

# Integration

## A Public Programme by Céline Condorelli May & November 2022

At the École Supérieure des beaux-arts de Casablanca  
20 boulevard Rachidi  
Casablanca, Morocco



My entry in the large field of knowledge available in the *School of Casablanca* consists in a common interest in working against the traditional / historical opposition between culture and politics. I recognise the important contribution that the Casablanca Art School made in understanding and developing the role of art and artists in society. The politics of this question lay in the role and responsibility of the arts within the construction of more adequate societies than the ones offered to us today, or those offered sixty years ago, different realities that nevertheless operate according to the same logic that feminists and anti-colonial scholars have long since understood as “CPC”—colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism—a system thriving on the exploitation of labour, precarity of life, and inequality. For this reason does it become essential to look again at how the *School of Casablanca* proposes the role of artists as contributors to a democratic project, through the construction of a decolonised and renewed culture able to link the past—or collective heritage—to possible futures. To engage with these (very large!) questions more specifically, I would like to develop a knowledge and understanding of how an artistic culture is present in public space, through public art, decoration, a techné outside the museums and other spaces where culture is traditionally conserved.

Secondly, I am also interested in how the artists of the Casablanca Art School understood and chose to pursue research oriented towards abstraction. Pursuing abstraction as a language for action, and re-appropriating it back from the notion of it being a XXth century western painterly invention, as is beautifully explained in a passage of a text by Toni Maraini which explains that, in the school:

“A lot of attention was given to the signs and symbols, their aesthetic, iconography and history within the Afro-Mediterranean space. (...) now a beautiful rural traditional carpet—the work of a woman artisan from the Houz region—was hung on the wall of the painting class to inspire students. The carpet was friendly named “Klee’s carpet”. For a short period, Bert Flint—a Dutch-born researcher who was collecting rural pieces of art throughout Morocco focusing on iconology—joined the school. The “source of reference” confirmed how meaningful a triangle, wavy line, a lozenge, or a colour could be. They were all elements of a cryptic language—or, to say it with Asger Jorn’s *Imaginista* declaration of the visual realm—they were “silent myths”. Painters of the Maghreb were inspired in a radical free and personal way by such a “source”. It confirmed that abstraction was not the fruit of an “Occidental alienation”, as the traditionalists had claimed.”\*

This question of “Klee’s carpet” brings me back to the *Carpet* by Klee, (Paul Klee, *Teppich*, 1927, Private collection, used in the *bauhaus imaginista* project and exhibition), which I would like to use as key: to look at abstraction as space on the one hand, and choose to read the drawing as a plan, and also to anchor an understanding of abstraction as an ancestral practice of experimentation, documented and therefore mined by what was to be designated as western abstract art. To say it in another way, it brings us that experimentations with abstraction do not originate from the great male artists of the 20th century, as most of art history would like us to think, but in crafts practices from around the world, usually carried out by women. This research strand should therefore be called: abstraction as women’s labour.

—Céline Condorelli

\*Toni Maraini, *The Bauhaus and Morocco*, in *bauhaus imaginista* journal, <http://www.bauhaus-imaginista.org/articles/256/the-bauhaus-and-morocco>

# May 2022

## Artist Talk with Céline Condorelli

Wednesday 25 May 2022

16–18h

École Supérieure des beaux-arts de Casablanca

The talk, moderated by Salma Lahlou, takes place in Casablanca at the École supérieure des beaux-arts de Casablanca.

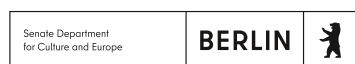
The talk will be in French and shall start with a presentation by Céline Condorelli on her practice and ongoing research for the School of Casablanca, followed by a discussion with the moderator and Q/A with the public.

## Part of *the School of Casablanca*

The *School of Casablanca* is a collaborative project that takes as its starting point the legacy of the Casablanca Art School and its innovative pedagogical methods and exhibition strategies in 1960s Morocco.

KW Institute for Contemporary Art and Sharjah Art Foundation, in collaboration with Goethe-Institut Marokko, ThinkArt and Zamân Books & Curating have initiated the School of Casablanca. The project includes research residencies, public programmes, a digital archive and a touring exhibition of new works created by the residents as well as an exhibition of historical works by the artists who were originally associated with the Casablanca Art School. Launched in 2020, the initiative will continue through 2024.

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The *School of Casablanca* is initiated by KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin and Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah in collaboration with ThinkArt, Casablanca, Zamân Books & Curating, Paris, and Goethe-Institut Marokko.

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