in the format of a video interview. These figures will include the notable theoretician **Ariella Aïsha Azoulay** (*ArtReview Power 100*, 2024), whose work focuses on decolonial theory; the philosopher **Nadia Yala Kisukidi**, who rethinks notions of Pan-Africanist utopias and Afro-diasporic migrations; and philosopher and curator **Dénètem Touam Bona**, who re-examines sacred and ritual knowledge and their potential for liberation and transcendence in today's world.

As part of a new, annual programme of site-specific installations across the museum's spaces, the collection exhibition will also comprise two monumental works by **Salima Naji** and **Aïcha Snoussi**. Naji's architectural piece in MACAAL's main atrium, *Dans les bras de la terre* (2025), has been crafted using local materials and construction techniques, including adobe and rammed earth, to reassess heritage preservation and sustainability. Snoussi's work, *Cyborg Archaeology* (2025) displayed in the central stairwell, will address themes of identity, queer

perspectives and power dynamics, with drawings that spread outwards to cover the surrounding walls.



Coinciding with the re-opening of the museum and the collection exhibition, MACAAL will also launch its temporary exhibition programme for 2025 with a solo show of French-Moroccan artist **Sara Ouhammadou**, presented in collaboration with ifa Gallery Berlin. Entitled *Display*, this will inaugurate the museum's new Artist Room, one of the transformed gallery spaces which will be dedicated to solo and group exhibitions. The exhibition will highlight Ouhammadou's long-term creative collaboration with artisans from Marrakech, challenging how we perceive the relationship between art and craftsmanship.

The exhibition co-curator Morad Montazami (Zamân Books & Curating) commented: *"In this new configuration, spaces are intentionally considered as individual stopovers along a cosmopolitan and plural journey. Each destination is introduced by an action verb, inviting us to expand the limits of our imagination. Each room also features its own thematic issue, scenographic experience and ecosystem. This journey finds home in the DNA structure of MACAAL: a pan-African museum where female artists play a significant role; a Marrakech-based museum whose mission is to represent African artists."*

Artistic Director of MACAAL, Meriem Berrada, commented: *"The inaugural exhibition in our temporary exhibition space celebrates Sara Ouhammadou's work while reaffirming MACAAL's commitment to producing exhibitions in close collaboration with Marrakech's artisanal community. Through Display, a project developed with ifa Gallery Berlin, the artist questions the tools used to display works of art in a museum context, by placing herself at the service of craftspeople with whom she has been working for several years."*



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Notes to editors

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Image captions:

1. Billie Zangewa, *Sunworshipper in Central Park*, 2009, Embroidered silk. Courtesy of MACAAL and the artist.
2. Abbes Saladi, *La Palmeraie* (undated), Mixed media on paper. Courtesy of MACAAL and the estate of the artist.
3. Ahmed Cherkaoui, *YA'SIN, Paris 1965*, 1965, Oil on canvas. Courtesy of MACAAL and the estate of the artist.
4. Chris Soal, *Gestalt*, 2021, Birch wood toothpicks, held in polyurethane sealant board. Courtesy of MACAAL and the artist.
5. Nidhal Chamekh, *Nos visages D*, 2019, Ink on fabric. Courtesy of MACAAL and the artist.
6. Jacques Majorelle, *Marocaine au foulard rouge, Marrakech* (undated), Mixed media on paper. Courtesy of MACAAL and the estate of the artist.
7. Amina Agueznay, *A Garden Inside*, 2020, Dyed spun natural wool, cotton, glue, galvanized metal, painted galvanized metal, painted wood. Courtesy of MACAAL and the artist.

About MACAAL

The Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL) in Marrakech is an independent, not-for-profit contemporary art museum. One of the first of its kind on the continent, MACAAL is dedicated to the promotion of African art through its diverse exhibition and education programmes, cultivating the interest of a wide audience base. The museum nurtures an understanding of contemporary art from Africa through collecting and exhibiting established and emerging artists, highlighting the creative energy and cultural diversity found across the continent.

MACAAL showcases art from Morocco and its neighbouring countries across a range of media. In addition to the permanent collection, its temporary exhibition programme focuses on art which engages in a dialogue with the continent, including African and international artists.

About the Collection

Driven by a deep passion for art, Alami Lazraq, founder and CEO of the Groupe Alliances, began his collection of modern and contemporary art forty years ago. Sharing the same passion as his father, Othman Lazraq has expanded the collection since the creation of Fondation Alliances in 2009 and the opening of MACAAL in 2016. As the President of MACAAL and Fondation Alliances, Othman Lazraq works closely with his teams and external advisors to enrich the collection.

Initially, the collection focused on the works of pioneering Moroccan artists before broadening its scope to include other influences, particularly from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Today, it includes works from nearly three hundred artists. It mainly consists of works by prominent Moroccan artists as well as artists from across the African continent. The collection covers a wide



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range of mediums, including painting, sculpture, and more recently, photography, installation, and digital arts.

The museum's collection illustrates the Fondation Alliances' commitment to providing universally accessible contemporary art, while supporting cultural development in Morocco. It comprises more than 2,000 Moroccan and international works, including pieces by some of the most renowned Moroccan artists such as Farid Belkahia, Ahmed Cherkaoui, Jilali Gharbaoui, Mohamed Melehi, and Chaïbia Talal. It also includes major artists from the African continent like Chéri Samba, Romuald Hazoumè, Joël Andrianomearisoa, Abdoulaye Konaté, Serge Attukwei Clottey, and Billie Zangewa, as well as artists from the Maghreb art scene, such as Meriem Bouderbala, Rafik El Kamel, Adel El Siwi, and Djamel Tatah.

About Othman Lazraq

Othman Lazraq is a multidisciplinary creative entrepreneur. A Moroccan national and trained interior architect, he studied in Switzerland and later in New York. In 2012, Othman returned to Morocco, his home country, where he founded Lazraq Studio, an architecture and interior design firm based in Casablanca. Since 2013, he has also served as the director of Fondation Alliances, a non-profit organisation that supports socio-cultural development and the democratisation of art in Morocco and across the African continent. Through the creation of various programmes aimed at artists and cultural actors, he champions the idea that culture drives progress and development.

His passion for photography led to the establishment of the Lcc Program, a competition promoting contemporary African photography that supports the exposure and recognition of emerging artists. Other initiatives include the *Programme Passerelles*, which aims to engage young audiences with the arts by organising workshops in theatre, cinema, visual arts, and design. Othman and the Fondation Alliances team also foster public engagement in Morocco through exhibitions and cultural programming hosted at the foundation's cultural space in Casablanca.

In 2016, Othman founded the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL) in Marrakech, where he has served as president since its inception. MACAAL is a philanthropic initiative by the Lazraq family, showcasing one of the largest collections of modern and contemporary art in Africa. The collection, made up of more than 2,000 works, brings together major and emerging artists from African and beyond. Since opening, MACAAL has hosted over 14 major temporary exhibitions, displaying the museum's collection alongside innovative curatorial projects by renowned guest curators. With his team, Othman implements educational initiatives and youth outreach programmes while fostering knowledge development and research within the museum.

In 2019, MACAAL launched its first open call for the MACAAL Residence, welcoming artists, researchers, and curators. The museum also introduced the MACAAL Lab – spaces for artistic experimentation – and the MACAAL Bootcamp, which offers workshops for emerging cultural professionals of African descent.

Othman Lazraq is a member of various institutional circles and committees, including Sotheby's 1744 Circle, the Fondation Cartier circle, the acquisition committees of the New National Museum of Monaco (NMNM) and Afreximbank, as well as the advisory board of Afikra. He previously served on the Tate Africa Acquisitions Committee (AAC).



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Since 2013, he has supported major cultural events across Africa and internationally, such as the Marrakech and Lubumbashi Biennales, the Bamako Encounters, *Afrique en Capitale* (Rabat), *Africa2020* (France), and the Lyon Biennale.

He has participated in numerous conferences and symposia worldwide, including BIENALSUR (2018), the Director's Forum at Yale University (2019), the Misk Global Forum (2021), RO.ME (2021), and Talking Galleries New York (2022).

Othman Lazraq has initiated several publications and contributed to various books, including a monograph on artist Salah Elmur, published in 2022 by the Misk Art Institute. His work has been featured in over a hundred articles and media outlets, including *CNN*, *BBC*, *Vogue*, and *Forbes*.

About Meriem Berrada

Meriem Berrada is an artistic director and a curator. She also works as an independent consultant alongside consulting firms in cultural engineering and strategy. Her curatorial practice critically explores the intersections of art and craft in contemporary narratives.

She is renowned for her ability to develop and lead innovative cultural projects. In 2016, she was instrumental in establishing the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL) in Marrakech, becoming its artistic director in 2018. Her notable initiatives include a photography competition and a comprehensive training program for young cultural professionals across Africa. Recognized for her contributions, Berrada was featured in *Apollo* art magazine's "40 Under 40" influential art world figures and in the French ranking *100 Femmes de Culture*. She continues to mentor emerging talents through projects like NOOR Photo and Duvangu residency (Gabon). Berrada serves on prestigious juries, including those for the British Journal of Photography CNAP/Ateliers Médicis, Goethe Institute South Africa. In 2021, Berrada was the co-curator of the 13th edition of the *Rencontres de Bamako* (Mali), and the head curator of *What is forgotten and what remains* at Palais de la Porte Dorée in Paris, as part of the *Africa2020* cultural season.

An active contributor to international dialogues, Berrada participated in Harvard's "Future of Africa-Based Curatorial Practice" symposium and the "Museums Round Table" in San Francisco. As artistic director of Tasweer Photography Biennale (Qatar), she continues to champion African and Arab voices in global contemporary art.

About Zamân Books & Curating

Led by Morad Montazami and Madeleine de Colnet, editorial and curatorial platform Zamân Books & Curating explores the counter-histories of visual modernity, with a focus on Arab, African and Asian worlds. Zamân Books has as its primary mission the dissemination of the latest international thinking about art and the image, through monographs, artists' books, and thematic and collective publications. Recent exhibitions organised by ZBC include: *Bagdad Mon Amour*, Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris, 2018; *Monaco-Alexandria. The Great Detour. World-Capitals and Cosmopolitan Surrealism*, Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, 2021-2022; *Casablanca Art School*, Tate St- Ives/Sharjah Art Foundation/Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 2023-2024, as well as the exhibition *New Waves: Mohamed Melehi and the Casablanca Art School Archives*, which took place at MACAAL in 2019-2020.



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About Franck Houndégla

Scenographer and designer with a PhD in architecture, Franck Houndégla specialises in exhibition and museum design, entertainment venues, living spaces, and the enhancement of public spaces and heritage sites in France and abroad. He is the author of works of fiction and research articles, embracing a mixed disciplinary culture that links different design registers and spatial scales—space, object, and sign. Franck Houndégla is also curator and scenographer of the exhibition *Singulier Plurielles: Dans les Afriques contemporaines* presented in the context of Biennale Design Saint-Etienne 2022. He teaches at the École Supérieure des Beaux-arts de Bordeaux and is a visiting lecturer at the École du Patrimoine Africain in Porto-Novo (Benin). He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in design from ENSBA Lyon and in architectural research from Université Paris-Est/Laboratoire IPRAUS - ENSA Paris-Belleville.

About Fondation Alliances

Founded in 2009, Fondation Alliances is a not-for-profit association backed by Groupe Alliances, the leading real-estate operator in Morocco, and whose mission is to support the social and cultural development of Morocco through specific actions. The foundation advocates for art accessible to all, through the development of significant cultural mediation to benefit all social backgrounds, thus participating in highlighting contemporary Moroccan and African art through a rigorous approach. In addition to MACAAL, Fondation Alliances has initiated five other projects:

- The Al Maaden Sculpture Park: Inaugurated in September 2013, the Al Maaden Sculpture Park features monumental sculptures by Moroccan and international artists, created exclusively in situ at Al Maaden, in Marrakech.
- Lcc Program: Launched in 2013, this programme—originally known as La Chambre Claire—is an annual event to support contemporary photography through the promotion and exhibition of an emerging artist.
- Programme Passerelles: Created in 2014, Passerelles is a programme designed to raise awareness about visual art, intended for young people from exurban areas, through workshops, tours, and encounters.
- MACAAL Residence: A residential research and production programme inaugurated in 2019.
- MACAAL Bootcamp: An intensive training programme designed for young professionals in the African art world, which includes a series of workshops, masterclasses, and teamwork projects supervised by recognised professionals from various sectors.