

Press release
Loft Art Gallery at Art Dubai

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Transmission is love



(Love) الحب, Malika Agueznay, 72x72 cm, 2022

The act of transmission is born of a need to share and preserve values that define ourselves and the world we live in. Intangible cultural heritage, according to UNESCO, is defined by four characteristics: it is both traditional and contemporary at the same time, inclusive, representative, and based in community. TRANSMISSION IS LOVE embraces this exchange of research and values, from acts of kindness to material experimentation, presenting five artists who share their own experience of the intangible. The artists—Mohamed Melehi, Malika Agueznay, Mohamed Lekleti, Mous Lamrabet, and Marion Boehm—represent the range of transition from modern to contemporary art. All five artists manifest their own aesthetic process, while together they endeavour to share their love of heritage and values. Art is the transmission of their feelings and, for these five, transmission is an act of love.

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Mohamed Melehi, *Untitled*, 2013, Mixed media on canvas, 170 x 150 cm

The first of the five is the late Mohamed Melehi, known throughout the world for his blending of hard-edge abstraction, exuberant colour, and the geometries of Islamic art. Early in his career, Melehi, the master of the wave, championed the fierce reconnection with artisanal tradition and material experimentation associated with the Casablanca School movement. He continued to explore new symbolism, from Berber iconography to cybernetics, and was eager to share his discoveries in the public space. In Sufi tradition, he represented the universe and all of its elements in his work, as Sufis believe that fire, water, the earth and the moon reflect the immanence of God, and for Melehi, this transmission of his Sufi roots was a gesture of love.



Malika Agueznay, *Untitled*, 2022, Oil on canvas, Wood, 150 x 250 cm

One of Melehi's students was Malika Agueznay, the pioneering woman artist of the Casablanca School. Known as the Morocco's pre-eminent printmaker, Agueznay is also a sculptor and painter, and has developed a cross-disciplinary oeuvre inspired by the natural world. Like her friends Melehi and Belkahia, her innovative works span the transition from modern to contemporary Moroccan art, always with a love of nature and for all beings. For *Transmission is Love*, she has created a series of lyrical calligraphic panels, in which letters adopt the vocabulary of her symbol of choice: seaweed. Here the artist offers up the five values essential to us all: humility, peace, generosity, affection, and gratitude.



Mohamed Lekleti, *Entre deux infinis tu nous tiens suspendus*, 2022, Mixed media on paper, 152 x 250 cm

Calligraphy, nature, and irreverence combine in the exquisite details of Mohamed Lekleti's multi-media work, exploding in a black and white meets colour landscape of chaos. He recalls the hikaya (legends) that his grandmother would transmit to him as a child, and these fabulous stories developed his own fervent imagination. Animals and retro-style figures are captured in mid-air amid exquisitely drawn machines, piano, and the abjad flowing from an open shirt collar. Images emerge from the depth of consciousness in a shock of cultural dissonance, resonating with his own memories of childhood.



Marion Boehm, *Nadira*, 2022, Mixed media & collage, 167 x 120 cm

Marion Boehm is a collage artist who divides her time between her native Germany and her adopted home of South Africa. She explores the universal identity of children in her mixed-media on paper series Nomad. Transmission is in her DNA, as she combines her research into east-west diffusion culture with her experience as a preschool teacher in South Africa. Boehm uses images of children from northern Morocco in this series, integrating and elaborating their stories with bits of textile, sequins, shells. She adds delicate, hand-made objects that evoke millennial tradition, connecting these children to their heritage. In these rich, colourful works, she weaves the multiple identities of her subjects to show their underlying grace and generosity.



Mous Lamrabat, *If the shoe fits*, 2019, Tirage fine art, Impression jet d'encre,
Papier: Hahnemühle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth 305g, 75 x 50 cm

Moroccan-Belgian photographer Mous Lamrabat shapes a parallel universe, filtering his own brand of African heritage through humour, empathy, and irreverence, reconnecting with themes from his early years to reach out to the child within us all. Brand logos represent his teenage desire for assimilation and the bright world of coveted objects. The women in his family are powerful influences in his life, and hold an important place in his work. Lamrabat blends the lines between cultures, leaving the viewer free to interpret the mystery of the veil and the power of the brand. For Lamrabat, traditions are open to reinterpretation to create a more perfect, non-binary world, where women are superheroes and racism/discrimination are things of the past.

Together, these five artists embrace the past and describe their own individualistic vision for the future, underscoring the specificity of Morocco to find the universal humanity that we all share. With love.