CULTURAL EXHIBIT EDITORIAL

A scream like an east wind: artistic creation in the contemporary Mediterranean

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Som, me dius,
la polseguera d'altres temps:
fetes així, de ponentada,
ben de garbí, de batre a l'era,
de tela fosca de la nit.

By Maria Cabrera Callís. Extract from "Nit mallorquina", found in *La ciutat cansada*.

When we say "culture" and we say "Mediterranean" what instantly comes to our minds is a plate on a table, olive oil, a slice of bread, almonds, figs and a glass of wine. And people, family or friends, sharing conversations and time around the table. We also hear some music, probably coming from the closest street or square, and it is a Melody performed by string or percussion instruments. We hear voices, ranging from the Andalusian *cante jondo*, to the reaping tunes from Mallorca, the Corsican and Occitan polyphonies and the Andalusian rhythm that dialogues with the Algerian *raï*, which shares the same breath of protest with the rap performed by youngsters in Maghreb. We also hear the compositions of Zülfu Livanelli, Theodorakis, these great masters that have grown their legacy in our land, as Maria del Mar Bonet, Pep Gimeno "Botifarra" or Biel Majoral have also done. We hear musicians that appeal to the tradition and twist it, such as Joana Gomila, and others that create extraordinary creative dialogues, as El Lebrijano or, once again, Maria del Mar Bonet did back in their days.

What we aim to do in the IDEES cultural section focused on Mediterranean culture is to step off the known track of cultural synergies and dig into the landscape of contemporary creation in the Mediterranean arena, providing insights of the three major problematic aspects that surround it: the challenge of mobility, artistic creation in contexts of repression and political instability, and the tensions of the new feminist paradigm.

The goal is to open a wider window that reaches further than the ethnographic and

romantic vision of a Mediterranean region that stopped being “ours” long ago, and somehow communicate the creative heartbeat and the survival strategies of artists in their diverse creative contexts. All this is done by focusing on non-institutional projects, as especially in the Mediterranean context, it is outside “official” spaces that the most genuine initiatives take place.

The transformative role of culture and creation

We think that it is through looking at problems that the transformative role of culture and creation can be better understood and that, therefore, we needed to boost the voice of non-institutionalized actors and discover some independent projects. The price of this freedom when it comes to building a project is the overwhelming fragility of these projects: economic concerns, bureaucratic pressure coming from institutions and, in some cases, the physical integrity of the involved people being put at risk. And we do not think this is only an issue that is exclusive to one of the Mediterranean shores; despite the existing and insufficient supports, in our shore there are several cultural projects that, although small, have had a very deep impact in their context and that, despite contributing to their communities, end up disappearing due to tiredness, institutional abandonment and loneliness.

Therefore, we do not aim to provide an exhaustive list of creators. Rather, we aim to shed light into the artistic dissidences as spaces of resistance and freedom. From comics to literature, taking into consideration actions performed in public spaces –if this space can still be considered as a space of action–, to the strategies followed when it comes to overcoming the limits of repression and censorship in these Mediterranean cities, effervescent spaces of conflict and cultural exchange. From Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, France, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Catalonia, we will collect genuine voices and experiences in order to find again, and finally, the value of hospitality and sharing from the tradition of the Muslim *rihla*, the journey as a source of knowledge, as a space of freedom and discovery of oneself. We will thus return, inevitably, to the shattered dream of a sea “of our own”, to that simple table where we sit together with friends and family, sharing and welcoming the foreigner, the other, with our arms wide open.

Cultural Exhibit

Mobility

Santiago Alba Rico , Najat El Hachmi , Lara Bourdin , Pau Catà , Uri Costak

Transfrontier Writings

Meritxell Joan Rodríguez , Ahmed Ghazali , Mohamad Bitari , Asmaa Azaizeh

Creation and Dissent

Gürçim Yilmaz , Vural Özdemir , Salma El Tarzi , Sondos Shabayek , Azza Abo Rebieh

Winds of change riding the arab comic

Pedro Rojo , Álvaro Pons , Zainab Fasiki , Andeel , Sonia Ben Salem , Lena Merhej

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Mireia Estrada Gelabert

Mireia Estrada Gelabert is a cultural manager and curator of artistic projects related to immigration, interculturality and social integration in Catalonia, Spain and Morocco. In 2011 she founded Jiwar Creation and Society, an association that for 8 years offered residencies for artists from all over the world and worked to extend the creative dynamics of the residency by looking for spaces of deliberation and dialogue. She studied in Barcelona, France and Quebec, where she did a Masters degree in French-speaking African literature. From 2005 to 2019 she developed a series of teaching resources for schools in Girona related to the challenges of interculturality. She is a member of the Advisory Council of the Teatre Lliure in Barcelona. She currently combines her work in cultural management with teaching in secondary schools.