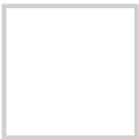

How do we productively map the historical and contemporary relationships that exist between North Africa, the Middle East and the Global South?

Embroiderers of Actuality

6 November 2014



A platform is a space for speaking in public. It is an opportunity to express ideas and thoughts. It also suggests the formal declaration of a stance or position on any given subject.

Unique to Ibraaz is a 'platform', a question put to writers, thinkers and artists about an issue relevant to the MENA region. This platform is sent to respondents both in and beyond the MENA region and it will change every six months.

KURCHI DASGUPTA
MARYAM JAFRI
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ANTHONY GARDNER

It is a fragile moment for the Mediterranean, socially and politically. The crisis has brought into question the lack of fundamental values and organizations, not to mention art in dialogue with the civil society, particularly with women. It is this context in relation to the question of what 'resistance' means and how we might perform it that is the subjects of our project.

Embroiderers of Actuality is an action that aims to be a sensible provocation: a visual discussion about the position of women in the society. As an exchange between local populations and artists, its purpose is to map diversities of (feminine) resistance within the realities of the Global South. The project uses texts of art, poetry and literature, written by local women, and employs embroidery as a form of folk craftsmanship that speaks to notions of belonging, tradition and participation. Through this, the project aims to provide an opportunity for women to express their voice and to improve their socio-economic situation, since the embroidery work is paid, thereby generating an additional source of income.

In this sense, Embroiderers of Actuality is also a confrontation and a statement between yesterday and today, between politics and religion, between modernity and tradition. Art is used here as a tool to realize a dialogue between the local population and artists. This situation questions contemporary art as such, as a possibility or necessity to bring art into the public sphere. This dialogue will develop, confront and stimulate the research for the artist (conceptual and formal) and will be, at the same time, a medium of communication, working in the

intersection between the private sphere and the public one.

This project not only concerns an attitude of attention to location (city/country), but also an awareness of ethics and politics, a direct performative and emotional involvement, and the acquisition of a personal point of view, referring specifically to women and related to each personal history.

Embroiderers of Actuality is a collaboration between the Moroccan artist Abdelaziz Zerrou and Swiss artist Aglaia Haritz. The project wants to questions the role of art in political and social change and does this by producing collaborative situations in which art is in direct contact with the community. It was first created in Cairo at Art Residency Artellewa, then in Rabat at Le Cube, followed by a residency in Casablanca at the French Institute. It will soon be realized in Marrakech in collaboration with the Dar Al Mam'un Foundation and the Swiss Embassy.

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