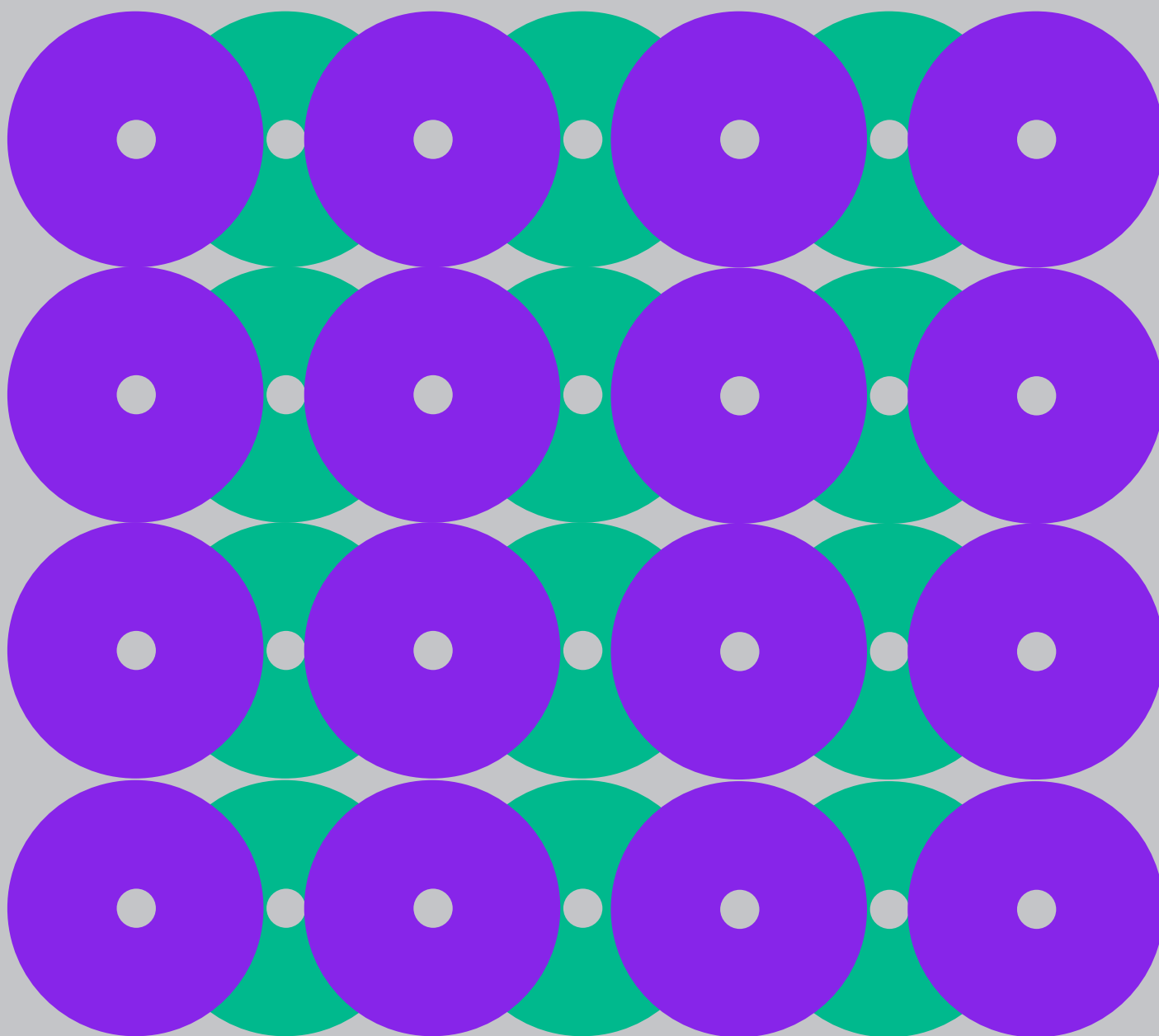


# AFAC Annual Report 2019







## About AFAC

The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC was founded in 2007 through the initiative of Arab cultural activists as an independent foundation to support individual artists, writers, researchers, intellectuals, as well as organizations from the Arab region working in the field of arts and culture. Since its launch, AFAC's programs have steadily expanded to cover cinema, documentary film, documentary photography, visual and performing arts, music, creative and critical writings, research on the arts, entrepreneurship, trainings and regional events. Based in Beirut, AFAC works with artists and organizations all over the Arab region and the rest of the world.

## Our vision

AFAC strives to build a flourishing cultural and artistic scene across the Arab region that contributes to establishing open and vibrant societies, where young and seasoned voices engage with each other in the wake of the massive transformations being witnessed by the region.

In such a context, AFAC seeks for works of art and culture to contribute to the following goals:

- Take advantage of the grey areas and collapse of self-evident certitudes in our region to spur fresh thinking and innovative visions of the future.
- Search for tools to bear witness to the hopes and hindrances our region is living through, with techniques that go past traditional documentation to create new forms of experimentation in writing and ways of dealing with the image.
- Rediscover the complexity and diversity of our societies, and search for marginalized narratives in both the near and distant pasts.
- Promote engagement between Arab societies and their diasporas, especially after such a large number of Arab artists have become refugees or been forced into exile across the world, which has reflected on them personally and the art they produce, as well as on the various societies they are now working in.
- Expand the space for civic engagement through the offerings of intellectuals, artists, researchers and civil society organizations; a space for dialogue, questioning, critical reflection, and tolerance.

## How we work

1. Autonomy: AFAC is keen on diversifying its funding sources allowing us autonomy to work towards realizing our vision.
2. Transparency: AFAC adheres to transparency at every stage of work, beginning from the grants application forms which are accessible and open to all, up until the selection process itself, which is the responsibility of a committee of jurors chosen annually for each category.
3. Dynamism: AFAC carries out periodic evaluations of its work, taking into consideration deliberations between jurors, social and political changes, and the new creative genres that accompany them, which allow us to be constantly prepared to evolve or modify our programs.

## Strategic Areas of Work

Supporting the production of cultural and artistic work lies at the core of AFAC's work. Since our inception, numerous changes have taken place in our funding programs in response to the needs, gaps, and emergence of new forms of expression and storytelling. The fund for supporting novelists has transformed into encouraging other genres of creative writing, while the support for documentary filmmaking has expanded, adding a dedicated program for enhancing documentary photography.

The support that AFAC offers is not restricted to cultural and artistic work; it extends to cover research on the arts, to secure appropriate channels of distribution and to guarantee the sustainability of pioneering cultural organizations in the Arab world, whether by way of financial support or through training and mentorship. In accordance with this, AFAC's work is divided into five strategic areas: providing grants, developing training programs, building and sharing knowledge, broadening the pool of supporters for the arts, and cultivating appreciation for and engagement with contemporary arts and culture productions by connecting them with audiences.

- Grants: AFAC offers close to two hundred grants every year through open calls to submit applications. These grants are spread over nine programs: Performing Arts, Visual Arts, the AFAC Documentary Program, Music, the Research on the Arts Program, Creative and Critical Writings, Training and Regional Events, Cinema, and the Arab Documentary Photography Program.
- Training and Mentorship: In addition to the grants, AFAC sets up programs that offer training and mentorship to develop missing skills and practices, as is the case with the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship and the Arab Documentary Photography programs.
- Knowledge Building and Sharing: AFAC's extensive database includes more than 13,000 applicants and 1,556 funded projects, which has made it into a considerable source of information on cultural trends, modes of artistic production, social impact, geographic contexts, and all the relevant statistics. AFAC shares this information through reports, infographics, grantees' stories and studies that it commissions.
- Broadening the Pool of Supporters for the Arts: AFAC is committed to strengthening philanthropy for the arts, and to working with the private sector to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship in the field of cultural and artistic production. Our aim is to expand and diversify sources of funding for artists, writers, intellectuals and researchers, as well as organizations that present artistic and cultural content.

- Building Audiences: AFAC seeks to cultivate appreciation for and engagement with arts and culture production to reinforce the transformational power of creative expression.



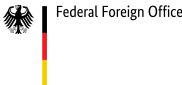
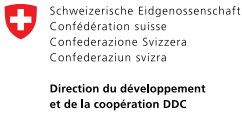
AFAC ARAB FUND FOR  
ARTS AND CULTURE  
الصندوق العربي  
للثقافة والفنون

## Board of Trustees:

**AFAC is privileged to have an esteemed Board of Trustees made up of the following members:**

Dr. Ghassan Salame, Dr. Nabil Qaddumi, Dr. Suzanne Wettenschwiler, Hani Kalouti, Sawsan Al-Fahoum Jafar, Abla Lahoud, Amr Ben Halim, Elias Khoury, Farouk Mardam Bey, Roxane Zand, and Oussama Rifahi.

## Institutional Donors:



## Individual Donors:

**AFAC is grateful for the generous contributions of the following individual donors:**

Nabil Qaddumi - Amr Ben Halim - Sawsan Jafar - Hani Kalouti - Abla Lahoud - Housseem Aoudi - Reem Z. Renno - Elizabeth Kassab - Charles Aoun

\* AFAC is also most grateful to a number of philanthropists who prefer to remain undisclosed.

## MORE ABOUT AFAC

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AFAC is registered in Lebanon under decree 6388 dated 24 September 2011, as the Lebanese branch of the foundation AFAC, registered in Zug, Canton of Zug, Switzerland on 23 June 2006, under article 80 of the Swiss Civil Code. Previously, AFAC was registered in Jordan as the Jordanian branch of the foundation AFAC, under registration number 2099, dated 11 April 2007. AFAC is audited yearly by PricewaterhouseCoopers in Zurich, Switzerland.



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# in a nutshell

an introduction  
to the AFAC  
annual report 2019

Measuring the “impact” of the arts has never been easy. Those who believe in the transformative power of the arts do so on a principle of faith: they know that they themselves have been profoundly changed through their relationship to art, and therefore that such change is not only possible, but inevitable. But by which metrics does one then measure that impact, that transformation?

This is an important question for funding structures such as AFAC to think about, because the question of how to secure funds in order to provide support to individual artists and cultural entities that are part of its network, and how to continue securing funds in order to be able to cast an even wider net of support, is a constant preoccupation. Especially during a time when funding for the arts has significantly declined worldwide, most funders wish to see a return on their investments, in the sense that they would like to see proof that they have invested their money in such a way that has made a difference. And being able to point out that difference is key to attracting new individual philanthropists, who have always been the backbone of art patronage in general.

With the artists and structures that we support, the question of impact is different but no less vital to our work. We know that the support we provide makes a real difference in their lives, and are trying to collect testimonies to document this both for ourselves and for others, whether through in-depth questionnaires or such initiatives as our Stories Boldly Told series, for example. Examining impact on people’s lives and the ways it manifests—whether in work achieved or simply in a heightened sense of possibility—is important because it helps us understand how to consistently do better by our grantees, and how to most capably fulfill our role as the “connective tissue” between donors and grantees.

Unfortunately, in an Arab world beset by crises and humanitarian emergencies, many funders would rather understandably provide financial support to deal with urgent needs. This is also where impact can be most apparent, measured in the number of people who have received relief, in the amount and kind of relief that has been provided, etcetera. Against the urgency of crisis, support for the arts can seem like a secondary concern. But art, too, provides relief in various different ways. And it is also a necessary component of a healthy, functioning society.



Among dedicated patrons, it is commonly accepted that the sort of transformation that art makes possible usually unfolds slowly over the long-term, or happens on a more layered scale. That it can rarely be measured in economic terms. But it is also accepted that its impact can be exponential, spreading through an entire community, an entire society, creating shifts here and there that accumulate over time and help enact profound transformation. These transformations can be traced in increased knowledge production, in better capacity, in changes of individual attitudes and larger discourse, and together, all of these can extend to changes on the policy level, creating a positive feedback loop that can then translate into a more robust public sector that places support for the arts as a priority. This, of course, is what AFAC is consistently working toward: helping create and foster an environment in which there are more institutions like AFAC, more sustainable structures, more resources for arts and culture production provided through a combination of public and private backing as well as engaged individual donors, so that artistic and cultural production can connect with and inspire support from the widest community possible, from everyday people and not just big philanthropists.

All of our activities in 2019 were dedicated to creating as wide an impact as possible with the resources we have, strengthening existing networks and growing new ones. The year saw a significant leap in the number of potential grantees applying to AFAC, and also saw the continued implementation of a number of initiatives meant to unfold in several phases over several years, most notably the North Africa Cultural Program and the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship scheme.

Training, mentorship, and capacity building workshops took place under the umbrella of a number of different programs, with both cultural entities and individual artists receiving advice and support according to the needs of their respective fields.

The last quarter of 2019 also saw profound change unfold in Lebanon where AFAC is based, when a revolution broke out on October 17. The occasion called on us both as individuals and as an institution to reconsider our priorities, to balance between reacting in the moment and planning how to better stand our ground moving forward into the future, and made it clearer than ever how imperative it is for us to continue working and operating at full capacity regardless of circumstance.

The following is an overview of this year's highlights, in terms of successes, lessons, and challenges. We hope above all that it provides a sense of the impact that AFAC's funding, programs, and initiatives have had across the region.



## increasing capacity

In 2018, we carried out the field research stage of the North Africa Cultural Program, as a precursor to its launch this year in 2019. Members of the AFAC team conducted extensive on-site meetings and discussions with various cultural actors across the five countries that comprise the North African region with a view to identifying how best to approach opening up two new grant schemes. Carried out in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the NACP is intended to provide institutional and/or programmatic support over a three-year period to cultural entities and organizations in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt. There is a national fund to support institutional infrastructures that are already in place, and a regional fund to facilitate cross-border cooperation, collaboration, and networking.

After much discussion among the juries, the NACP chose to support 28 different cultural entities, as well as 12 regional collaborations that involve a total of 37 different organizations across North Africa and other regions.

Of the 28 different cultural entities that were chosen, 21 were awarded funds for institutional strengthening support, either solely or in combination with programmatic support. Only 7 were awarded funds for programmatic support alone. This was very much a strategic choice, in line with our core mission of building capacity in such a way that might allow the entities and collaborations fostered by this scheme to then carry on by themselves, growing organically and eventually creating their own infrastructures independent of AFAC's support.

The results of our 10-year study, which ended in 2017, pointed very clearly to the fact that the best way to ensure longevity for cultural entities is to provide institutional support. But most funding schemes seek out projects that have a clear beginning and end date, awarding money to facilitate time-bound events, activities, or programs. There are unfortunately very few grant schemes that offer open support, that is, funds dedicated to boosting an institution at large, allowing that institution's own team to decide where and how the money might best be spent to shore up any weaknesses.

Hence, a cultural entity in need of institutional support, but which is offered programmatic support alone, might be able to efficaciously mount the event in question and even be lauded for its success. But there is a big chance that this same entity, faced later on down the line with crisis or challenge, might not survive because it was fundamentally under-resourced all along.

The NACP was always intended to be a flagship program, with the potential to be duplicated in other Arab regions. But in the meantime, it isn't the only AFAC initiative specifically designed to foster and grow different cultural entities. The Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship, which is also a three-year program, entered into its second year in 2019, with its cohort of participants receiving mentorship, training, and general courses from local and international experts and practitioners on everything from community engagement to ethics in project financing. Learning how to quantify and communicate impact in order to mobilize resources is also a fundamental lesson, studied from various different angles. Again, the goal is for AFAC to provide support that can then extend independently into the future, and soliciting funding is a huge part of the work that cultural entities must do in the absence of a supportive public sector. Securing that funding requires being able to demonstrate impact in imaginative and innovative ways, particularly when it comes to core programs.

We try to share with our ACE cohort the lessons that we have ourselves learned (and are continuing to learn): because again, funders tend to prefer offering restricted support, and this applies not only to projects that are restricted in terms of time-frame, but also restricted in their definitions. That is, a grant scheme set up to support "rap music" is more likely to receive donor funding than one set up for the more general category of "music." Likewise, a grant for "graphic novels" is more attractive to donors than one for simply "writing."

This is something that we ourselves have had to find a way to balance. Restricted support makes most funders feel safer: they know exactly what they are paying for. And so, setting up specific programs (such as, for example, ACE itself) allows us to attract more funders, which is to the benefit of our grantees. But we try never to do this at the expense of our ongoing, more core programs, because more open support also fosters more creativity and diversity. It allows for projects that don't fit into a specific niche but might be, precisely for that reason, bursting with surprise and innovation. And so, with long-term impact and increased capacity always at the forefront of our considerations, we know we must continue to fight for the ability to provide open support to grantees, strategically balancing this with more "restricted" support schemes and where there is a need.

producing  
knowledge

As our experience with the NACP makes clear, building effective programs and growing the cultural sector requires reliance on knowledge produced both from theory and from practice. But knowledge production, like art, also has an inherent value that cannot be read through practical application alone. It also unfolds over time, and works in ways that are not immediately apparent. The Research on the Arts grant scheme, established in association with the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS), seeks out research projects that establish connections between different fields, disciplinary formations, and cultural practices, and that demonstrate an awareness of debates positioned at the juncture between local, regional, and global issues.

It is a grant scheme meant to acknowledge not only the importance of theory as a component of understanding artistic practice, but also the prevalence of theory in much contemporary artistic practice. Beyond that, however, research on the arts impacts the wider cultural discourse, revealing art's fundamental entanglement with various categories and disciplines including environmental studies, policy formation, social and political issues, and paving the way for aesthetic and technological innovation that consequently open up more avenues of research, more avenues for dissemination, more potential for transformation and change.

The applications we received nearly doubled in this second year of the grant scheme, from 47 applications in 2018 to 84 in 2019. Among the six projects chosen for funding there is one from Sudan, studying the Sudan uprising through not only its art, but connecting this to issues of artificial intelligence and grassroots activism. One of the two projects from Morocco examines the always-vital question of the relationship between art and power by looking at how arts and culture are instrumentalized by the authorities in the country.

*All of the chosen projects demonstrate how research in the arts is a vector that impacts and disseminates change in various different directions, serving to underscore one of the fundamental beliefs that animates our work at AFAC: that arts and culture are inherent parts of a vibrant social and political whole.*

## changing attitudes and discourse

As the production of knowledge lays bare the porousness of cross-border exchange and the prevalence of intercultural links, it seems like physical and ideological borders become ever-more forbidding. The openness toward migrants witnessed in Europe around the middle of the last decade has turned into outright backlash at its close. Right-wing ideologies have experienced resurgence and new welcome in the US and Europe, while closer to home, state repression and fundamentalism have tightened their grips on Arab societies. Artists from the region have great challenges to face, whether working at home or abroad, both in personal terms and in artistic ones. Even within so-called supportive environments, many artists are dealing with the unfair burdens of expectation. Social and political norms would have them bound within the confines of a specific identity, so that at home they are expected to push boundaries, while abroad they are expected to pull their weight with regards to representation.

But the feedback from our juries across the board this year in both our on-going grant schemes and our newer, more specific ones, shows that many artists manage to walk this line with such grace and finesse it disappears entirely. The chosen projects across various disciplines are sophisticated, insightful, critical, traditional, and experimental: they turn their lenses inward on the self, outward onto society and the world at large; they deal with issues of both local and global importance, and with great sensitivity also often point out the personal stakes inherent in each issue.

One scheme that deserves special highlight is the Arab Documentary Photography Program. Relatively new, ADPP combines financial support along with technical support and mentorship. Documentary photography has often been wielded in such a way as to both consciously and unconsciously reinforce hierarchies of dominance; in the Arab world, the documentary photograph has long been the purview of conflict journalists, turning a lens on suffering without revealing the full range of humanity that exists alongside. The ADPP applicants all presented work that re-appropriates their own stories, that delves deeply into issues of displacement and migration, that explores questions of space and memory, and that probes at the tension and violence surrounding gender and social expectations.

In Europe, AFAC held a number of activities under the umbrella of the Arab-European Creative Platform, including a continuation of the writing workshop for Arab migrants in Germany under the mentorship of Egyptian writer Haytham al-Wardany, and the organization of a conference in Berlin in partnership with Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) on narratives and politics. Such symposiums and workshops, particularly in Europe, function not only to challenge negative perceptions of Arabs and migrants, but also as organic and informal networking events, between Arab artists and cultural practitioners, and also between European artists, key cultural actors, and decision-makers and their Arab counterparts. This sort of impact, that manifests in differences in attitude and discourse, is the most difficult to really measure, but also the kind with the most transformative potential. When people talk about art's power to "change hearts and minds," to "humanize," to "challenge," to "push the limits of the imagination," they are talking about this kind of change. A change that affects the way people think about and interact with one another, that slowly translates into shifts in social norms and values. There is not a repressive ideology in the world that doesn't understand the power of propaganda, and doesn't fear art's power to counteract and interfere with it.

## revolution and its aftermath

On October 17, 2019, right before a number of AFAC juries were set to convene in Beirut, a proposed government tax on WhatsApp phone calls brought to surface tensions that had been straining beneath the surface of Lebanese society for years, if not decades. People erupted in protest, filling the streets and squares from north to south, in town and country, from mountain to coast. In 12 days, the government—guilty of such corruption and financial mismanagement that it destroyed the banking system and led to economic crisis—was brought down. The AFAC team, who had watched uprisings break out across the region for an entire decade, and who had tailored programs to consider the needs of Arab artists and institutions dealing with such upheaval, now had to contend with it at home, both as individuals and as an institution.

As individuals, we were out on the streets from the first night, caught up in the giddy, collective will to say “no more!” As an institution we decided to continue doing what we had to do without making any reactive decisions about what would happen next.

Still, for all of us, both as individuals and institution, we experienced the moment of revolution as a moment when all the parameters of the known world are disrupted, where reality suddenly reveals its multi-dimensional possibilities. A single path eventually coalesces out of the chaos, of course, but that initial moment remains an opportunity to see and articulate potential modes of being whose existence we hadn’t even been aware of.

We gave our jury members the option to hold their meetings online instead of in Beirut. Very few took us up on this offer. Most boarded planes and came to join us in the streets and squares, seizing the opportunity to witness and be part of the historical moment.

We went from protests, to jury meetings, to public lectures and open debates on everything from civic responsibility to constitutional law. We were caught up in a frenzy of productive activity, of planning for and dreaming of and executing change.



As AFAC, however, we followed our general instinct of remaining conservative. Though this was our first time experiencing an uprising in our own country, we are no strangers to upheaval in general, and experience has taught us that our greatest strength as an institution is the measure of stability we are able to provide for both individual artists and the cultural infrastructure at large. Weathering crisis certainly requires flexibility, but must not turn into reactivity. It is imperative upon us to remain sober-minded so that our grantees are able to be creative.

To remain stable so that our grantees can follow their wildest and most outlandish impulses. But still, we tried to use the opportunity presented to us by the energy of the revolution to think of how to best move forward. As the momentum of the protests died down and the year closed on the grim promise of an economic downturn, we tried to carry that dynamic sense of potentiality with us into the new year.

We  
know the coming  
year will be difficult, but it  
does not change our core goal of  
creating and accumulating enough impact  
with our work to eventually enact change  
on the policy level. And this of course remains  
the biggest challenge in our local and regional  
context. Across the Arab world, the public sector  
remains not only woefully underfunded but also  
ineffective in terms of capacity and capability.  
Still, every uprising that has so far broken  
out across the Arab world, from Algeria  
to Lebanon to Sudan, has loudly  
demanded change in this  
regard.

Citizens want  
societies that respect them,  
that fulfill not only their material  
but also their more inarticulable needs.  
The need for dignity, for self-expression,  
for a life that leaves room for more than just  
survival. This in fact has been the demand of  
every uprising: enough material support to live  
a life that leaves room for creation, enjoyment,  
curiosity, and art. This is exactly the sort of  
life we strive to give our grantees, and  
exactly the sort of world our funders so  
generously help us create.



# Facts and figures

1556

projects supported

268

jurors from 23 countries

447

female artists received grants from AFAC

115

practitioners received mentorship

411

arts and culture institutions supported

20

Arab countries represented in grants

2007-2019

24.3

million dollars in grants

158

AFAC-supported publications

353

regional and international awards received by AFAC grantees

98

AFAC-supported festivals

388

AFAC-supported films completed

125

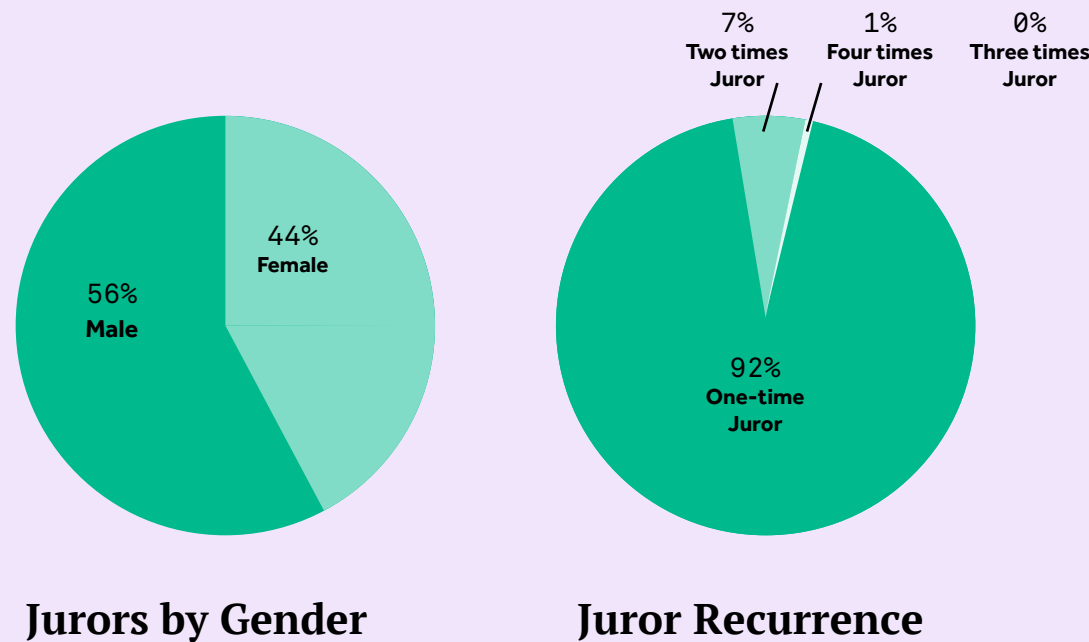
AFAC-supported music albums released

215

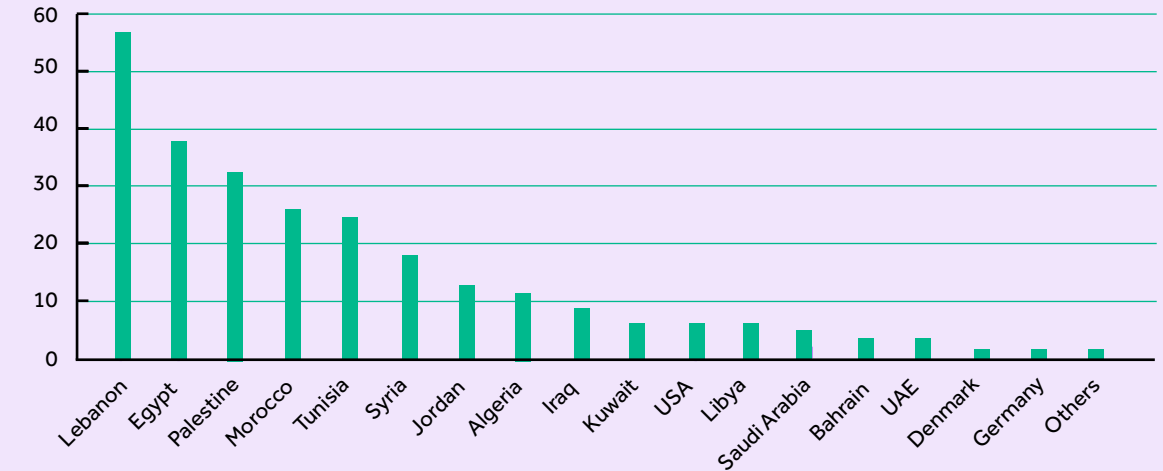
impact stories shared

# Jurors Statistics 2007-2019

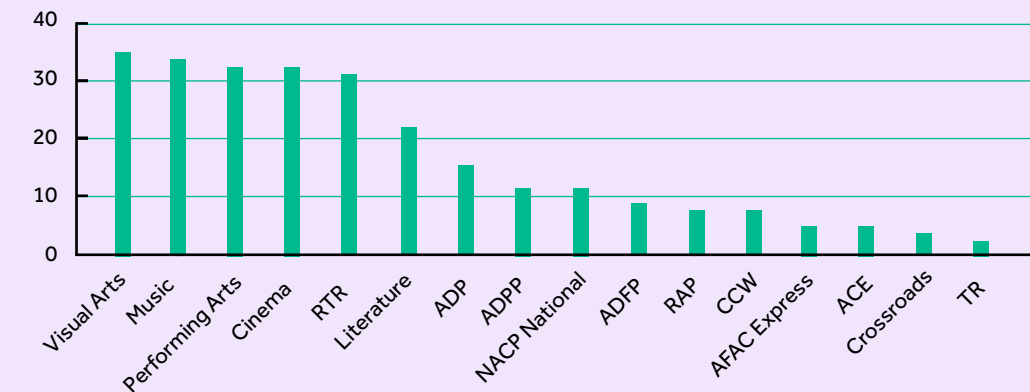
For each of the ten grants programs that AFAC runs annually, a three-membered jury, selected anew every year, deliberates the submitted projects and selects the ones to receive grants. Over the past 13 years, we worked with 268 jurors from across the Arab region and beyond. The below graphs demonstrate the AFAC jurors' facts and figures across programmatic, geographic, and gender parameters. The graphs also illustrate the number of jurors who were once, or more, previous or future recipients of AFAC grants.



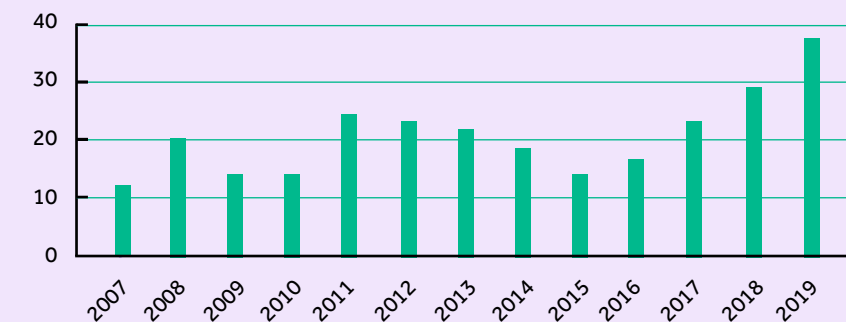
## Jurors by Country



## Jurors by Programs



## Jurors by Years

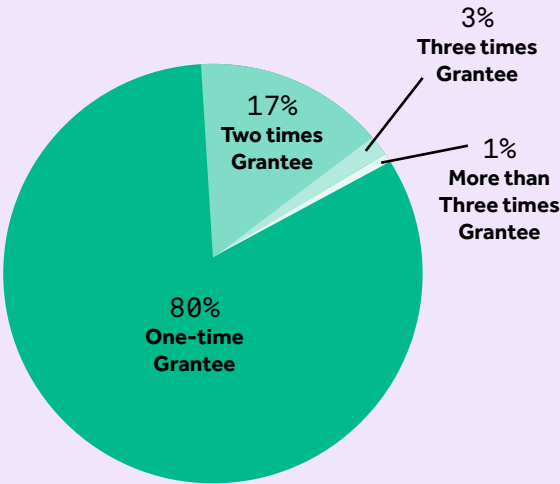




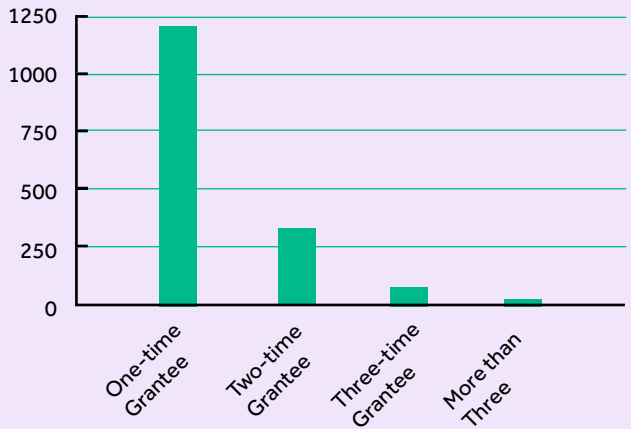
# Grantee Recurrence

## 2007-2019

Between 2007 and 2019, AFAC distributed 1,556 grants. The below graph demonstrates the total number of grants based on recurrent grantees as compared to one-time grantees.



Grantee Recurrence







# In Summary



**The year 2019 has been eventful for AFAC on all levels – contextual, institutional, and programmatic. It was off to a challenging start with two major carry-overs from 2018 which kept us on our toes for a good three months into the new year: the launch of the new AFAC website and visual identity and the roll out of the North Africa Cultural Program with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation which required dedicating the first three months of the year to completing the scoping field visits (Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya by proxy) and finalizing the program details, leading up to the official announcement of the partnership on March 25<sup>th</sup>.**

Our small fully-dedicated team managed to pull off the load of work in a highly cooperative spirit and synergized efforts. The new website and logo were revealed on February 6th following a thoughtful and thrilling social media campaign which built anticipation and engaged our fans, followers, grantees and donors. The new identity was received with critical acclaim, setting the tone for a renewed fresh youthful image that builds on the institution's solidness and rootedness. Additionally, new application forms were developed with new features and a more demanding content.

Our busy lives at the AFAC office in Beirut were temporarily interrupted with the spontaneous nation-wide civil strikes in October (with over two million people on the streets) calling for the demise of the political system and corruption in Lebanon. AFAC was part of the collective of arts and culture organizations and structures in Lebanon that joined the open strike, as an expression of solidarity with the popular uprisings. It was

not a withdrawal of the arts from this historical moment, but rather a suspension of “business as usual”, in order to listen to the demands and calls of citizens and non-citizens from all walks of life.

Some activities were stalled but the team maintained adequate presence and fulfilled essential commitments. Seven jury meetings were held during the most intense first month of the uprisings, mainly for the five countries of the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP), Training and Regional Events, and Music. Few jury members preferred to participate virtually, while others considered the jury participation a valuable opportunity to experience first-hand what's happening on the Lebanese streets.

The events in Lebanon during the last quarter of the year were one of many bitter-sweet occasions that remind us how our work in this sector is never on the margins of society and that we are constantly called on to engage with and safeguard civic spaces and networks. The rest of the Arab region with its share of challenging contexts was not less eventful. Many grantees and partners in Palestine, Iraq, Algeria, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt, Libya and Syria continue to be preoccupied with shrinking space. The practice of many artists is testimony to how art pushes boundaries, opens space, and reshapes debate on social justice issues.

Despite all odds, we can still talk about a good year for AFAC!

We started off 2019 with exciting developments: the launch of a new logo and website, a spike in social media reach, the roll-out of the new North Africa Cultural Program (NACP) with extensive field visits and outreach, an ever-growing demand for our on-going programs with over 1752 applications received in 2019, and a successful completion of the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) program, propelling the eight participating institutions in this first round to start innovating with an incentive grant.

Our delivery of grants (225 supported projects in 2019) coupled with professional support to programs like Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE), Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP), and Research on the Arts Program (RAP) is buttressed with even more strategic initiatives that strengthen active entities and practices, such as the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP). Responding to a huge gap in long-term institutional and programmatic support, the launch of this new program in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development

and Cooperation mobilized wide interest: 122 applications from local independent cultural entities and 43 exciting propositions for regional collaborations.

The new Mellon Foundation grant of \$320,000 over three years affirms the priority to push outreach even wider by building and diffusing knowledge AFAC has amassed in the past 13 years. Moving forward with the labor-intensive engagement required with individual donors, 2019 was also focused on negotiating future partnerships with long-term donors.

Storytelling is intrinsic to AFAC's work. A publication titled “Stories Boldly Told” was produced featuring fifteen impact stories that battled for social change, selected from the pool of supported projects in 2017- 2018, and compiled through in-depth interviews. Spanning across diverse geographical locations and categories, these compelling stories challenged the social and political contexts in various ways and helped to change the narratives imposed by these contexts.

With our work focused around five strategic areas, the year 2019 carried a lot of opportunities and challenges. In grant-making, we awarded 225 grants across our 11 grants programs: Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Documentary Film, Documentary Photography, Music, Trainings & Regional Events, Research on the Arts, Creative and Critical Writings, Cinema, North Africa Cultural Program, and Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship. In training and capacity-building, we convened four workshops for those programs that also include training and mentorship components, namely Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship, the Arab Documentary Photography Program, and Research on the Arts program. At the level of strengthening the arts and culture sector's infrastructure, we extended long-term support to 28 institutions working on disseminating cultural content to their grassroots communities, to support them in elaborating programs and reinforcing their core structures. In Knowledge Building and Sharing, we invested in our focused programs-creative and critical writings and research on the arts – in addition to producing communication material to benefit wider communities, including videos and publications. Finally, in the area of connecting Arab communities with their diasporas, we continued with our special program, the Arab European Creative Platform, in Berlin and held a series of events to promote Arab creative expression including a summer festival of performances and concerts, a forum on ‘Narratives of the Self’ in partnership with HKW, a six-month writing workshop with Berlin-based young writers and much more.



### Grants and Programs

The demand for grants grew by 22% in 2019. AFAC received 1752 applications (compared to 1441 in 2018) from 19 Arab countries and 18 non-Arab countries, out of which 36% were first-time projects. The breakdown of applications per program was as follows: 257 in Visual Arts (208 in 2018); 210 in Documentary Film (179 in 2018); 92 in Documentary Photography (79 in 2018); 164 in Creative and Critical Writings (117 in 2018); 133 in Performing Arts (147 in 2018); 38 in Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (compared to 37 in 2018); 250 in Cinema (compared to 287 in 2018); 47 in Research on the Arts (compared to 84 in 2018); 253 in Music (compared to 148 in 2018); 143 in Training and Regional Events (compared to 154 in 2018); and 165 in the new North Africa Cultural Program – 122 under the National Fund and 43 under the Regional Fund. Out of the 10 open calls for programs and one call by nomination, a total of 225 inspiring projects were granted support under Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Creative and Critical Writings, Documentary Film, Documentary Photography, Research on the Arts Program, Training and Regional Events, Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship Program, Cinema, Music, and the National Fund of the North Africa Cultural Program.

The 2019 batch of grantees is characterized by its young profile: 44% of individual grantees are between 25 and 35 years, and 34% between 35 and 45. On the other hand, among the 70 granted institutions, 45 entities possess more than 5 years of establishment.

These projects hand-picked by 50 independent jury committee members (55% of whom were women) embody promising and impactful practices as testified by the jurors’ observations. This adds to AFAC’s growing network of jurors and their valuable input on trends, priorities, and nuances across programs and

sub-regional contexts, and which guide us in our continuous efforts to improve how we work and what we support.

The total grants amount for 2019 was roughly \$5 million compared to \$3 million in 2018. The spike in number of grants and budget is related to the new North Africa Cultural Program.

### Professional Support

In addition to managing the grants of 11 programs, AFAC successfully implemented four workshops in 2019 for those programs that also include training and mentorship components, namely ACE and ADPP; with the workshop of RAP foreseen for January 2020. The second ACE workshop (27 February – 3 March 2019) of the 2018-2019 cycle offered the 8 participating cultural institutions hands-on introduction to the concept of innovation and entrepreneurship and possible ways to introduce revenue-making /audience-engaging elements in their work. The sessions were replete with project-design exercises, and looked at different mindsets of an entrepreneur depending on different phases of an institutional challenge, to discover structures and tools of innovation. The participants acquired techniques for building high performing teams but also how to convey what they do best through storytelling. They also critically examined what is community engagement and issues around quantifying impact. Throughout the workshop, they practiced the design of innovation activities within their contexts. In the third and final workshop (8-12 July 2019), participants were exposed to techniques of storytelling, the design of an effective communications plan, and the development of a public narrative to renew their mission, communicate their values, and call others to join them in action. The workshop also offered practical guidance on mobilizing resources including assets and business models, and ethics in project financing. With renowned experts from Tunisia, Kenya and Jordan, as well as Lebanon, participants looked at what constitutes success stories and testimonials in the artistic/creative sector and considered key elements required for organizational development and increased sustainability. Concluding the 2018 Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP) cycle, the second and final workshop was convened in April in Beirut resulting in the completion of nine visual stories. As part of the 2019 ADPP cycle, the first workshop was organized in Beirut 29 August - 2 September where the new group of nine grantees shared their visual narratives with the ADPP



mentors, partners, and fellow participants, and benefited from the enriching exchanges as well as the eye-opening sessions.

### Longer-Term Institutional Support

In addition to grants for both individuals and institutions in the various artistic disciplines, the incubation and acceleration of cultural entities is a positive catapult that AFAC offers for their structures and practices. AFAC’s growing role in this sphere is having ripple effects across the sector, with positive feedback so far on the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) program’s first cycle that includes three workshops, mentorship and the disbursement of incentive grants with 8 participating institutions. The newly established North Africa Cultural Program has also attracted a lot of buzz for the much-needed focus on longer-term institutional and programmatic support to arts and culture entities through a national fund and a regional fund. Following the scoping visits to Egypt and Algeria in November and December of 2018, visits to Tunisia and Morocco took place in January and February 2019. Ranging between one week and ten days, each trip covered 3 to 4 cities per country and comprised one-on-one meetings with cultural players and artists (grantees as well as non-grantees) and public presentations. Findings from the scoping visits fed into the design of the program that was sensitive to the challenges and opportunities per country, as well as absorption capacities of diverse cultural entities. The official announcement of the partnership between AFAC and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) on March 25th took place in Tunis in the presence of Chairperson Ghassan Salamé, AFAC Board Member Amr Ben Halim and Swiss Federal Councilor Alain Berset. In his speech,

Berset stated that “It is an honor for us to collaborate with AFAC, an institution that shares our vision of cultural promotion, and brings us its expertise and capacity to endorse the region’s cultural institutions.” With country-specific contexts in mind as well as regional challenges and opportunities, AFAC drew up a program to accommodate the priorities and modalities of the arts and culture sector in North Africa. The one-time open call in 2019 attracted 122 applicants - from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria - under the National Fund and 43 applications under the Regional Fund. The launch post reached 37,779 people. Eligible proposals were deliberated by independent jury committees per country with five jury meetings held to date for Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Libya. The jury discussions and choices reflect to a large extent the findings and analysis that AFAC gathered from its extensive field visits prior to designing the program. Recurrent points brought up included the importance of balancing support to those with a strong track record and outreach but also to take measured risks with potential spaces and entities, including those outside of central areas. The choices made indicate a willingness by the jurors to give a much-needed institutional and programmatic push and within realistic absorption capacities but also a keen interest to support a diversity of disciplines and sub-regions. Under the Regional Fund, AFAC received 43 applications, with lead applicants from the following countries: Algeria – 3, Egypt – 10, Libya – 1, Morocco – 12, and Tunisia – 16 and that involve an extensive array of partnering institutions mainly from those five countries in addition to some from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Levant and Europe. Those that pass the administrative and eligibility check will be evaluated in February 2020 by a regional jury committee. Out of the total NACP budget of USD 5.5 million, AFAC envisages to cover with direct grant support USD 4.7 million during the period 2019-2022: 12 regional projects (\$150,000 - \$300,000 per project) under the Regional Fund; and 28 core and program support initiatives (\$75,000 - \$200,000 per institution) as well as 10 smaller initiatives (\$15,000 - \$30,000 per institution), distributed among the five countries.

### The Arab European Creative Platform

In its third year connecting the dots between Arab societies and the diaspora, the Arab European Creative Platform (AECPP) in 2019 was replete with events and activities that brought together Arab and European artists and institutions, to

empower and enable the production of art and culture and diffuse knowledge. The second edition of the Documentary Convention, in partnership with DOX BOX e.V. in Leipzig; the Forum “Politics Through the Looking Glass” and the Summer festival “Wish You Were Here” in its third edition, in addition to the Un-Spoken series of participative talks, were among the highlights.



### Knowledge Building And Sharing

In its efforts to promulgate visual narratives from the Arab region and diaspora, AFAC cast the light on fifteen bold stories based on in-depth interviews that demonstrate the urgency of issues and how they are tackled in challenging contexts through different mediums - documentary photography, film, music, performing and visual arts, writing, research and regional collaborations. This is part of a wider ambition to create a culture of knowledge building and sharing and finding new avenues and networks that will feed back into the prevailing culture to create shifts in thinking and action. Rich with its extensive database of 13,310 applications amassed across the past 13 active years, the 1,556 projects supported to date, as well as its newly launched programs since 2018 (Creative and Critical Writings, and Research on the Arts), AFAC is keen on sharing resources with the wider community of arts and culture practitioners and entities. Internal and commissioned research outputs will be made available for the wider public, and disseminated via publications and convenings. To capture the wealth of AECP thematic forums, AFAC is about to produce two publications (print and digital) that bring together the outcomes of the five conferences and writing workshops over the past three years. Internally, an online data management

system is being finalized for better data collection on applicants and management of grants, and potentially allowing researchers and users the ability to browse non-confidential information relevant for research, production and networking. With the Mellon Foundation grant, we will be able to expand this aspect of our work by commissioning research papers that tackle topics and trends pertaining to the artistic fields we support.

AFAC also managed to mobilize resources commensurate with its programmatic goals, and throughout 2019, it made strides in reaching out to new audiences, creating collaborative opportunities for its grantees, promoting exchanges, making use of diverse channels for diffusing meaningful works, reaping acclaims by local, regional, and international awards and recognitions, and promoting exchanges.

### Communication

We kicked off the year 2019 with a rejuvenated brand and identity. The AFAC iconic, calligraphy-based logo morphed into a modern logo that reflects the rootedness of the institution, its youthful spirit and dedication to enhancing contemporary creative expression and knowledge production across the Arab region. Following a 10-day teaser campaign on AFAC’s social media channels, AFAC’s new website was revealed, characterized by a sleek look and feel, a smoother navigation and an upgraded application process. In addition, hand-shake leaflets (in Arabic, English, and French) have been widely distributed across the region to encourage aspiring and established artists to apply to AFAC. A detailed review of 2018 was published in an English annual report, with a preface that emphasizes the infrastructure AFAC provides as a funding body in support of artistic practice, and AFAC’s positioning within an ecosystem that inherently compels it to steer and change in order to maintain well-being and balance. As part of the documentation deliverables of the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) Program, six TED-like videos have been completed, featuring Mike Van Graan from South Africa, Carla Fonseca from Brazil, Arundhati Ghosh from India, Robert Wolfe from The Netherlands, Moukhtar Kocache from Lebanon/Syria, and Rob Burnet from Kenya. In order to inform and entice potential applicants, a series of short jurors’ interviews are also available online, reflecting on their choices but also trends and discoveries. A publication titled Stories Boldly Told was produced capturing 15 stories about artists working in challenging contexts. Going forward, our communication deliverables in 2020 will include a written/



video story that will be released on a bi-monthly basis.

AFAC’s followers on social media was 61,269 (compared to 42,361 in 2018) with the highest number of followers from Algeria (7,080) followed by Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon and Libya. There were ten times as many Instagram followers this year (11,400) as in 2018. AFAC featured on a number of media platforms across the region for its work on entrepreneurship in the sector, its Film Weeks and promotion of documentary photography. In addition, a 3-minute short animated film captured the essence of what AFAC stands for: a regional resource responsive to needs of the arts and culture scene; an instigator of creative trends; and a connector between givers and artists.

### Resource Mobilization

AFAC’s efforts in resource mobilization to meet the needs of the sector and consolidate its programs required a combination of labor-intensive engagement with individual donors, but also focused on negotiating future partnerships with long-term donors and specifically for the general grants – the most

essential part of AFAC’s work. With the closure of the Open Society Foundations’ challenge matching grant and general support (the annual \$1 million and matching funds), 2019 was a year of transition regarding future partnerships with long-standing donors that give general support such as DOEN, OSF and Ford Foundation. Proving yet again to be the connective tissue between generous donors and deserving artists, AFAC welcomed a new donor – The Mellon Foundation with a budget of \$320,000 over 3 years to reinforce AFAC’s ambition create a culture of knowledge building and sharing using its extensive database to commission external research and internal analysis as well as annual convenings. Our efforts to engage individual philanthropists continued in 2019. The priority in the second half of 2019 was to get the two new big programs on their feet (the North Africa Cultural Program and the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship), as well as the on-going 9 grants programs.

Continued foundational and institutional support to AFAC in 2019 came from Drosos (for ACE until 2021), the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (for Research on the Arts program until 2021), and the Prince Claus Fund (for ADPP until 2020). Based on an evaluation and research paper on the six years of ADPP,



a renewed partnership with PCF and Magnum Foundation is in the works for another three years (2020-2022) with PCF’s contribution increased to \$130K (compared to \$90K for 2017-2018). The three government agencies currently supporting AFAC are the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (general support), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (support to NACP), and the German Federal Foreign Office (support to ACE).

Outreach and Advocacy

In recognition of its pioneering regional role, AFAC is increasingly solicited to host peer learning and exchange visits, which are also excellent channels for spreading the word about AFAC. In 2019, we were visited by several interlocutors: The African Cultural Fund (inspired as a model by AFAC) and Fonds Maaya, both based in Bamako, Mali benefited from good practices and tools of AFAC; Artasfoundation based in Zurich conducted a study visit to AFAC as part of its further education course, “CAS Arts and International Cooperation” involving professionals from the arts as well as from project funding organizations; as well as a visit by a 25-member “Circle of Friends” of Kaserne Basel, one of the largest centers for contemporary theatre, dance and performance scene, and for innovative popular music in Switzerland. The Goethe-Institut and GIZ conducted a round of consultations with AFAC to develop a concept for the new phase of their “Culture and Creative Industries” in the region. AFAC was also visited by a group of international artists, art workers and activists from RESHAPE, an initiative made up of intermediary organizations such as Onda, Pro Helvetia, the British Council but also some civil society initiatives like Bunker in Slovenia, AltArt in Romania, and including Ettijahat as an

associated partner from Lebanon.

In addition, the small and dedicated AFAC team participated in several regional and international events to promote arts and culture. During the first quarter of 2019, AFAC participated in panel discussions as part of the Sharjah Film Platform in Sharjah; the Dubai Photo Week; the Taawon Day in Amman; the Arts and Culture Informal Donors Meeting in Beirut; the International Donors Meeting supporting and improving conditions of knowledge production in the Arab Region; and gave two talks at The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and the OSF Regional Office in Amman. In the second half of 2019, AFAC participated in panels and workshops including Les Journées Musicales de Carthage in Tunis for professional encounters; Ettijahat meeting in Lebanon on Maharat and how the role of performing arts can be enhanced of their strengthened production professionals; a discussion on cultural production in London at the Mosaic Rooms; and lately a Drosos Partner Meeting in Lebanon. In addition, the AFAC team was present in key events such as Beirut Cinema Days, Shubbak Festival in London; third edition of El Gouna Film Festival showcasing nine AFAC-supported films; and Dream City Festival in Tunis by its former grantee L’Art Rue. AFAC also organized the AFAC Film Week in Dubai showcasing 12 films. Week-long scoping visits were made to Morocco, Tunisia (including a meeting with Libyan interlocutors) to complement prior visits to Egypt and Algeria, in preparation of the North Africa Cultural Program. The AFAC Executive Director was invited to sit on the juries of two of the biggest international festivals: IDFA in Amsterdam in November, and Sundance in Utah in January 2020.

Financial Allocations

The privilege of working with supportive donors – individuals, corporates, foundations, and governments – is what invigorates the cultural scene, and affirms the professional processes and accountability that AFAC prides itself on to achieve and sustain impact. Our gratitude extends to our individual donors, but also to a new private sector partner – the Bank of Palestine – in addition to our institutional supporters: The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, DOEN Foundation, Prince Clause Fund, Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, the Arab Council for the Social Sciences, Drosos Foundation, and the latest new donor to AFAC – the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



**Total Allocations:**  
\$4,442,235

**Overheads:**  
\$430,714 equivalent to  
7.5% of total expenditure

**Grant Activities:**  
\$5,120,465 equivalent to  
89% of total expenditure

**Difference of Exchange:**  
\$11,110 equivalent to 0.1%  
of total expenditure

**Fundraising and Communications:**  
\$196,115 equivalent to  
3.4% of total expenditure

Outlook 2020

The prospects for 2020 are exciting and dynamic, continuing the trajectory of opening up new paths and possibilities for knowledge production, institutional resilience, and network building across the Arab region and beyond. Building on the overwhelmingly positive response to the inclusion of Creative and Critical Writings on the list of funded programs, AFAC plans to organize a conference on Critical Cultural Journalism in 2020, a possible preliminary step toward opening up yet another

funding scheme. During 2020, AFAC will also be studying the possibility of creating a structure to support works of art after they are finished—that is, a fund for distribution, dissemination, and circulation. There is likewise a discussion on the table about an annual convention, one that would bring together arts practitioners, curators, researchers, and actors from different organizations and institutions together in one place to exchange and collectively grow in their artistic practices and knowledge.

To reach out and share more extensively our supported works and impact, our communication deliverables will include a monthly written/video story, generating impact stories with grantees using multi-media channels, and specifically benefit from the long-term support to cultural entities under the North Africa Cultural Program. Fundraising efforts with institutional donors will continue as will the focus on individual donors and cultivated organizations for partnerships.



# Recognition of Grantees

## January

Egyptian photojournalist **Roger Anis** and Irish artist **Bryony Dunne** opened their collaborative exhibition “My Dear Friends”, on January 9 in Istanbul.

The physical theater performance “Eyelids” by **Rana Karam** from Syria, was presented as part of the Moussem Cities Damascus event in Station Beirut on January 14.

**Lara Tabet**’s photographic installation “Underbelly” opened at Janine Rubeiz Gallery in Beirut on January 15.

**Kristine Khouri** was present for a talk and conversation with Nada Raza at Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai on January 19. Kristine also presented the book *Past Disquiet: Artists, International Solidarity and Museums in Exile*.

The release concert of the album “Inner Rhyme” by **Layale Chaker and Sarafand** took place in New York on January 22.

**Petra Serhal** unveiled the findings of her current research project on the history of dance in Lebanon, *Adagio*, in the first of a series of talks on January 24 in Sursok Museum, Beirut.

## February

**Talal Derki**’s documentary “Of Father and Sons” was nominated for the 91<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards in the Documentary Feature category.

Seven ADPP photographers featured their work during

the exhibition “The Shortest Distance Between Us: Stories from the Arab Documentary Photography Program” at GPP week in Dubai from February 4 to 9.

Three AFAC-supported films participated in the 69<sup>th</sup> edition of the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale): Sudanese films “Off Khartoum” by **Marwa Zein** and “Talking About Trees” by **Suhaib Gasmelbari** (both films premiered at the festival), and “Of Fathers and Sons” by Syrian director **Talal Derki**. “Talking About Trees” won the Documentary Prize at the Berlinale Awards.

12 compelling short films were produced from the Comra Doc Film Camp in Yemen.

## March

The documentary “Paris Stalingrad” by **Hind Meddeb**, held its premiere on March 16 as part of the Forum des Images section of the Cinéma du réel – International Documentary Film Festival’s 41<sup>st</sup> edition in Paris.

14 photographers from the Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP) have been selected among the 245 nominees of World Press Photo Foundation’s best known educational program: the 2019 Joop Swart Masterclass. Photographers **Zied Ben Romdhane** and **Abdo Shanan** were selected among the Joop Swart Masterclass’ 12 participants.

Five AFAC-supported documentaries, all by women directors, participated in the 16<sup>th</sup> Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival (CPH: DOX 2019) from March 20 to 31: “Tiny Souls” by Jordanian director **Dina Naser**, and “Ibrahim” by Jordanian



director **Lina Al Abed**, both premiered at the festival, in the DOX: AWARD and Next: Wave sections respectively. “The Day I Lost My Shadow” by **Soudade Kaadan** (Syria), “Khartoum Offside” by **Marwa Zein** (Sudan), and “Freedom Fields” by **Naziha Arebi** (Libya) also screened at the festival.

The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the AFAC-supported Beirut Cinema Days Festival opened on March 29 with Of Fathers and Sons by Syrian director **Talal Derki**, followed by a panoply of AFAC-supported films and documentaries, whether in the Festival itself or on its sidelines, as part of the Beirut Cinema Platform and the newly launched Impact Lab.

Beirut’s experimental music festival **Irtijal 2019** took place from March 29 to 31. Lebanese duo **Abed Kobeissy** and **Ali Hout** (Two or the Dragon) as well as the performance “A Universe Not Made for Us” by **Yalda Younes** and **Khyam Allami** featured in the festival’s program.

## April

Seven AFAC-supported films screened at Aflam in Marseilles, April 1-7, namely: “Benzine” by **Sarra Abidi** (Tunisia), “The Reports on Sarah and Saleem” by **Muayad Alayan** (Palestine), “Weldi” by **Mohammed Ben Attia** (Tunisia), “Of Fathers and Sons” by **Talal Derki** (Syria), “Erased\_\_Ascent of the Invisible” by **Ghassan Halwani** (Lebanon), “The Day I Lost My Shadow” by **Soudade Kaadan** (Syria), and “Amal” by **Mohamad Siam** (Egypt).

Artist, architect and dancer **Ghida Hachicho**’s performance “Beyond a Certain Point, Movement Itself Changes” showed on April 5 at Citerne Beirut as part of BIPOD.

The fourth ACSS conference “Power, Borders and Ecologies in Arab Societies: Practices and Imaginaries” took place in Crowne Plaza Beirut from April 12 to 14. The nine RAP grantees 2018 presented their research

projects during the conference.

ADPP photographer **Abdo Shanan** won the CAP (Contemporary African Photography) prize 2019 for his project Dry.

## May

The multidisciplinary AFAC-supported event “Oh to End” opened on May 2 at the ancient age-worn Beirut house in Zouqaq Al-Blat: Mansion.

The publication “Sonic Territory” was launched by **Raymond Gemayel** at Ashkal Alwan in Beirut on May 3.

For the Danish pavilion of the 58<sup>th</sup> La Biennale di Venezia – Art edition 2019, which opened on May 10 in Venice, Danish-Palestinian artist **Larissa Sansour** presented her latest work, “Heirloom”.

Kuwaiti playwright and director **Sulayman al-Bassam** participated in the 56<sup>th</sup> edition of the Theatertreffen Berlin 2019 forum, one of the most renown theater festivals among German-speaking countries.

The film “It Must Be Heaven” by Palestinian cineaste **Elia Suleiman** won the FIPRESCI prize and received the Jury’s Special Mention at the Awards ceremony of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Cannes Film Festival.



## June

Singer **Emel Mathlouthi** (Tunisia) received the “Special Recognition Award” at the Kahlil Gibran Spirit of Humanity Awards ceremony 2019 in Washington DC.

## July

ADPP photographer **Zied Ben Romdhane** was nominated to the Magnum Photos Agency.

ADPP photographers **Iman al-Dabbagh** and **Shaima Al-Tamimi** were awarded Women Photograph + Nikon awards for 2019.

The short film “Bab Sebta” by Moroccan director **Randa Maroufi** held its world premiere within the international competition of Marseille’s International Film Festival, FIDMarseille (July 9-15).

## August

Two AFAC-supported films were selected to compete in the Locarno Film Festival 2019, from August 7 to 17: **Maya Khoury**’s “In Revolution” (Syria) participated in the International Competition for the Golden Leopard, and **Larissa Sansour** showcased her short film “In Vitro” in the Pardi di domani international short film category.

The film “The Greatest Wait” by Palestinian director **Razan AlSalah** was selected among six projects for the Sundance Institute New Frontier Story Lab.

The performance “Titre Provisoire” by **Chrystele Khodr** and **Wael Ali** played at the Zürcher Theater Spektakel (Zurich) from August 15 to 17.

Five AFAC-supported films participated in Venice and its various sections, scooping 7 awards. The

76th International Venice Film Festival’s Lion of the Future - Luigi de Laurentiis Award for Best Debut Feature was picked up by Sudanese director **Amjad Abu Alala** for his film “You Will Die at Twenty”. “A Son” by Tunisian director **Mehdi Barsaoui** received the Orizzonti Best Actor Award for Sami Bouajila’s role, as well as the Interfilm prize for best film. the Lebanese film “All This Victory” by **Ahmad Ghossein** was the grand winner at the 34<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Critics Week, bringing home the Grand Prize, the Audience Award – Comune di Taranto, and the Mario Serandrei – Hotel Saturnia International Award for Best Technical Contribution. On the sidelines of the festival, Moroccan director **Ismael Ferroukhi**’s “Mica” was awarded the El Gouna Film Festival Award at the 7<sup>th</sup> Final Cut in Venice.



## September

Four AFAC-supported films featured in the 44<sup>th</sup> edition of Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) from September 5 to 15: the two documentaries “Ibrahim: A Fate to Define” by Palestinian director **Lina Alabed** and “Paris Stalingrad” by Tunisian director **Hind Meddeb** screened in the TIFF Docs selection, in addition to the two feature films “You



Will Die at Twenty” by Sudanese director **Amjad Abu Alala** (in the Contemporary World Cinema section), and “It Must Be Heaven” by Palestinian director **Elia Suleiman** (in the Masters Section).

The performance “Heroes (Surface of a Revolution)” by the Lebanese dancer and choreographer **Khouloud Yassine** was presented on September 14 in Le Théâtre La Cité in Marseilles, France.

Iraqi multi-media artist **Sama Alshaibi**’s solo exhibition “Staging the Imagined” opened on September 18 at Ayyam Gallery in Dubai.

ADPP photographer **Roger Mokbel** received the Boghossian Prize – Lebanon 2019, while directors **Michel Kammoun** and **Remi Itani** picked up the “Cinema: Coup de Coeur” prize each, delivered by Boghossian Foundation in partnership with Fondation Liban Cinema.

The exhibition “**Akram Zaatari: Against Photography. An Annotated History of the Arab Image Foundation**” opened on September 27 at Sharjah Art Foundation.

Five AFAC-supported films scooped CineGouna prizes, on the industry front of El Gouna Film Festival: “Harvest” by **Ely Dagher**, “A Long Breath” by **Remi Itani**, “Yella Baba!” by **Angie Obeid**, “Mica” by **Ismael Ferroukhi**, and “Our Dark 70s” by **Ali Essafi**.

Three AFAC-supported films stroke gold at the El Gouna Film Festival in end-September. Sudanese director **Amjad Abu Alala**’s “You Will Die at Twenty” walked away with the El Gouna Golden Star for Narrative Film, while **Suhaib Gasmelbari** picked up the El Gouna Golden Star for Documentary Film for “Talking About Trees”. A third prize, the Best Arab Documentary Film Golden Star, was awarded to AFAC-supported film “Ibrahim” by **Lina Alabed**.

## November

Lebanese multidisciplinary artist **Mo Khansa** opened the Belfast Outburst Queer Festival on November 8.

**Youness Atbane**’s performance “Untitled 14km” held its premiere in Mucem Museum in Marseille in November.

## December

Tunisian artist **Essia Jaibi** held the premiere of her performance “On la refait” in El Hamra/Tunis on December 20.

ADPP photographer **Nadia Bseiso** from Jordan was awarded the Aftermath Grant worth USD 25,000 for her project “Infertile Crescent”.



## October

Lebanese artist **Petra Serhal** presented the second of her series of talks “Adagio” on the movement of dance in Lebanon, on October 5 at Metropolis Cinema, Beirut.

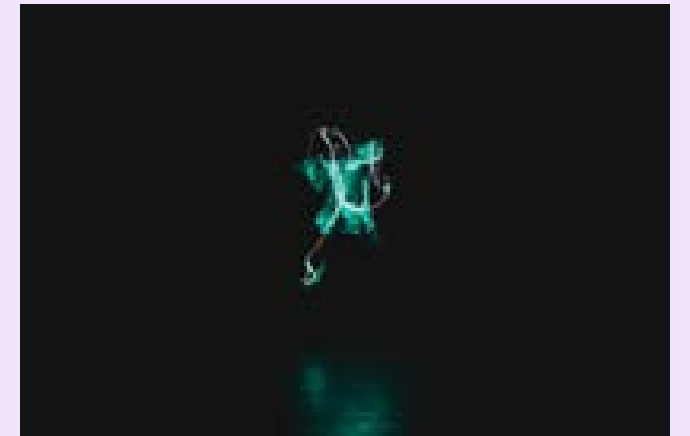
Palestinian festival Mahrajazz kicked off its third edition across several locations in Palestine on October 16.

The exhibition “Within the Vacuum” showcased the works of the Modern Sculpture Art Training and Workshop led by Shababek for Art from October 17 to November 15.

The performance “Fa’addebhoul-li” (“Dresse-le pour moi”) by Lebanese choreographer **Nancy Naous** was presented on October 18-19 at MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels) in Montreal.

Iraqi visual artist **Athar Jaber** opened the Lubumbashi Biennial in the Democratic Republic of Congo on October 24 with his project “Katanga Libanga”.

The premiere of the performance “Resister” by Algerian choreographer **Tarek Aitmeddour** took place in Nevers in France, in front of a full house on October 26.



# Milestones of 2019

## JANUARY

[January 13 → 21](#)

The AFAC team undertakes a field visit to Tunisia, as part of the North Africa Cultural Program’s inception phase

[January 24](#)

Last Un-Spoken series event by Maha Maamoun in Berlin, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AECP)

## FEBRUARY

[February 04](#)

AFAC launches its new brand identity, following a 10-day social media teaser campaign

[February 04 → 09](#)

Arab Documentary Photography Program’s exhibition in Dubai as part of Gulf Photo Plus Photo Week

[February 08 → 16](#)

The AFAC team visits Morocco as part of the North Africa Cultural Program’s inception phase

[February 11](#)

Open call for Visual Arts, Performing Arts, AFAC Documentary Program, the Arab Documentary Photography Program and the Creative and Critical Writings grants program

[February 27](#)

The Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) program’s second 5-day workshop kicks off in Beirut

## MARCH

[March 05 → 06](#)

AFAC joined the 12th Informal Donors Meeting in Beirut

[March 07](#)

The opening panel of Art + FinTech summit at Art Bahrain Across Borders was moderated by AFAC Board member Oussama Rifahi

[March 21](#)

AFAC’s Executive Director Rima Mismar visited Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar

[March 29](#)

Beirut Cinema Days opens with the AFAC-supported film “Of Fathers and Sons” by Syrian director Talal Derki

## APRIL

[April 01 → 06](#)

AFAC holds the second ADPP Workshop of the 5th cycle in Beirut

[April 11](#)

AFAC takes part in the Donors’ Forum Planning Consultation Meeting in Beirut

[April 12 → 14](#)

The Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) Conference is held in Beirut, with the participation of the Research on the Arts Program’s first cohort of grantees

[April 15 → 17](#)

The second edition of the Documentary Convention takes place in Leipzig, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AECP)

[April 30](#)

AFAC and Drosos Foundation launch the new ACE program

## MAY

[May 1](#)

Open Call for Cinema

[May 07](#)

Calls closed for Visual Arts, Performing Arts, AFAC Documentary Program, Arab Documentary Photography Program and Creative and Critical Writings

[May 16](#)

AFAC and SDC jointly launch the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP)

[May 17](#)

Open call for the Research on the Arts Program

[May 20 → 21](#)

AFAC Board Meeting

[May 23](#)

African Cultural Fund and Fonds Maaya visit to AFAC

## JUNE

[June 01](#)

Open Call for Music and Training/Regional Events

[June 27 → 28](#)

AFAC team retreat

[June 28 → July 14](#)

AFAC participated in the Shubbak Festival of contemporary Arab culture in London

## JULY

[July 08 → 12](#)

Third Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship workshop was held at Hammana Artist House

[July 09](#)

AFAC announced 9 new grantees for the Arab Documentary Photography Program

[July 23 → 26](#)

AFAC held the third edition of “Wish You Were Here: AFAC Music and Film Summer Festival” in Beirut, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AECP)

[July 30](#)

AFAC announces 24 new grantees for Visual Arts

## AUGUST

[August 01](#)

Call closed for Cinema

[August 02](#)

AFAC announces 24 new grantees for its Documentary Program

[August 06](#)

AFAC announced 28 new grantees for Creative and Critical Writings

[August 09](#)

AFAC announced 29 new grantees for Performing Arts

[August 19](#)

AFAC announced the 8 Arts and Culture institutions to participate in the ACE program

[August 29 → September 2](#)

First workshop of the ADPP 6th cycle is held in Beirut

## SEPTEMBER

[September 01](#)

Call closed for Music and Training/Regional Events

[September 27](#)

The 7<sup>th</sup> AFAC Film Week kicks off in Dubai, with 11 films from 5 Arab countries

## OCTOBER

[October 04 → 06](#)

AFAC organizes “Politics Through the Looking Glass” forum in Berlin, as part of the Arab European Creative Platform (AECP)

## NOVEMBER

[November 29](#)

AFAC announces 28 Arts and Culture structures to receive long-term support as part of the National Fund of the North Africa Cultural Program

[November 30 → December 01](#)

AFAC Board Meeting

## DECEMBER

[December 02](#)

AFAC announced 21 new grantees for Music

[December 04](#)

AFAC announced 24 new grantees for Training and Regional Events

[December 19](#)

AFAC and ACSS announced the 6 selected research projects for the second cycle of the Research on the Arts Program (RAP) projects for Cinema

[December 24](#)

AFAC announced 22 new film projects for Cinema





# Grants and Programs

January – December 2019

## Applications and Grants

AFAC runs eleven grants programs offering financial and, in some cases, professional support across a wide spectrum of artistic disciplines, namely: Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Creative and Critical Writings, Documentary Film, Documentary Photography, Research on the Arts, Training and Regional Events, Cinema, Music, Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship, and most recently, the North Africa Cultural Program.

]Institutional resilience of cultural organizations is prioritized by AFAC as part of its five-year strategy (2017-

2021). In response to the needs expressed by institutions active in the cultural sector in its Ten Years' Study of 2016-2017, AFAC in partnership with Drosos Foundation, launched the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) program, with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office, providing time-bound training, mentoring and an incentive grant to 8 cultural entities per year, in partnership with expert institutions and a network of collaborators from inside as well as outside the Arab region. AFAC's latest initiative in responding to a huge gap in longer-term institutional and programmatic support is the North Africa Cultural Program (NACP). It was launched in 2019 in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development

and Cooperation (SDC), dedicated to the five countries of North Africa- namely Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya- and comprises two support schemes: A National Fund and a Regional Fund. Together, the two schemes aim to strengthen 28 independent arts and culture entities (institutions, collectives, networks, spaces...), encourage 12 regional collaborations, and focus on supporting distribution, circulation and dissemination of artistic works in all fields. Unlike the other ten programs of AFAC, NACP was conceived as a one-time call in 2019 given its longer-term scope.

AFAC's Visual Arts grant program supports painting, sculpting, photography, installations, audio-video arts and multi-media works of a contemporary and innovative nature. The grant can support exhibitions, visual arts book publications as well as art production.

Under Performing Arts, the grant is open to classical, folk and experimental theater; dance performances from across the Arab region, including contemporary dance; public intervention performances; street arts and festivals. It also supports theatre writing, acting, directing, dancing and choreography workshops.

The Creative and Critical Writings grant provides support to critical writings on the arts and culture, theatrical writings, children and youth literature (including both the adaptation of classical Arabic and international literature as well as original stories), graphic novel, short story, poetry, in addition to online publishing platform. The final product is expected to be in Arabic.

The AFAC Documentary Program supports feature length, medium-length and short documentary projects, in production and post-production, addressing the social realities in the Arab world in creative and compelling ways.

In Music, the grant supports production, performances, collaborations, album recordings and festivals. It is open to all kinds of music composition and production in the Arab world including classical, tarab, Arab folk music, hip hop, reggae, jazz, fusion, electronic sound and Arabic alternative music.

The Cinema grant is open to all kinds of fiction film projects – short, medium and feature narratives, animation and experimental films projects that are in development/ scripting, production or post-production phases.

The Training and Regional Events grant supports trainings and workshops in the different cultural and artistic fields, in addition to residencies, symposiums, forums, and festivals (multidisciplinary, music, film, performing arts, visual arts, literature...).

In partnership with the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS), AFAC's Research on the Arts offers a funding opportunity that aims to support research on all art practices across disciplinary boundaries and methodological approaches on key themes of concern to, and in, the Arab region. It encourages projects that aim to answer a specific analytical question concerning artists, art practices and/or art production. Additionally, the processes and practices involved in connecting, producing, thinking, and communicating art and culture work, in specific contexts, may be documented and analyzed.

In some grants programs, AFAC offers professional support in the form of workshops and mentoring. The Arab Documentary Photography Program supports compelling non-stereotypical and unconventional visual documentation of important social issues and narratives relevant to the Arab region, in recognition of the image's power to document, educate and advocate.

In response to the massive forced migration following the crisis in Syrian, and since 2016, AFAC offers a multi-disciplinary platform that galvanizes Arab and European artists and institutions for the production of art, culture and knowledge. The Arab-European Creative Platform explores innovative actions that probe both imagination and expression and that challenge negative perceptions of migrants/refugees in mainstream media, among decision-makers and key cultural actors.

AFAC's annual open call is announced on the website and social media and through press releases to an extensive network of regional media.

The total number of applications received under the different grants programs in 2019 was 1,752 - compared to 1,441 applications in 2018 - and the total number of supported projects is 225, with a total budget of roughly \$5 million. The spike in number of grants and budget is related to the new North Africa Cultural Program, but also to a significant increase in numbers of applications in certain grants programs, namely music with 253 applications (compared to 148 in 2018), visual arts with 260 applications (compared to 208 in 2018), and creative and critical writings with 164 applications (compared to 117 in 2018).

# Application Statistics

## Total Number of Applications Received

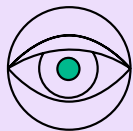
1752

Applicants in 2019

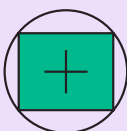
1441

Applicants in 2018

## Grants and Programs Applicants 2019/2018



Visual Arts  
260/208



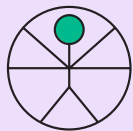
Arab Documentary  
Photography Program  
92/79



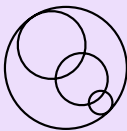
Research on  
the Arts Program  
47/84



Cinema  
250/287



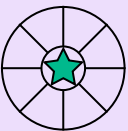
Performing Arts  
133/147



Arts and Culture  
Entrepreneurship  
38/37



Music  
253/148



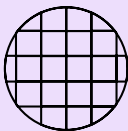
North Africa  
Cultural Program  
National Fund  
122



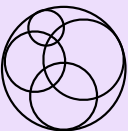
AFAC Documentary  
Program  
210/180



Creative and  
Critical Writings  
164/117

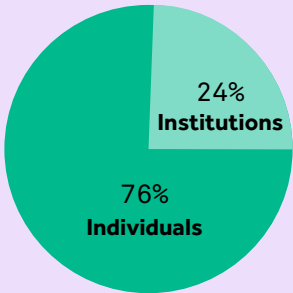


Training and  
Regional Events  
143/154

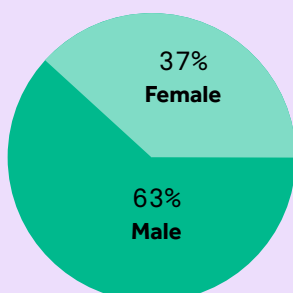


North Africa  
Cultural Program  
Regional Fund  
43

## Applicants Ratios



Individuals vs  
Institutions



Applicants  
by Gender

## Comparative per country 2019/2018

### The Arab Region

Egypt: 420/329  
Lebanon: 244/247  
Syria: 159/163  
Palestine: 215/157  
Morocco: 200/114  
Tunisia: 170/89  
Jordan: 55/58  
Algeria: 62/50  
Iraq: 51/32  
Sudan: 17/31  
Yemen: 28/18  
Libya: 29/9  
Kuwait: 6/6  
Saudi Arabia: 10/6  
Mauritania: 5/4  
UAE: 6/3

Bahrain: 3/2  
Djibouti: 2/1  
Comoros Islands: 0/1  
Qatar: 0/1

### Europe

France: 13/33  
UK: 9/17  
Turkey: 6/0  
Germany: 5/10  
Belgium: 3/5  
Netherlands: 3/4  
Switzerland: 1/3  
Greece: 4/2  
Portugal: 2/0  
Austria: 1/1

Spain: 1/0  
Sweden: 1/0  
Latvia: 1/0

### North America

USA: 11/31  
Canada: 2/2

### Africa

Africa: 0/3

### Asia

Asia: 1/0

### Australia

Australia: 2/1

# Grantee Statistics

## Total Number of Grantees

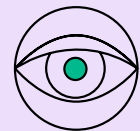
225

Grantees in 2019

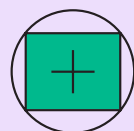
201

Grantees in 2018

## Grants and Programs Applicants 2019/2018



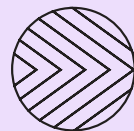
Visual Arts  
24/22



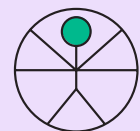
Arab Documentary  
Photography Program  
9/9



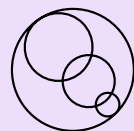
Research on  
the Arts Program  
6/9



Cinema  
22/31



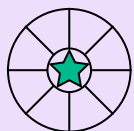
Performing Arts  
29/24



Arts and Culture  
Entrepreneurship  
8/8



Music  
21/27



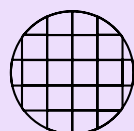
North Africa  
Cultural Program  
National Fund  
28



AFAC Documentary  
Program  
24/23



Creative and  
Critical Writings  
28/23



Training and  
Regional Events  
24/25

## Grantees as per Individuals/Institutions, Nationalities and Total Amount per Category

### Visual Arts 21/3

Egypt (7), Iraq (3), Tunisia (3), Lebanon (2), Morocco (2), Syria (2), Jordan (1), Libya (1), Palestine (1), Yemen (1), and Germany/Iraq (1)

Total amount of Grants: \$325,000

### Performing Arts 23/6

Lebanon (12), Palestine (4), Syria (3), Egypt (2), Morocco (2), Tunisia (2), Algeria (1), Jordan (1), Kuwait (1), and Mauritania (1)

Total amount of Grants: \$336,000

### AFAC Documentary Program 24/0

Lebanon (6), Palestine (4), Morocco (3), Syria (3), Iraq (2), Tunisia (2), Algeria (1), Egypt (1), Jordan (1), and Libya (1)

Total amount of Grants: \$400,000

### Arab Documentary Photography Program 9/0

Egypt (3), Sudan (1), Lebanon (1), Bahrain (1), Kuwait (1), Algeria (1), and Yemen (1)

Total amount of Grants: \$45,000 in addition to professional support costs equivalent to \$159,000

### Cinema 22/0

Morocco (4), Lebanon (3), Palestine (3), Syria (3), Tunisia (3), Egypt (2), Sudan (1), Algeria (1), Iraq (1), and UAE (1)

Total Grants Amount: \$414,000

### Music 16/5

Lebanon (6), Egypt (4), Syria (3), Morocco (2), Tunisia (2), Iraq (1), Mauritania (1), Palestine (1), Sudan (1),

Total Grants Amount: \$311,500

### Training and Regional Events 9/15

Lebanon (9), Palestine (3), Syria (3), Egypt (2), Algeria (1), Morocco (1), Sudan (1), UK (1), USA (1), Canada (1), and Germany (1)

Total amount: \$360,000

### Creative and Critical Writings 25/3

Egypt (16), Syria (6), Morocco (2), Palestine (2), Lebanon (1), and Tunisia (1)

Total amount: \$215,650

### Research on the Arts Program 1/5

Morocco (2), Egypt (1), Tunisia (1), Lebanon (1), and Sudan (1)

Total amount: \$150,000

### Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship 0/8

Lebanon (2), Egypt (1), Morocco (1), Libya (1), Algeria (1), Tunisia (1), and Yemen (1)

Total amount: \$200,000 in addition to professional support costs equivalent to \$220,000

### North Africa Cultural Program – National Fund 0/28

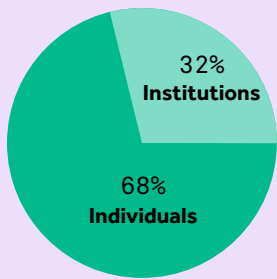
Morocco (7), Algeria (4), Tunisia (6), Libya (3), and Egypt (8)

Total amount of Grants: \$2,499,000

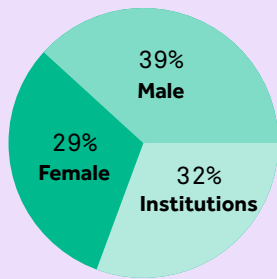


# Grantee Ratios

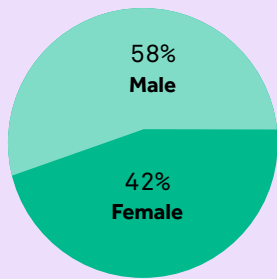
A sizeable percentage of young artists (**44%** between **25** and **35 years** of age) characterized the **2019** cohort of grantees across programs. The **225 projects** were selected by **50 jurors** - out of which **55% were women** – composing the **16 jury committees**.



Individuals vs Institutions

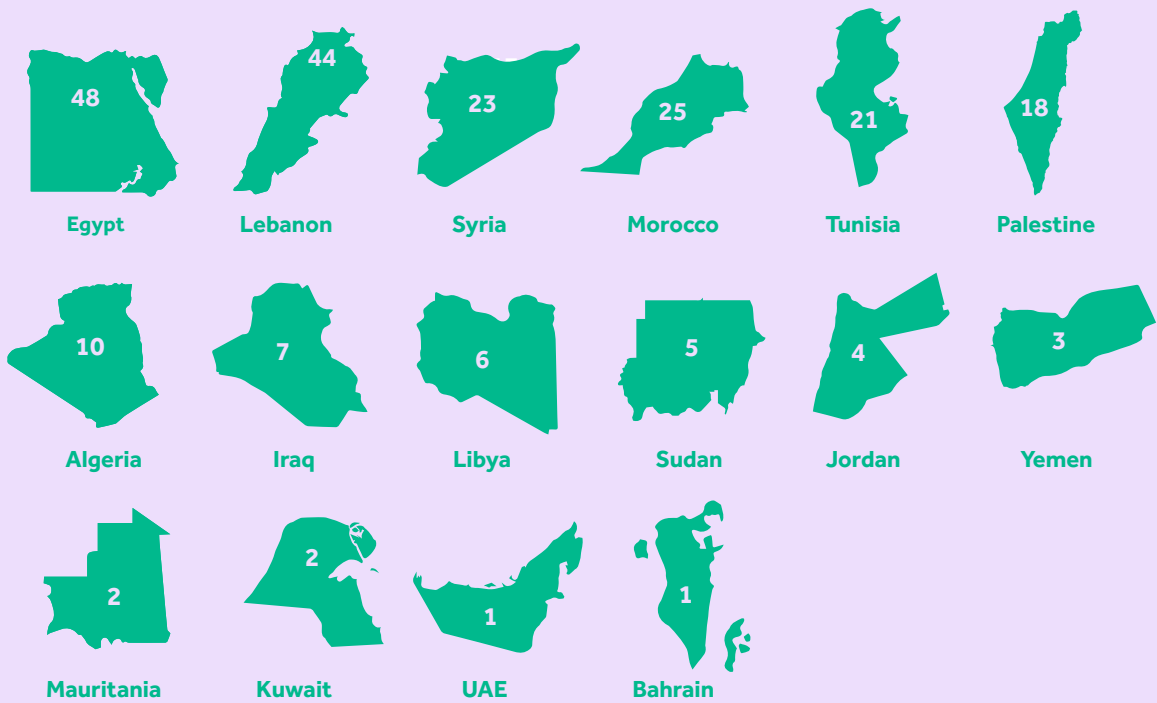


Grantees by Type

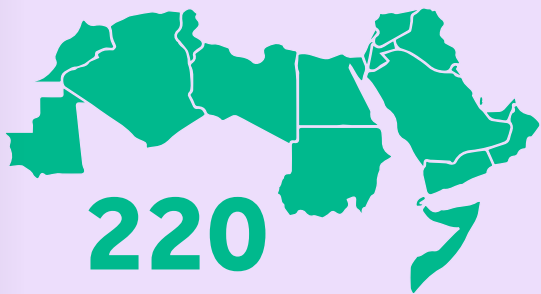


Jurors by Gender

## By Country | Arab Spread



## Arab Spread



## Non-Arab Geographic Spread

Europe 3  
North America 2



## Total Number of Grantees

General Programs and North Africa  
Cultural Program National Funds

225

Grantees from

19

Countries

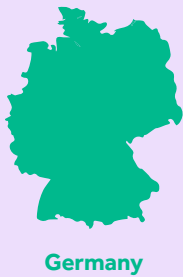
## Arab region-based projects

166

## Projects in diaspora

59

Year-round programming for exiled artists in Germany under the framework of AFAC's Arab European Creative Platform

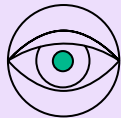


Germany

5 activities in 2019 8 activities in 2018

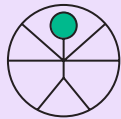
Total amount \$150,000

# 2019 Granting Schedule



## Visual Arts

Open Call February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Announcement of Grantees July and August
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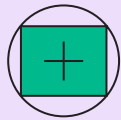
## Performing Arts

Open Call February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Announcement of Grantees July and August
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## AFAC Documentary Program

Open Call February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Announcement of Grantees July and August
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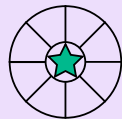
## Arab Documentary Photography Program

Open Call February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Announcement of Grantees July and August
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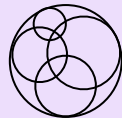


## Creative and Critical Writings

Open Call February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Announcement of Grantees July and August
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NATIONAL FUND

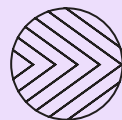


REGIONAL FUND

## North Africa Cultural Program

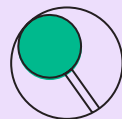
Open Call May 16 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call August 1 <sup>st</sup>	Announcement of Grantees November 25 <sup>th</sup>
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Open Call May 16 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call November 1 <sup>st</sup>	Announcement of Grantees End of February 2020
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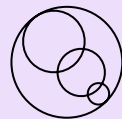
## Cinema

Open Call May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Close Call August 1 <sup>st</sup>	Announcement of Grantees December 24 <sup>th</sup>
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## Research on the Arts Program

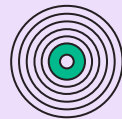
Open Call May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call August 1 <sup>st</sup>	Announcement of Grantees October 25 <sup>th</sup>
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## Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship

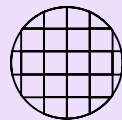
Open Call May 12 <sup>th</sup>	Close Call June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Announcement of Grantees August 8 <sup>th</sup>
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Application submission based on nomination



## Music

Open Call June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Close Call September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Announcement of Grantees November 25 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup>
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## Training and Regional Events

Open Call June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Close Call September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Announcement of Grantees November 25 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup>
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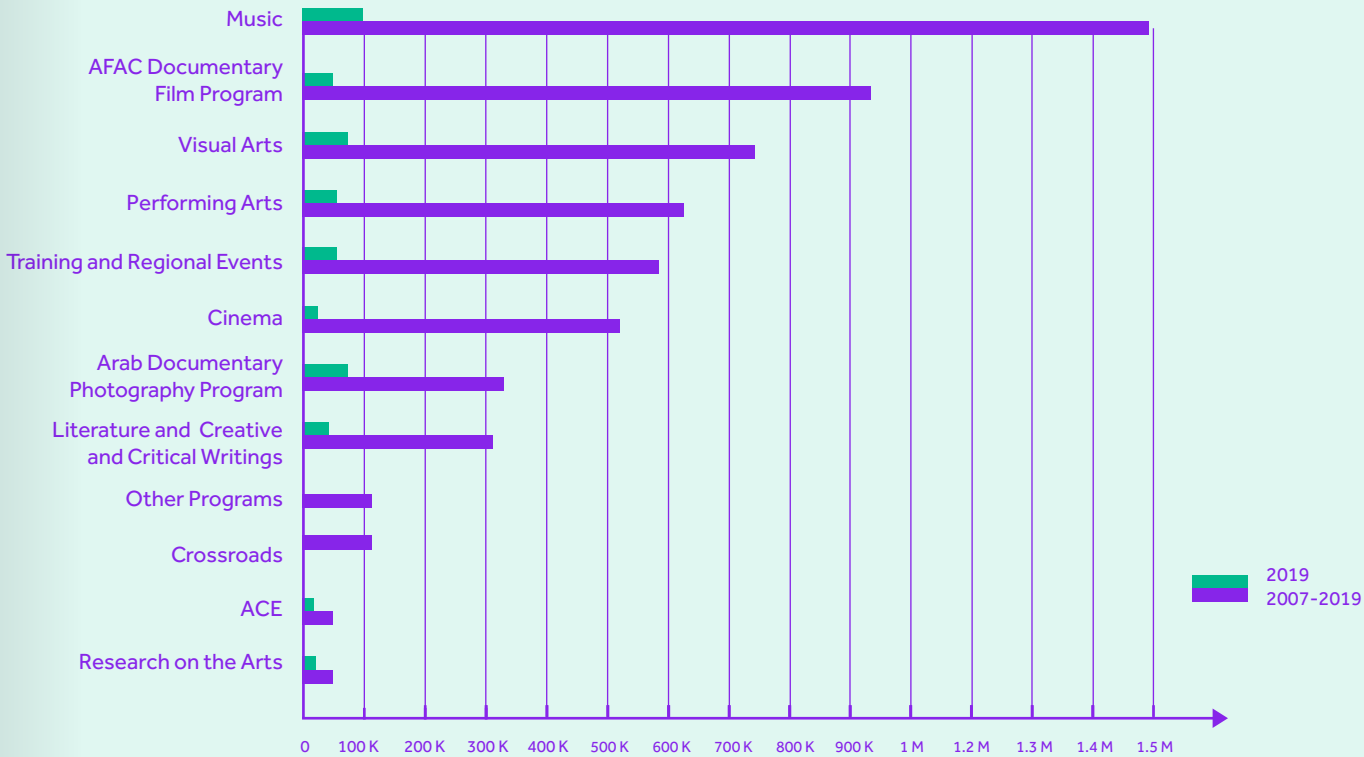
# Impact

To show the impact of its programs on the sector, AFAC records and regularly reports on two output variables to highlight the outreach of projects in terms of the approximate audience they generate, but also the number of professionals that are directly and indirectly involved in the production of the cultural activity. A third category reflects the direct work undertaken by AFAC itself such as its social media and website content and its own events. The grants are divided between individuals and institutions across AFAC-supported categories. Each category has its specificities in terms of professionals involved as well audience outreach. A film project for example requires an average of 20 professionals during the production stage, 3 in the development stage and 5 during post-production. On the other hand, the figures vary between a short film, a documentary or a feature, as well as according to the budget. To accommodate for all variables across the different disciplines and within each discipline, we came up with three average figures for each ; the number of professionals and the number of audiences. The three figures stand for low, medium and high professional/audience involvement. Music for instance, is a stark example of high audience engagement given its multi-dimensional and long-lasting mode of consumption (album purchase, concerts, radio and TV broadcast, internet).

# Metrics

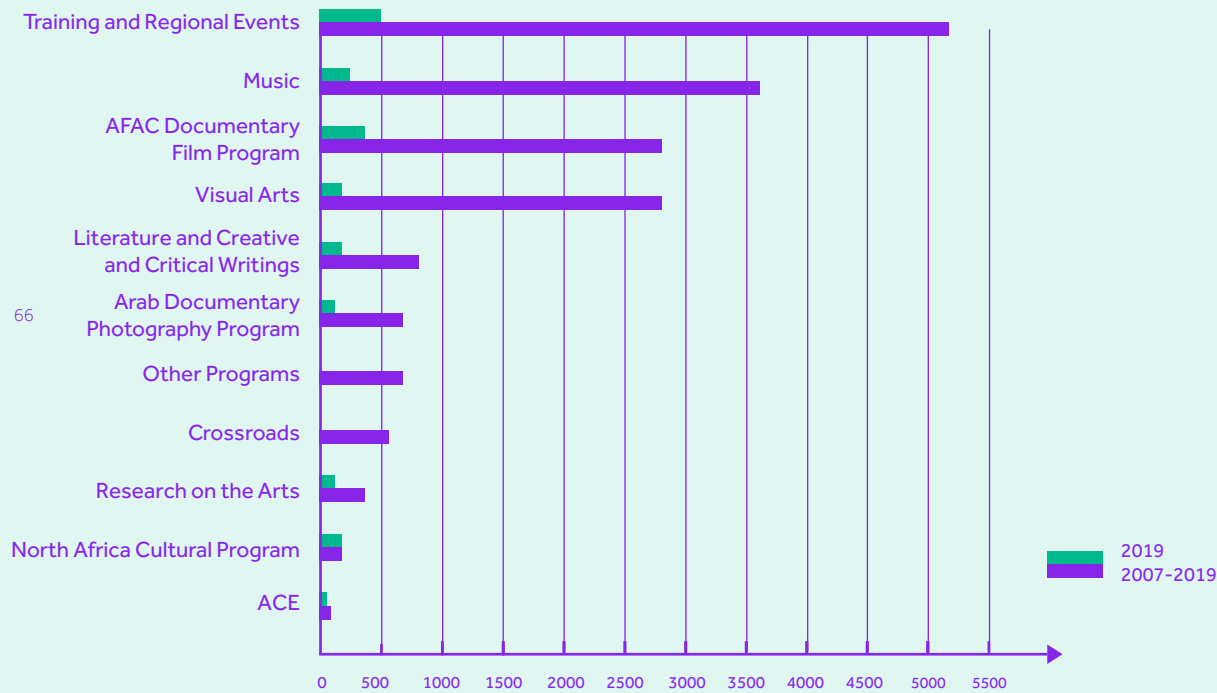
## Audience for Grantee Projects

We estimate that the largest tranche of AFAC grantee projects have resulted in an audience of around 5,700,000 people since 2007.



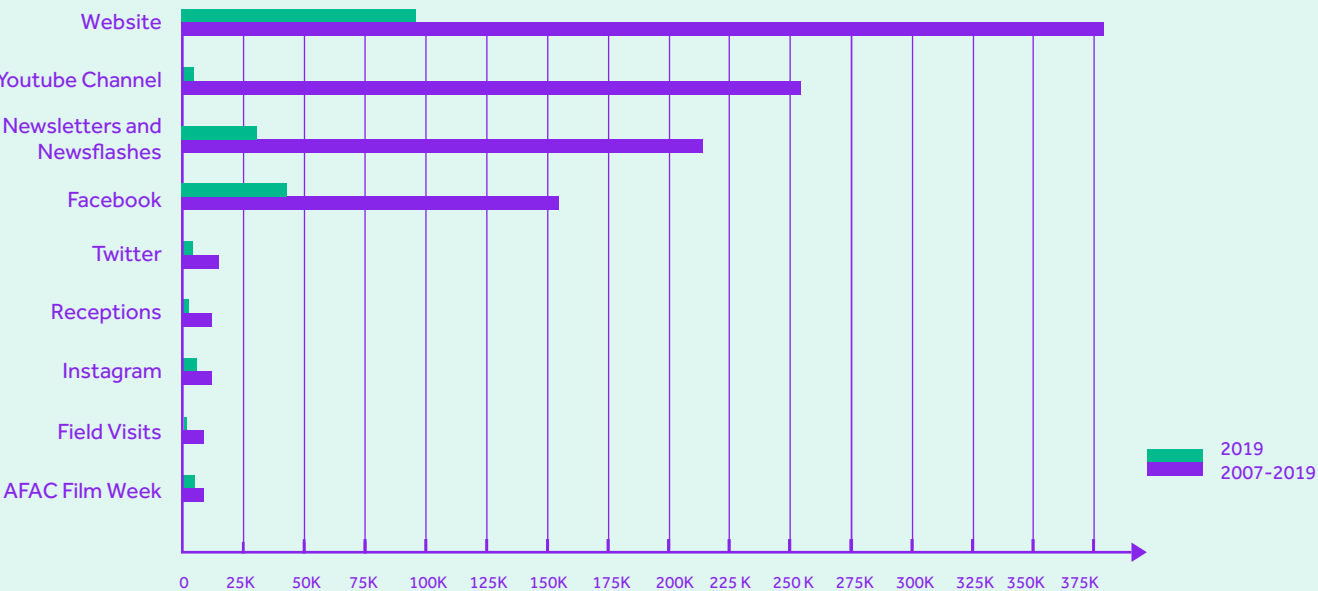
## Professionals for Grantees Projects

We estimate that AFAC grantees projects have resulted in the employment of around 2,200 professional persons in 2019 and more than 22,000 professional persons since 2007.



## Audience for AFAC direct promotional work

We estimate around 176 thousand audiences for AFAC direct promotional work on social media, the website, field visits and events.







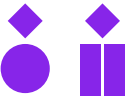
# Visual Arts

Number of Applicants

260

Number of Grantees

24



9 Females  
12 Males



3 Institutions

Countries

- Egypt (7)
- Iraq (3)
- Tunisia (3)
- Lebanon (2)
- Morocco (2)
- Syria (2)
- Jordan (1)
- Libya (1)
- Palestine (1)
- Yemen (1)
- Germany/ Iraq (1)

Total in Grants

\$325,000

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title	Type
Mohammad Shawky Hassan	Egypt	Shall I Compare you to a Summer’s Day?	Audiovisual Essay
Iman Issa	Egypt	Proxies, with a Life of Their Own	Sculpture Installation
Farah Khelil	Tunisia	Effet de Serre	Exhibition
Walid Siti	Iraq	“Walid Siti” Artist Monograph	Artist Book
Athar Jaber	Iraq	Lubumbashi Biennial	Residency and Exhibition
Nadia Kaabi-Linke	Tunisia	Idle Current	Site-specific exhibition
Mahmoud Khaled	Egypt	The House Museum of an Unknown Crying Man	Artist Book
Khaled Barakeh	Syria	Abandoned Property	Exhibition
Dina Jereidini	Egypt	Where is the Fun in Contemporary Art?	Exhibition
Shakeeb Abu Hamdan	Lebanon	_____’s Trip Down the Plughole	Exhibition and Publication
Heba Khalifa	Egypt	Thrown into the Sea	Artist Book
Nassim Azarzar	Morocco	Bonne Route	Exhibition
Adel Abidin	Iraq	Heroine	Exhibition
Abdelaziz Zerrou	Morocco	Tea Time: Chemistry of History	Public Installation
Nahla Tabbaa	Jordan	Daftar Asfar	Sketchbook
Mohamad Omran	Syria	Sculptures’ Trip	Exhibition
Sarri Elfaitouri	Libya	Tahafut - Incoherence	Exhibition
Nidhal Chamekh	Tunisia	Mnēmē - Le Battement des Ailes	Exhibition
Salwa Aleryani	Yemen	Variations on Pressure, or a Thought for Your Penny	Interactive Installation
Shahira Issa	Egypt	Figures of Accidental Loves	Artist Book
Yasmine ElMeleegy	Palestine	Cup of Tea with Fathi Mahmoud	Exhibition

el-Atlal	Palestine	el-Atlal air 03	Residency
Temporary Gallery	Germany/Iraq	Majnoon Field	Exhibition
Samandal Association	Lebanon	Samandal 3000	Comic Book

**Readers:** Sadik Rahim (Algeria) – curator; Basma AlSharif (Palestine) – visual artist; Monira Al Qadiri (Kuwait) – visual artist; and Mohamed Allam (Egypt) – artist and co-founder of Medrar.

**Jurors:** Fatma Kilani (Tunisia) - founder of La Boite in Tunisia; Manal AlDowayan (Saudi Arabia) – artist; and Hassan Khan (Egypt) – artist and professor.

## Jury Statement

“The Jury would like to heartily congratulate all the awarded projects of this edition- it has been a focused, intense and very engaged process that has given us the privilege to reflect upon the visual arts landscape in the region. We have found a consistently high quality as well as a wide diversity in approach. Although many of the topics and concerns were shared it was truly uplifting to notice that individual sensibilities remained pertinent. Applicants reflected a sensitivity to formal languages, a heightened self-awareness and criticality, originality of thought and a seriousness in approach that was remarkable. Our choices do not reflect any one single idea of what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ but is rather the result of a long detailed invested discussion where each member of the jury has brought their differing experiences, positions and ideas to the table. It is this process of discussion that helps formulate a vision and a context through which to be able to collectively judge the quality of the proposals as well as its relevance and connection to a wider art discourse. These elements have been significant to the choices we made. It is therefore no surprise that a large percentage of the selected projects give a platform of visibility for artistic practices; we were happy to support books, solo exhibitions, and artist led initiatives along with the process of production. These grants are not just financial incentives they are also a sign of the jury’s confidence in the significance of these practices and a willingness to invest in their continuing evolution.”

## Hassan Khan

Visual Arts juror Hassan Khan reveals what he looks for while evaluating applicants. *(In Arabic)*

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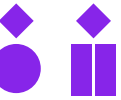
# Performing Arts

Number of Applicants

133

Number of Grantees

29



11 Females  
13 Males



5 Institutions

Countries

- Lebanon (12)
- Palestine (4)
- Syria (3)
- Egypt (2)
- Tunisia (2)
- Morocco (2)
- Jordan (1)
- Algeria (1)
- Kuwait (1)
- Mauritania (1)

Total in Grants

\$336,000

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title	Type
Rawan Halawi	Lebanon	Ya Leil Ma Atwalak	Play
Nancy Naous	Lebanon	Poppies	Dance
Yara Lucia Afram Boustany	Lebanon	Boundless Thought	Dance
Nadine Abou Zaki	Lebanon	The Elephant in the Dark	Performance
Aisha Brahim	Mauritania	Theatrical Days of Nouakchott	Festival
Hannah Khalil	Palestine	Scenes from 71* Years	Play
Dima Matta	Lebanon	This Is Not a Memorized Script, This Is a Well-Rehearsed Story	Play
Petra Serhal	Lebanon	Suspended Between the Second and the Third Kiss	Dance
Mette Loulou Von Kohl	Palestine	No One Likes an Ugly Revolutionary	Performance
Hoor Malas	Syria	Dust	Performance
Essia Jaibi	Tunisia	Let’s Do it Again!!	Play
Forat Alhattab	Syria	Tales of The Other Half	Interactive Performance
Leen Hashem & Alexandre Paulikevitch	Lebanon	Night Prayer	Dance and Poetry Performance
Ali Chahrour	Lebanon	Told by My Mother	Dance
Tarek Aitmedour	Algeria	Résister	Play
Fadi Toufiq	Lebanon	Je Ne Suis Pas Vanessa Tay	Performance
Ramzi Choukair	Syria	Y-Saidnaya	Play
Mounzer Baalbaki	Lebanon	And I Went into Slumber for Three Days and Three Nights	Play
Assad Fouladkar	Lebanon	Reconciliation with Om Kolthoum	Performance
Sinan F D Mansour	Palestine	Garbage Gar Gar	Dance
Sulayman Al Bassam	Kuwait	Media Medea	Play
Adham Hafez	Egypt	In 50 Years Or So	Dance
Jaouad Essounani	Morocco	Fadma/ About a Cheikha	Play

Selim Ben Safia	Tunisia	Chawchra	Dance
Stereo48 Dance Group	Palestine	Journey to Jerusalem	Dance
Centre Rézodanse – Egypte	Egypt	Silsilah#5 Dance Program	Training Dance
The Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts, Ashkal Alwan	Lebanon	Home Works 8: A Forum on Cultural Practices	Festival
2K-far	Morocco	Ballet Gnawa - L'Haal	Dance
IDEA - International Dance Encounter Amman	Jordan	International Dance Encounter Amman 2020	Dance Festival

**Readers:** Carol Abboud (Lebanon) – actress and producer; Aliya Khalidi (Palestine) – actress and playwright; and Khaled Amin (Morocco) – academic.

**Jurors:** Mariem Gellouz (Tunisia) - choreographer and dancer; Asmaa Houri (Morocco) - theater director; and Abdulsattar Naji (Kuwait) – journalist.

## Jury Statement

“The committee would like to acknowledge the trust placed in it by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC, and reaffirm the role AFAC plays in supporting innovative arts and culture projects. Upon reviewing and evaluating 99 performance arts proposals and projects, the committee noticed a number of issues, among which most noteworthy are: the presence of many projects that touch on the subject of war and its effects and repercussions in terms of political, social, and economic problems; gender and queer issues marking a significant trend in the proposed projects; a wide variety in the proposed works between theater, dance, performing arts, and new media arts; a notable youth presence; and major attention to meetings, festivals, and training workshops. The committee would also like to point out the geographic diversity represented in the proposals, which covered different parts of the Arab region (east and west), and commend the distinguished projects that were proposed from Lebanon, which were characterized by a modern, contemporary, and experimental artistic direction, taking theater and performing arts to new and additional creative dimensions. The committee then agreed on the artistic standards for the selection of quality projects and the search for value in content and presentation. It also sought projects that are built upon research and innovation, and which transcend the traditional and common, at the level of ideas and treatment. The selection process also concluded that there is equal gender representation in the Arab theater scene, and that was reflected in the results of the process, which did not come from any preconceived direction by the committee. Finally, the committee hopes for the presence of more projects from Iraq and from the Arabian Peninsula in the upcoming cycles.”

## Abdul Sattar Naji

Performing Arts juror Abdel Sattar Naji shares his general observations on the pool of applications evaluated by the jury committee. *(In Arabic)*

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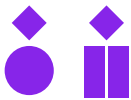
# Creative and Critical Writings

Number of Applicants

164

Number of Grantees

28



8 Females  
17 Males



3 Institutions

Countries

- Egypt (16)
- Syria (6)
- Morocco (2)
- Palestine (2)
- Lebanon (1)
- Tunisia (1)

Total in Grants

\$215,650

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title	Type
Haytham el-Wardany	Egypt	If Beasts Could Speak	Critical Study
Amira Badawy	Egypt	Six Qiblahs for Prayer	Poetry
Abed Alrahman Shabaneh	Palestine	Interpretations	Poetry
Ahmed Shawky Hassan	Egypt	The Video Museum	Critical Study
Ayman Al Zorkany	Egypt	The Day of The Monkey Rumpus	Graphic Novel
Walaa Fathy Hassan	Egypt	Despite Being a Regular Wiretapping Task Why was "Elamin Ghareeb" Shocked and Chilled?	Theater Play
Muhammad El-Hajj	Egypt	Two Stories on Panicking Masculinity	Short Stories
Salma El Tarzi	Egypt	You Know You Want It: Representation of Desire and Normalization of Sexual Violence in Egyptian Mainstream Cinema	Critical Study
Rasha Azab	Egypt	Tales of Departure & Partings	Short Stories
Anas Abu Rahma	Palestine	Monsters Come Every Tuesday	Critical Writings
Ahmad Katlesh	Syria	Sound as a Tool in Modern Arabic Poetry	Critical Study
Mohamed Abdelmoula	Tunisia	Marginalized Visual Arts in Tunisia: Caricature, Comics, Book Covers, Postage Stamps, Movie Posters	Critical Study
Mohamed Salem	Egypt	Sons of the Sea	Theater Play
Maher Raii	Syria	Chocolate Covered	Poetry
Nawal Alhalah	Syria	Representing War, Revolution and Exile in the Arab Novels Published Between 2010 and 2019	Critical Study
Soukaina Habib Allah	Morocco	Maybe Tomorrow	Short Stories
Ahmed AlSadek	Egypt	Ten Failed Attempts to Commit Suicide	Short Stories
Nora Amin	Egypt	Dance of the Persecuted	Critical Study
Mohamad Houjeiri	Lebanon	Oum Kalthoum Pop Art	Critical Study
Houssein Almoreey	Syria	The House of the Beast and the Ghost Maker of the Dolls	Theater Play
Ahmed Salah	Egypt	A Clay Like Pottery	Short Stories
Amr Elazaly	Egypt	The Language of the Virtual Reality Novel	Critical Study

Maiss Alrim Karfoul	Syria	Diaries of a Poet at Law School	Poetry
Wael Abdel Fattah	Egypt	Secret Histories: The Stories of Three Prominent Egyptian Women	Critical Study
Wael Salem	Syria	Theater, Cinema and TV-Drama in Syria A Historical and Critical Analysis 1970 - 2019	Critical Study
Kulte Editions	Morocco	The Seventh Gate	Online platform
Boring Books and Turjuman	Egypt	Boring Books and Turjuman	Online platform
Mada Masr	Egypt	Mada Encounters - Seminars on Egyptian Cultural History and Memory	Literary Booklets

**Jurors:** Rana Issa (Lebanon) - Assistant Professor of Translation Studies at the American University of Beirut and poet; Ayman EIDesouky (Egypt) - Chair of

Comparative Literature at the Doha Institute; and Sinan Antoon (Iraq) - novelist and scholar.

## Jury Statement Highlights

“...The committee sensed in the applications a deeper and more complex understanding of Arab cultural spheres and their plural identities, and perceived the presence of critical feminist discourse that was not limited to female participants only, but included various social and conceptual frameworks. Also noted was the prominence of certain specific topics and concerns, such as children’s literature, cultural history, archiving, documentation and the deconstruction of collective memory in view of critiquing political realities. The applications pointed to an interest in visual language, in the interactivity of media and in crossing and blurring gender identities. Noteworthy to the committee was the interest manifested in the registers and function of language, and in translation as theory and practice. Also noted was the inclination among applicants of both genders to look into emerging, non-mainstream local cultures...”

## Rana Issa

Creative and Critical Writings juror Rana Issa gives an overview of the highlights and themes that transpired from the applications evaluated by the jury. *(In Arabic)*

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AR



## Sinan Antoon

Creative and Critical Writings juror Sinan Antoon discusses the trends that transpired from the pool of applications received in 2019. *(In Arabic)*

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AR





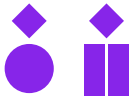
# AFAC Documentary Program

Number of Applicants

210

Number of Grantees

24



10 Females  
14 Males

5 in development,  
12 in production,  
and 7 in post-  
production

Countries

- Lebanon (6)
- Palestine (4)
- Morocco (3)
- Syria (3)
- Iraq (2)
- Tunisia (2)
- Egypt (1)
- Algeria (1)
- Jordan (1)
- Libya (1)

Total in Grants

\$400,000

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title	Stage
Asmae El Moudir	Morocco	The Mother of All Lies	Feature Documentary in Development
Dalal Mawad	Lebanon	Queens of Beirut	Feature Documentary in Development
Angie Obeid	Lebanon	Yalla, Baba!	Feature Documentary in Development
Zakaria Sedrati	Morocco	Bilmawn	Short Documentary in Development
Rima Samman	Lebanon	In the Heart a Swallow	Feature Documentary in Development
Omar El-Khairy	Palestine	Naz	Feature Documentary in Production
Farah Kassem	Lebanon	We Are Inside	Feature Documentary in Production
Mehdi Hmili	Tunisia	Fouledh	Feature Documentary in Production
Bassel Ghandour	Jordan	Five Football Dreams	Feature Documentary in Production
Jumana Manna	Palestine	Foragers	Medium-Length Documentary in Production
Jihan Kikhia	Libya	Searching for Kikhia	Feature Documentary in Production
Mohamed Sabbah	Lebanon	Embodied Chorus	Feature Documentary in Production
Albaqer Jafeer	Iraq	Take Me to the Cinema	Feature Documentary in Production
Abdullah Al Khatib	Syria	The Yarmouk Ghetto	Feature Documentary in Production
Salim Abu Jabal	Syria	Yusra and Dorothy	Feature Documentary in Production
Intissar Belaid	Tunisia	Bardo	Feature Documentary in Production
Adam Zuabi	Palestine	At the Palestinian National Theatre	Feature Documentary in Production
Ahmed Swayedi	Iraq	The Fifth Story	Feature Documentary in Post-Production
Nadim Mishlawi	Lebanon	Eye of the Architect	Feature Documentary in Post-Production
Carol Mansour	Palestine	Aida Returns	Short Documentary in Post-Production
Amine Kouti	Algeria	One, Two, Three, Viva l'Algérie !	Feature Documentary in Post-Production
Noura Rahman	Egypt	I Might Not Normally Share This	Short Documentary in Post-Production
Ali Essafi	Morocco	Our Dark 70s	Feature Documentary in Post-Production
Nidal Al Dibs	Syria	Home There... Cinema Here...	Feature Documentary in Post-Production

**Readers:** Hala Abdallah (Syria) – filmmaker and producer; Kais Kassem (Iraq) - critic; Soumeya Bouallegui (Tunisia) – producer and co-founder of Doc House; Ghada Sayegh (Lebanon) – filmmaker and professor; Rania Stephan (Lebanon) - filmmaker; and Hicham Fallah (Morocco) – founder and director of FIDADOC.

**Jurors:** Habiba Djahnine (Algeria) – filmmaker; Hala Galal (Egypt) - filmmaker and producer; and Amer Shomali (Palestine) - multi-disciplinary artist.

## Jury Statement

“Despite the diversity of proposed projects in subject matter, points of view, and visual treatment, the jury noticed a consistent presence of young and fresh voices coming into the documentary film world from the margins. These young men and women reflect a movement away from the regurgitated molds, images, and rhythms of traditional documentary. Their projects rebel against the classic form with visual alternatives and modern artistic approaches blurring the lines between the cinematic genres of documentary, fiction, video art, and animation. The least one could say about the selected filmmakers is that they are adventurous, and are aware of what they want to say as a new generation in need of a novel language that they themselves need to create. This generation of filmmakers re-examines the past with contemplative eyes, sifting through overlooked archives and marginalized narratives. Their proposals do not call for reliving the past, however, but suggest an alternative future rooted in the “here and now”. It is an active generation that sees in cinema a tool to forge the future and an entryway for their involvement in the transformations that our region is experiencing. This rebellious creativity by a generation that wants to seize its right to express itself despite all the major political, economic, and social challenges that affect the Arab region is hope-instilling. Their projects explore without prejudice, propose without preaching, draw inspiration without recycling ideas, and seek contemporary visual paths without masking identities.”

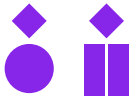
# Arab Documentary Photography Program

Number of Applicants

92

Number of Grantees

9



6 Females  
3 Males

Countries

- Egypt (3)
- Lebanon (1)
- Sudan (1)
- Kuwait (1)
- Algeria (1)
- Bahrain (1)
- Yemen (1)

Total in Grants

\$45,000

(in addition to professional support costs equivalent to \$159,000).

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title
Thana Farog	Yemen	Some Quiet Noise
Somaya Abdelrahman	Egypt	A Permanent Wound
Salih Basheer	Sudan	The Home Seekers
Mohammed Alkoush	Kuwait	Failaka
Dania Hany	Egypt	Here, There, or Elsewhere
Fathi Hawas	Egypt	Margined in a Supposed Green
Lola Khalfa	Algeria	Je T'aime Hic
Mariam Alarab	Bahrain	But Hope Is Born from the Suffering Womb
Emanuelle Ferneini	Lebanon	A Bigger Room

**Jurors:** Kristen Lubben (USA) - Director of Magnum Foundation; Bruno Boudjelal (Algeria) – artist; and Gregory Buchakjian (Lebanon) - artist, photographer and professor.

## Bruno Boudjelal

Arab Documentary Photography Program juror Bruno Boudjelal shares his main observations on the pool of applications evaluated. *(In French)*

FR



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## Jury Statement

“Among the 84 proposals from 16 countries that the jury reviewed, we selected nine very strong applicants from Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Algeria, Yemen, and Bahrain. While these artists represent a variety of approaches and profiles, several themes emerged across their projects: displacement and migration; intimate portrayals of place and memory; youth culture; and tensions and violence surrounding gender and social expectations. The very encouraging news is that so many young photographers are dedicated to pursuing their work, even when working in isolation or in challenging environments. Though photographers from elsewhere can and do take pictures of the region, the applicants to the ADPP program are doing something very different in their work: re-appropriating their own stories and those of their countries. A primary goal of this program is to bring these photographers into a network of support and mentorship, so that their unique perspectives and capacities are developed. Six of the nine selected projects are by women. While this was not intentional on the part of the jury, it reflected the strength of this year’s proposals by female photographers, which is particularly notable given the larger contexts for women in the region. As is typical for the program, the largest number of applicants came from Egypt, with Lebanon and North Africa also well represented. In the future, and given the political transformations underway, we should see more variety, including from the Gulf region.”



EN

## Kristen Lubben

Arab Documentary Photography Program juror and Magnum Foundation Executive Director Kristen Lubben shares her views on the evolution of the program and what struck her most during her evaluation of the projects submitted for ADPP this year. *(In English)*

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# Research on the Arts Program

Number of Applicants

47

Number of Grantees

6



1 Male



4 teams  
1 institution

Countries

- Morocco (2)
- Lebanon (1)
- Egypt (1)
- Tunisia (1)
- Sudan (1)

Total in Grants

\$150,000

Grantee Name	Structure	Nationality	Project Title	Type
Yasser Mahmoud Abdel Naeim Othman	Team	Egypt	Memory of Sounds and Music, Ma’amal El Sukkar St. 18	Music
Jamal Abarnous	Individual	Morocco	Traditional Performance Arts in the North of Morocco: Documentation, Study, and Presentation of Developmental and Artistic Investment Prospect	Performing Arts
Aadel Essaadani	Team	Morocco	Arts et pouvoir : recherche sur l’instrumentalisation de l’art et de la culture au Maroc	Cultural Policy / Multi-disciplinary
Anas Ghrab	Team	Tunisia	Arabic Sources on Music	Music
Jana Traboulsi	Team	Lebanon	Artistic action: collective notes (working title)	Multi-disciplinary
Andariya	Institution	Sudan	Unpacking the #SudanUprising: Art, Artificial Intelligence & Grassroots Activism	Music

**Jurors:** Driss Ksikes (Morocco) – scholar; Jack Persekian (Palestine) – artist and curator; Maha Maamoun (Egypt) – visual artist and curator; Walid Sadek (Lebanon) – artist, writer and professor at the

Department of Fine Arts and Art History at the American University of Beirut; and Tarek Al Ariss (Lebanon) – Professor and Chair of Middle Eastern Studies at Dartmouth College.

## Driss Ksikes

Research on the Arts Program juror Driss Ksikes shares his main observations following the 2019 jury meeting. *(In French)*

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FR



## Jury Statement

“In this grant cycle for the AFAC/ACSS, we selected a limited number of projects with high potential. We followed the criteria of the institution trying to strike the right balance between artistic and cultural practices and analytical reflection and self-questioning. Our aim was to recognize and support critical endeavors with a potential to contribute to a wide array of debates on culture and politics in the Arab region. We also valued precision in terms of research questions, rigor in terms of method, and effort to reach and connect wider constituencies and audiences.

The projects selected focused on understanding the relevance of past traditions and forgotten or suppressed eras or practices. We sought projects that questioned binaries and assumptions about art, politics, race, gender, and culture, as well as those that aimed at reconstructing and reimagining cultural heritage, be it musical or performative. We engaged proposals dealing with soundscapes and sound culture, and projects that were able to establish connections between different fields and disciplinary formations and cultural practices. The proposals selected examine these connections and problematize them while critiquing questions of power and positionality. Moving beyond stagnant theoretical formations or frames of reference, the successful proposals demonstrated an awareness of debates and concerns that emerge at the intersection of the local, the regional, and the global.

We felt like there are young scholars who want to go beyond their previous research topics and methods but also more established scholars taking particular interest in new practices and technologies. We also encountered and valued proposals by practitioners doing self-reflexive and self-analytical work and those engaging with and through online digital media. Other interests emerging from the proposals consisted in examining infrastructure of governmental policies and mapping models of effective communication. In several proposals, researchers and practitioners were devising new ways to empower the base by providing them with more insights and knowledge through models of dissemination that are both virtual and intersubjective. Promoting the dissemination of art and knowledge beyond specialized institutions and challenging policies and policy makers with new paradigms of thinking art, the projects that stood out focused on examining how government instrumentalization of cultural categories and practices perpetuate ceilings of production and representation.

The jurors valued experimental approaches and rigorous research that seek to create new openings in understanding art and culture in the region.”

## Tarek El Ariss

Research on the Arts Program juror Tarek El Ariss presents an overview of the projects presented, as well as of the parameters for evaluation. He also highlights the importance of this program in the region. *(In Arabic)*

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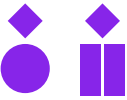
# Music

Number of Applicants

253

Number of Grantees

21



5 Females  
11 Males



5 Institutions

Countries

- Lebanon (6)
- Egypt (4)
- Syria (3)
- Morocco (2)
- Tunisia (2)
- Iraq (1)
- Mauritania (1)
- Palestine (1)
- Sudan (1)

Total in Grants

\$311,500

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title	Type
Toufic Farroukh	Lebanon	Nothing Personal	Jazz Album
Aisha Cheghali	Mauritania	Ardennes Festival	Music Festival
Teddy Tawil	Lebanon	TEDTEDTED	Electronic Music Album
Mohannad Nasser	Syria	Al Hamra	Jazz Album
Omar El Ouaer	Tunisia	Musk Sextet	Jazz Album
Ibrahim Muslimani	Syria	Wasl Album	Archive of traditional Maqams and Recordings
Ranine Chaar	Lebanon	Ranine	Pop Album
Salma Mahmoud	Sudan	Sawa Sawa	Electronic Music Workshop
Sami Salloum	Syria	Sham Trio	Classical Oriental Album
Makram Aboul Hosn	Lebanon	Transmigration	Jazz Album
Yousra Mansour	Morocco	Bab L'Bluz	Gnawa Album
Joelle El-Khoury	Lebanon	Must be so!	Jazz Album
Mohamad Safa	Lebanon	Ibtihalat	Electronic Music Album
Maurice Louca	Egypt	Elephantine Arab World Tour	Tour and Concerts
Amir ElSaffar	Iraq	Rivers of Sound - Sonoluminescence	Experimental Jazz Album
Nancy Mounir	Egypt	Nozhet El Nofous	Experimental Album
Mohamed Khachnaoui	Tunisia	Dendri Stambeli Movement	Classical Traditional Album
REFLECT:fest Foundation	Netherlands	Festival REFLECT: fest	Music Festival
Ewsal Bel3araby	Egypt	El Sellem	Teaching Platform
Mastaba Center	Egypt	Sham El Nesim Festival	Music Festival
Overboys 'Over Boarders Organisation of Youth' Society	Morocco	International Percussion Festival	Percussion Festival

**Jurors:** Fadia Tomb-El Hage (Lebanon) – soprano singer and voice coach; Rami Abadir (Egypt) – music producer and writer

for Ma3azef; and Zied Zouari (Tunisia) – musician and composer.

## Jury Statement

“We were selected and invited by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture – AFAC to be the music jury. Over a month and a half, each of the three jury members evaluated 253 applications. Over the course of two days, the jury engaged in fruitful and lengthy discussions reflecting the different backgrounds and interests of its members, ranging from classical, experimental, academic and popular, in search of the best projects which are innovative and serious.

The final selection included 10 emerging artists, 7 beginners and 4 institutions. The 21 winning projects included various musical genres like pop, jazz, experimental, electronic and heritage, as well as musical, documentary and educational festivals’ projects. The jury saw in the winners’ projects the tendency to innovate and extend the boundaries of music fields, and the will to produce innovative works in relation to the Arab region. In addition to evaluating on a creative and technical basis, the jury took into account the budget feasibility and project methodology, as well as the social and geographical context, the educational dimension and the potential impact of projects on their surroundings.

The jury identified in many projects an attempt to break out of the familiar and consumer forms; some through audio, documentary and educational works, others through heritage revival in traditional and creative ways, in addition to a large presence of music fusion. However, the jury noted the lack of women among applicants, and encourages more women artists to apply in the future. We also observed a lack of orchestral, contemporary classical, rap, contemporary and electronic folk music and subsequently, the jury also recommends that more artists engaged on these musical genres to apply. The jury also urges artists to delve into unusual creative forms outside their comfort zone, as well as musical projects that connect with other artistic disciplines such as combining music with audiovisual disciplines.”

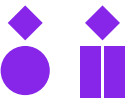
# Cinema

Number of Applicants

250

Number of Grantees

22



10 Females  
12 Males

4 Development,  
16 Production, and  
2 Post-Production

Countries

- Morocco (4)
- Palestine (3)
- Lebanon (3)
- Tunisia (3)
- Syria (3)
- Egypt (2)
- Iraq (1)
- Algeria (1)
- Sudan (1)
- UAE (1)

Total in Grants

\$414,000

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title	Type
Sulafa Hijazi	Syria	Hair	Development
Sohail Masar	Iraq	The Assassins	Development
Mohamed Kordofani	Sudan	Goodbye Julia	Development
Sofia El Khyari	Morocco	The Shadow of the Butterflies	Development
Ameer Fakher Eldin	Syria	Passerby	Production
Rima Alhamedd	Syria	Goodbye Lapis Lazuli	Production
Humaid Alsuwaidi	UAE	Dalma	Production
George Peter Barbari	Lebanon	Death of a Virgin, and the Sin of not Living	Production
Muayad Alayan	Palestine	A House in Jerusalem	Production
Malek Bensmail	Algeria	The Meursault Investigation	Production
Faouzi Bensaïdi	Morocco	Deserts	Production
Zahra Berrada	Morocco	Alia	Production
Meryam Joobeur	Tunisia	Motherhood	Production
Scandar Copti	Palestine	Happy Holidays	Production
Mounia Akl	Lebanon	Costa Brava, Lebanon	Production
Yasmine Benkiran	Morocco	Queens	Production
Lotfi Achour	Tunisia	Severed Head	Production
Mariam Al Ferjani	Tunisia	Ad Libitum	Production
Razan AlSalah	Palestine	The Greatest Wait	Production
Esmail Zalat	Egypt	Chained Prey	Production
Ghassan Salhab	Lebanon	The River	Post-Production
Ayten Amin	Egypt	Souad	Post-Production

**Readers:** Adnan Jdey (Tunisia) – film critic; Hala Lotfi (Egypt) – filmmaker; Mohamed Soueid (Lebanon) – commissioning editor; Tamer Ezzat (Egypt) – filmmaker; and Annemarie Jacir (Palestine) – filmmaker.

**Jurors:** Ala Hlehel (Palestine) – author; Rania Stephan (Lebanon) – filmmaker; and Youssef Rakha (Egypt) - novelist.

## Jury Statement Highlights

“As the 2019 cinema jury, we were heartened by the quality and range of the projects submitted, testifying to an impressive level of complexity and sophistication in present-day Arab cinema. We were especially pleased with the tendency of Arab filmmakers to open up to the world at large, placing themselves firmly in a global contemporary independent filmmaking context, though we also noted the potential risks to the artistic originality posed by the drive to conform to “global” expectations or fit into prepackaged formats. We noted with particular interest the use of archival footage, animation and genre cinema (horror, science fiction, thriller, action...), serving profound artistic and intellectual ends. Equally important is the predominance of an anxious, inquisitive and adventurous spirit, with both artists and subjects striving to leave their safe zones and questioning deeply held convictions. Perhaps reflecting political pessimism across much of the Arab world, the post-apocalyptic genre is especially widespread. In portraying such landscapes, which are presented variously as both bleak and ironic, the ingenious use of animation to offset otherwise prohibitive production costs is notable. Another major motif that runs through many of the works submitted is that of the journey both outer and inner, with the road-movie format as the basis for a social or emotional enquiry.”



AR **Rania Stephan**

Cinema juror filmmaker Rania Stephan comments on the highlights of the pool of film projects evaluated by the jury this year, and how these reflect the Arab cinema trends today. *(In Arabic)*

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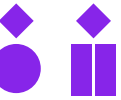
# Training and Regional Events

Number of Applicants

143

Number of Grantees

24



3 Females  
6 Males



15 Institutions

Countries

- Lebanon (9)
- Palestine (3)
- Syria (3)
- Egypt (2)
- Algeria(1)
- Morocco (1)
- Sudan (1)
- UK (1)
- USA (1)
- Canada (1)
- Germany (1)

Total in Grants

\$360,000

Grantee Name	Nationality	Project Title	Type
Mohamad Ibrahim Farahat	Egypt	Creative Writing Workshops for Children in Marginalized Neighborhoods	Creative Writings Workshop
Maher Jelo	Syria	Psycho-Social Support & Art-Based Intervention	Short Film Workshop
Reem Shilleh	Palestine	Out of the Shadows	Film Festival
Marie Elias	Syria	Writing for Stage	Performing Arts Workshop
Ibrahim Nehme	Lebanon	The Outpost Archive	Journalism Digital Archiving
Fadi Syriani	Lebanon	Youth Animation Platform	Film Workshop
Dima Abazah	Syria	Once Upon a Time... The Story Begins	Creative Writings Workshop
Mahdi Atiya /Hashem Karera	Palestine	Thread and Tale	Performing Arts Workshop
Kheira Ikram Hamdi Mansour	Algeria	Climate Change, Culture Change	Visual Art Workshops
Association of Al Madina Theatre for Arts and Culture	Lebanon	The Laboratory Spirit - with Odin Teatret	Performing Arts Workshop
Sudan Film Factory	Sudan	NAFAS - New Alternative Films Around Sudan	Film Workshop
Fondation Liban Cinema (FLC)	Lebanon	Creative Producing	Film Workshop
Tarek Waly Center for Architecture and Heritage	Egypt	The Return of the Soul - Egyptian Legacies	Workshops
Majless Al Biaa (Council of Environment)	Lebanon	REEF - Rural Encounters on Environment and Films	Films Screening
Filmlab Palestine	Palestine	Palestine Cinema Days 2020	Film Festival
Nadi LeKol Nas	Lebanon	The Musical and Literary Heritage of Omar Zenni	Music Digital Archiving
Temporary Art Platform	Lebanon	Art, Ecology and the Commons	Visual Art Workshops
Station	Lebanon	Love You Live	Multi-Disciplinary Festival
The Creative Memory of the Syrian Revolution	Lebanon	Illustrating the Revolution and the Syrian War	Digital Platform

Takassemtane Association for Environment and Development	Morocco	The 11 <sup>th</sup> Edition of the International Festival of Environmental Films	Film Festival
Alhudood CIC Independent Theater and Performing Arts	United Kingdom	Interactive Digital Training Guide for Creative and Satirical Writing	Journalism Workshop
Toronto Arab Film	Canada	Toronto Arab Film Festival	Film Festival
Al-Jumhuriya Collective	Germany	Hamesch: The New Arab Cultural Supplement	Journalism Workshop
Palestine Writes	United States	Palestine Writes Literature Festival	Literature Festival

**Jurors:** Hanan Kassab-Hassan (Syria) - researcher and cultural manager; Sarah Rifky (Egypt) - artistic director and curator; and Moez Mrabet (Tunisia) - researcher, actor and theater director.

## Jury Statement Highlights

“AFAC received a considerable and varied number of applications this year. The projects hailed from different fields and practices: literature, journalism and satirical writing, theater, dance and cinema, in addition to international festivals for Arab films, and local festivals that revolve around specific topics. Most cinema projects came from Palestine, while most theater projects came from Syria. Dance, literature, journalism, and satirical writing made up the smallest percentage of the projects presented; music and plastic arts were modestly present, while projects related to new technologies and media in the realm of art and technology were few and even rare. We were pleased to receive several projects that dealt with environmental issues from a cultural perspective, mostly from Lebanon, Algeria and Morocco.

The largest number of projects presented in this call focused on training and developing competencies, indicating a general awareness of the need to train and build capacities of young people in the areas of creative writing, especially in theater and film. The objectives of the cultural projects focused on the need and importance of cultural, intellectual and artistic communication with children and youth in refugee and displaced communities.

As a jury, we had to define our internal criteria. The first of these was the interest of these projects in the communities in which they are to be held, their impact on the target audience, the possibility of their implementation on the ground, and their level of seriousness and innovation. Other measures included balancing artistic types, large-scale projects and specialized smaller projects, taking into account the diversity of applicants in terms of age and gender. With all these criteria, we have always sought to respect geographical distribution, with particular attention to countries that lack cultural structures, and where support to culture and arts is a vital necessity.

This was the most difficult task, since the projects cannot be judged by the same criteria when they come from different regions where the possibilities and challenges in the field of art and culture vary in times of revolutions, conflicts, wars, asylum and migrations.

Finally, we hope that our efforts will contribute to meeting the needs of the cultural field and open new horizons for ideas and projects that would constitute a building block in the formation of a promising future for the Arab world.”



# Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship - ACE

Number of Applicants

38

Number of projects

8



8 Institutions

Countries

- Egypt (2)
- Libya (1)
- Algeria (1)
- Lebanon (2)
- Tunisia (1)
- Yemen (1)

Total in Grants

\$200,000

(in addition to professional support costs equivalent to \$220,000)

Grantee Name	Nationality	Sector	Years of Experience
Fanni Raghman Anni	Tunisia	Performing Art	6
Comra Films	Yemen	Film	2
Axxam n-dda Ali - Uncle Ali's house	Algeria	Multi-disciplinary	4
Metropolis Art Cinema	Lebanon	Film	13
Tanarout	Libya	Multi-disciplinary	4
Waraq	Lebanon	Multi-disciplinary	7
Ekaa Music	Egypt	Music	12
Reflection for Arts, Training and Development	Egypt	Multi-disciplinary	12

**Jurors:** Mona Younis (Syria) - development and human rights consultant; Sana Ouchtati (Tunisia) - cultural consultant; and Rasha Salah (Palestine/Lebanon) - independent curator.

## Sana Ouchtati

ACE juror Sana Ouchtati shares her view on the importance of the ACE program as it embarks in its second cycle in 2019, and how may relations among participating institutions be strengthened and widened by this program. *(In French)*

FR

## Rasha Salah

ACE juror Rasha Salah reveals her key observations on the institutions that were evaluated during the 2019 jury meeting. *(In Arabic)*

AR

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## Jury Statement

“The review of 38 excellent proposals gave us a window into the region’s extraordinary artistic contributions and development, and for this we feel privileged and honored. The organizations’ creativity, determination and resilience in the face of immense social, political and financial challenges are nothing short of heroic. The diversity of models and profiles is impressive, people are creating and exploring tools to not merely exist but also resist. Their pursuit of artistic excellence is matched by their engagement with local communities as well as counterparts throughout the region and beyond. Moreover, an impressive number have established strong ties with and presence in the international arts scene. It was very hard to select eight institutions out of the excellent applications. We were impressed by the level and quality of the applicants’ self-awareness in terms of the needs and the challenges they are facing and their readiness to address these head-on. We were also impressed by the caliber of the proposals and their thoughtful reflections on their institutional development and how they will benefit from the ACE program. In particular, they showed genuine interest in entrepreneurship and other ways to become self-sustainable and grow their institutions. The three of us were also inspired and exhilarated by the dedication to carry out their work even in challenging environments. Imagine, in Yemen, young filmmakers are coming together to produce films that tell stories while the war rages, while in Libya another organization is engaged in multi-disciplinary programs for communities in remote areas! We were also surprised by a few things. We were positively surprised by the diversity of applications in terms of countries, art practices, sectors, and models. This diversity bodes well for exchanges and sharing experiences and building synergies across the region. We also sadly note that the current political pressure on institutions has clearly affected arts organizations in a number of countries as reflected by the small number of applications from those countries. The ACE program is a gift from AFAC to the Arab region, and one that will see valuable arts organizations developing and flourishing in the years ahead and for that we can all be grateful.”



EN **Mona Younis**

ACE juror Mona Younis shares in this interview her impressions on the pool of applications submitted by nominated cultural institutions and reviewed by the jury committee in 2019. *(In English)*

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# North Africa Cultural Program

Number of  
Applicants  
(National Fund)

122

Number of  
Grantees

28

Institutions

Countries

Morocco (7)

Algeria (4)

Egypt (8)

Tunisia (6)

Libya (3)

Total in Grants

\$2,499,000

The North Africa Cultural Program (NACP) is the latest flagship program and is the fruit of an international bid put out by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) which AFAC won in mid-2018. It is dedicated to the five countries of North Africa- namely Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Egypt – providing institutional and programmatic support to cultural entities as well as promoting regional collaborative projects that involve two and more partners from the five countries and beyond. The first support scheme, the National Fund aims to strengthen independent arts and culture entities (institutions, collectives, networks, spaces...), while the second, the Regional Fund, encourage regional collaborations, and with a focus on supporting distribution, circulation and dissemination of artistic works in all fields.

This was the first time AFAC delineated a specific sub-region for grants' programs which are usually open and accessible to all applicants across the Arab region. We saw this as an opportunity to build a solid model for institutional strengthening of arts and culture entities. Our vision is to replicate such an experience in the wider Arab region and to expand connections where they organically exist. The North Africa Cultural Program builds on our huge body of work, knowledge and networks, and allows for an intervention at a more infrastructural and development level with longer-term engagement that is key to creating change and to making impact. It allows AFAC to address emerging priorities of institutions in distribution, research, institutional strengthening, engaging public programs beyond big cities, and to build on common concerns as well as common heritage through regional initiatives and exchanges.



During the inception phase, AFAC conducted scoping visits to four of the five targeted countries in addition to meeting practitioners from Libya in Tunis. Following the scoping visits to Egypt and Algeria in November and December of 2018, visits to Tunisia and Morocco took place in January and February 2019. Ranging between one week and ten days, each trip covered 3 to 4 cities per country and comprised one-on-one meetings with cultural players and artists (grantees as well as non-grantees) and public presentations. Findings from the scoping visits pointed at the following realities: longer-term support to institutions/collectives/spaces is a top priority; support should not create dependency but assist grantees in their sustainability efforts; contractual partnership agreements require flexibility depending on legal and financial hurdles; the importance of working with alternative structures such as hybrid models; respecting contexts where visibility may be counterproductive for the safety of initiatives; the need to address institutional strengthening with grants but also mentorship and coaching; prioritizing skill-building for young artists and technicians when coupled with diffusion of their artistic works; regional collaborations are excellent opportunities for exchange and to get artistic community out of isolation despite obstacles

related to mobility, visa and authorizations; recognizing that even though a country like Tunisia is favored by the EU for bilateral funding, the independent scene does not always benefit and there is limited institutional support across the region; dwindling purchasing power impacts lifestyles, funding and audience development; Libya specifically has the most challenging context in terms of the socio-political situation, access, big gaps in the arts and culture sector; and last but not least, the need to invest in accessing talents and in support of initiatives that reach audiences.

A delegation of SDC representatives from the Bern and Tunisia visited our offices beginning of March to discuss the findings of the scoping visits and how they will feed into the final design of the program. A small AFAC Team flew back to Tunisia in March for the official announcement of the AFAC-SDC partnership which took place at the Swiss Ambassador's residence in Tunis and in the presence of our Chairperson Ghassan Salamé, AFAC Board Member Amr Ben Halim and Swiss Federal Councilor Alain Berset. In his speech, Berset stated that "It is an honor for us to collaborate with AFAC, an institution that shares our vision of cultural promotion, and brings us its expertise and capacity to endorse the region's cultural institutions."



We seized the opportunity of being in Tunis to cover Libya by inviting a group of 9 Libyan cultural figures who shared with us their knowledge of the arts and culture initiatives, the challenges, needs and opportunities. Following the field visits, an internal report on the challenges, needs and opportunities of the arts and culture sector in each of the five countries was produced.

With country-specific contexts in mind as well as regional challenges and opportunities, AFAC drew up a program to accommodate for the priorities and modalities of the arts and culture sector in North Africa. The open call was launched on 16 May 2019 for both the National and Regional Funds for cultural entities, offering up to 3-year grants. The application templates, guidelines and FAQ were all uploaded and accessible in three languages (Arabic, French and English). The open calls for the National and Regional Funds were launched 16 May 2019 and the response was overwhelmingly positive as shown by the high engagement rates on Facebook insights and Instagram. The launch post reached 37,779 people. When the call closed for the National Fund on 1 August, AFAC received 122 applications. Following AFAC's administrative and eligibility check, the retained applications to be evaluated by the independent jury committee per country are: Egypt – 29 eligible out of 43 applications; Morocco – 24 eligible out of 33 applications; Tunisia – 24 eligible out of 31 applications; Libya – 6 eligible out of 11 applications; and Algeria – 4 eligible out of 4 applications. As for the Regional Fund which closed on 1 November, AFAC received 43 applications with lead applicants from the following countries: Algeria – 3, Egypt – 10, Libya – 1, Morocco – 12, and Tunisia 16. Those that pass the administrative and eligibility check will be evaluated in February 2020 by one jury committee. Out of the total NACP budget of USD 5.5



million, AFAC envisages to cover in direct grant support USD 3.5 million up to 12 regional projects (\$150,000 - \$300,000 per project) under the Regional Fund; and up to 15 core and program support initiatives (\$75,000 - \$200,000 per institution) as well as 10 smaller initiatives (\$15,000 - \$30,000 per institution), distributed among the five countries. AFAC is finalizing the jury meetings for the National Fund – a total of five independent jury (one per country). The discussions in the jury meeting reflect the analysis AFAC made following field visits and confirm the appropriate design of the program to accommodate for country-specific contexts as well as absorption capacities of independent cultural entities.





Country



Tunisia

Grantee	Type of Support: Programmatic and/or Institutional
Association l'Art Rue	Programmatic Support
Cinefils	Institutional Strengthening Support
Theatre EL Hamra	Programmatic Support
Siwa Platforme Tunisie	Both
Association Printemps de Sbeitla	Institutional Strengthening Support
Mass'Art Art Space	Institutional Strengthening Support



Egypt

Zawya Cinema & Distribution	Both
Mada Masr	Programmatic Support
Contemporary Image Collective – CIC	Both
Ma3azef Publishing LTD	Both
Arab Digital Expression Foundation (ADEF)	Institutional Strengthening Support
Wekalet Behna	Institutional Strengthening Support
Medrar for Contemporary Art	Institutional Strengthening Support
Cinematheque	Institutional Strengthening Support



Morocco

Association de Culture et d'Education par l'Audiovisuel (ACEA)	Both
Tilila	Institutional Strengthening Support
Le 18	Both
Kulte	Institutional Strengthening Support
L'blend	Institutional Strengthening Support
L'Aperté Théâtre	Programmatic Support
Arab Media Lab	Both



Algeria

Anis Cultural Company Sétif Algeria	Programmatic Support
Rizhome	Both
Collectif Cinéma et Mémoire	Both
Artissimo	Institutional Strengthening Support



Libya

Bayt Ali Gana	Both
Arete Foundation for Arts and Culture	Programmatic Support
Libya Culture and Media Organisation	Both

Jury Statement



Tunisia: Sana Ouchtati, Azza Chaabouni and Mourad Sakli

The jury commends and values the efforts made by AFAC to boost cultural action in the Arab Region and increase its impact through the support to the private sector and civil society. In this sense, the jury particularly emphasizes the importance of the call for projects by country, which can adapt to different contexts and meet specific needs. It also welcomes the initiative to provide structural support to cultural organizations and associations across the country. The jury notes that the proposals received reflect a dynamism and a real involvement of civil society and the private sector in cultural action.



Egypt: Dina Al Khawaga, Salma El-Tarzi and Tarek Abou El-Foutouh

The Arab Fund for Culture and the Arts has received a large number of requests for support from institutions active in the field of culture and the arts to obtain institutional support for two or three years under the program launched by AFAC several months ago. The jury took into account the balance in the selection of the institutions best suited for this support and lined up those that organize cultural events along with those that provide a platform to host artistic activities in order to spread the arts and culture and critical thinking more generally. The committee also agreed to support institutions with expertise in managing organizational resources besides its credibility in the fields of culture and arts, but at the same time tried to encourage some emerging and promising organizations whose survival depends on urgent support to ensure their viability, and to complete the institutional structure of these fledgling organizations. This enhances the pivotal role of AFAC in supporting organizational structures in the fields of culture and arts in the Arab region.

Dina Al Khawaga

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NACP National Fund (Egypt) juror Dina Al Khawaga communicates her view on the importance of this program as well as on the pool of applicants following the evaluation process. *(In Arabic)*



Morocco: Dounia Benslimane, Bouchra Salih and Hicham Houdaifa

Twenty-two candidatures were examined by the three members of the jury for Morocco. These files were presented by organizations with various profiles. Their



seniority is between 2 and 25 years old. Their disciplinary fields of intervention are also disparate, between living arts, visual arts, publishing, cinema, digital arts, etc. Other organizations tend to be cross-cutting and involved in mobility, creative industries, popular education and training. It was quite difficult to separate the structures and in the end, the three experts favored organizations and structures:- Having demonstrated a clear, coherent and balanced strategic vision; between the quality of their work and their actual needs, in terms of structuring and / or supporting projects, while being aware of their environment (gaps, strengths, challenges they face and opportunities they can seize through this funding).

- Having been able to provide a satisfactory overview of their current administrative, financial and human resource governance, and how it could be improved with the funds allocated.

- Young initiatives, initiated by young people and daring but struggling to raise funds and initiate a dynamic of sustainable funding, rather than those who could obtain funding with greater ease, because of their reputation or their network.

- Based in different cities, including “outside the capitals”. Thus, organizations in Tiznit, Marrakech and Agadir are present alongside others based in Casablanca and Rabat.

The selection committee also took care to respect the diversity of artistic disciplines (visual arts, urban and contemporary, theater, cinema, publishing) and methodological approaches (art for social change, artistic excellence, cultural entrepreneurship), while taking largely the social impact and the values defended by the organizations (citizenship, freedoms and rights, cultural democracy and democratization, etc.).

[Click here if you can't play audio from PDF](#)

## Hicham Houdaifa

NACP National Fund (Morocco) juror Hicham Houdaifa shares his general observations about the fruit of the jury deliberations. *(In French)*



## Algeria: Nadira Laggoune, Walid Aidoud and Ammar Kessab

The Cultural Program for North Africa, open for Algerian cultural entities, is a great opportunity for the development of independent cultural entities in Algeria. We are all the more pleased by this program that coincides with a historical period for Algeria, a period during which the independent cultural sector must play a central



## Libya: Najlaa El Ageli, Elham Ferjani and Reem Furjani

Affected by a challenging context and a restrictive governance background, the current weakness of the Libyan culture sector reflected through the applications both in number and strength. Initiatives are humble, but with a newly-found cultural and artistic freedom the practice is growing and it is a critical time for support. Amidst a scarcity of cultural funds, the importance of AFAC’s country-based Fund lies in its attending to deficiencies in managerial capacities and overcoming weaknesses in regional competing; allowing space for demonstrated experiences as well as potentials. We were therefore looking for projects that recognise fundamental needs and priorities for recovering the cultural practice in Libya, that consider mobilisation or could stimulate a ripple-effect, and which not only remedially approach gaps but which approach them innovatively for development. Searching for transcendents, we evaluated applications with an eye on three areas: a strong understanding of the setting ranging from community to sectorial needs and challenges; the relevance of the proposal to the setting, the originality and rationale of the method of response, and therefore the quality and depth of its potential contribution; and the entity’s capacity for influence through outreach, participation, and sustainability. The selection was based on credibility and the importance of the role that the entity plays in the context, and decisions were informed on the history, achievements, and development of the selected. Three entities were selected, covering a national scope and addressing various dimensions of cultural practising. Bayt Ali Gana in Tripoli contributes a safe space for artists amidst a shortage, nurtures participation, de-centralises the cultural practice towards the outskirts of the capital, and pioneers in creating an archive for the works of a Libyan art figure. Arete Foundation works on a national scale with bases in Tripoli and Benghazi, and seeks to promote cultural production, launch the careers of emerging writers, strengthen art education, and facilitate international connections. Libya Culture and Media Organisation emerged in Houn in the south of the country where it seeks to activate culture within marginalised communities by supporting actors in various forms of culture such as music and theatre, and to which initiative the judges highlighted areas for further development and recommended access to technical and methodological support to encourage their strengths towards the best possible contributions for the Libyan society and culture sector.



# Arab European Creative Platform – AECP



**The year 2019 boasted five events in Germany, under the Arab European Creative Platform, supported with a total budget of \$150,000:**

## Un-Spoken Series – Maha Maamoun

Berlin, January 24

The last event of Un-Spoken Series, which concluded on January 24th at the Grüner Salon (Volksbühne), featured a live performance by Maha Maamoun, entitled "The Subduer".

**"Based in ... How does writing un/relate to its place?" Writing Workshop**

Berlin, March to September

A second edition of the six-month writing workshop started in March under the mentorship of Egyptian writer Haytham El Wardany. While the first workshop emanated from the question "How Do We Write Catastrophe?", the current edition is titled "Based in ... How does writing un/relate to its place?" and welcomed 10 Berlin-based writers who over six months will work on their creative pieces and benefit from the contributions of guest writers, artists, and scholars. The outputs of the first and second workshops will be gathered in an e-publication.

## Documentary Convention – Second Edition

Leipzig, April 15-17

The second edition of the Documentary Convention took place from April 15 to 17 in Leipzig, bringing together 140 documentary filmmakers and professionals from the Arab region, Europe and the world. The Convention program was replete with inputs and interventions by more than 55 contributors from around the world, covering topics related to ethics of co-productions and collaborations, archives, distribution and knowledge building.

## "Wish You Were Here" Summer Festival

Berlin, August

The Summer festival "Wish You Were Here" in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition took place at the Silent Green Kulturquartier in Berlin, boasting a rich program of concerts and performances from across the Arab region, including "Ghosts of Meaning", a performative manifesto and new production by Tunisian visual artist Mohamedali Ltaief involving a Tunisian and Palestinian cast, followed by a concert by German-Lebanese percussion trio "SAWT OUT", featuring Mazen Kerbaj (trumpet), Burkhard Beins (percussion) and Michael Vorfeld (percussion), who launched their first album during the festival. A panoply of concerts and performances followed: "The Second Copy: I Like This Title" conceptualized and choreographed by Youness Atbane; the turntable solo concert "Archeophony" by Raed Yassin; the "Ahajeez Jazz Experiment" concert bringing together Tareq Rantisi (percussions, composition, arrangement), Yousif Yasseen (guitar, vocals), José Soto (electric piano), Han Beyli (electric bass), and Alex Johnson (saxophone); "Love and Revenge", a contemporary electro-pop musical and visual performance by Randa Mirza and Wael Koudaih; and a closing concert by N3rdistan featuring Widad Broco, Walid Benselim, Nidhal Jaoua, and Khalil Hentati.

## "Politics Through the Looking Glass" Forum

Berlin, October

Our partnership with HKW (Haus der Kulturen der Welt) continues in 2019 with the Forum "Politics Through the Looking Glass" that focuses on the proliferation of first-person writing and film, where the author's personal experience is the fount of narrative and representation, and where the "I" merges with the voice of collective consciousness. The Forum also explores several questions about the present moment of turbulent changes in the



Arab world: do those works incarnate a distancing from the "political", or on the contrary, its reconfiguration in the aftermath of deceptions and defeats? Has the personal lived experience become the only source for forging new meaning in the collapse of patriarchy? What is the relationship of first-person works with identity politics? Has the gendered and queer "I" become a political and artistic choice in itself? The contributions (papers, lectures, presentations) of the five forums, organized in Berlin under the AECP umbrella (2016-2019), cumulatively constitute a critical discourse on cultural production related to the Arab region - its specificities, new trends and challenges - which will be documented through a publication to be launched beginning of 2020.

**"The largest number of projects presented in this call focused on training and developing competencies, indicating a general awareness of the need to train and build capacities of young people in the areas of creative writing, especially in theater and film. The objectives of the cultural projects focused on the need and importance of cultural, intellectual and artistic communication with children and youth in refugee and displaced communities."**





# Professional Support



## Arab Documentary Photography Program

The Arab Documentary Photography Program’s group of nine selected photographers from 2018 went through a second workshop in April 2019 and finalized their respective visual stories, available on ADPP website. They had the opportunity to document complex stories while adding a layer of their own identity to their work, thereby reinforcing the purpose of the ADPP in highlighting

untold stories, and proposing alternative narratives and approaches to prevalent discourses and stereotypes. The projects range from intimate personal narratives to conceptual reportages, touching upon a variety of topics such as climate change, exile, sexual identity and religious education. While the intention of these photographers and visual artists is not to provide us with answers, what they do achieve through their work is to help frame the right questions. The youngest photographer of this year’s ADPP participants, Elwely Vall from Mauritania embarks on a mission with his camera to change humanity’s view

of the future and the impact of climate change which he depicts in his project titled “In the Light of Change”. Algerian photographer Abdo Shanan questions the idea of nationality in “Dry”, revealing arresting images that purposefully generate unease and unrest on the viewer’s side. Moroccan photographer M’hammed Kilito’s project “Among You” represents a reflection on the choice of a personal identity for Moroccan youth based on a selection of powerful portraits of young people who take their destinies into their own hands. Another identity quest is undertaken by Yemeni photographer Shaima Al Tamimi, whose project, “As if We Never Came”, is inspired by her family’s journey and her personal struggle to understand the identity complexities of the Yemeni diaspora, punctuated by travels and immigration. Through “Those Who Dance on the Staircase”, Syrian photographer Nadine Koudsi explores the different dimensions of nostalgia among Syrians currently living in Lebanon, and the complexities of the return ‘home’, which, in Nadine’s case, comes to document a real struggle. Lebanese photographer Roger Mokbel’s project, “Describe the Sky to Me” aims to highlight the dysfunctional urban planning in Lebanon through the struggle of the population under the Yerevan bridge in the densely populated Bourj Hammoud area. The seventh and last project, “Letters to Moses” by Egyptian photographer Ravy Shaker, reflects an ongoing discussion between Ravy and his wife regarding the kind of education to choose for their son Musa (Moses), more particularly the dilemma they are facing between Islamic education at Al Azhar- where both Ravy and his wife graduated- and a secular education. Through his project, Ravy calls on the public to send him their letters in favor of one type of education or the other.

As part of the 2019 cycle of the Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP), the first workshop was organized in Beirut 29 August - 2 September 2019. The workshop gave the floor to the new group of nine grantees to share their visual narratives with the ADPP mentors, partners, and fellow participants, and to benefit from the enriching exchanges as well as the eye-opening sessions. The nine participating young documentary photographers, among whom six are women, come from six Arab countries: Yemen, Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt, Sudan and Lebanon. Their socially and politically engaged projects reflect a range of highly relevant issues. In “Some Quiet Noise”, Thana Farooq (Yemen) focuses on undocumented asylum seekers in the Netherlands, while Somaya Mohamed’s “A Permanent Wound” confronts genital mutilation in Egypt. Salih Basheer (Sudan) depicts Sudanese refugees in Cairo and their inward search for “home” in “The Home Seekers”. Mohammed Alkhouh (Kuwait) documents a lost island in Kuwait in view of preserving its heritage with “Failaka”. “Here, There, or Elsewhere” by Dania Hany (Egypt) evokes questions of national and personal identities and

histories. Fathi Hawas (Egypt) reflects on youth struggles in marginalized cities of Egypt in “Margined in a Supposed Green”, while Lola Khalfa (Algeria) addresses the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Algeria in “Je T’aime Hic”. Mariam Alarab (Bahrain) brings the underlying identity crisis of Bahrain to the forefront in “But Hope is Born from the Suffering Womb”, and Emanuelle Ferneini (Lebanon) exposes violence against domestic helpers in Lebanon in “A Bigger Room”.

In addition to the presentations of the above-mentioned projects followed by vivid discussions with the mentors (Randa Shaath, Peter van Agtmael, Tanya Habjouqa and Eric Gottesman), the first workshop allowed for the discovery of the photographic work of the mentors, as well as new documentary photography practices. Sessions on editing and sequencing, as well as caption and text writing, complemented the workshop’s program. Another highlight included a site visit to the Arab Image Foundation and an informative talk with its director Marc Mouarkech. Towards the end of the workshop, each grantee was assigned to one of the mentors and benefited from a one-on-one exchange with him/her. Mentorship will continue for a period of 6 months, and will culminate with the second ADPP workshop scheduled for April 2020.

## Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship Program

The experience of carrying out the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) first cycle (2018-2019) has been an invaluable exploration for AFAC and all interlocutors involved. Programmatically, the holistic approach of combining workshops, mentorship, incentive grants





and an online platform was responsive and innovative, as expressed by participants and the experts involved. The three 5-day workshops allowed for joint discussions and collective learning. The discrepancy in experience among the participants was catered for by adjusting the program of the subsequent workshops, introducing topics that were not initially part of the design. For instance, it was clear that all could benefit from a basic review on annual budgeting which linked well with other related topics, such as resource mobilization. To complement the workshops, the mentorship offered tailored support addressing the needs of each structure, identifying challenges and opportunities, and covered a spectrum of priorities mainly related to strategic planning, restructuring in terms of governance and finance/administration, but also exploring business models for growth and better income-generating opportunities from existing or potential service. The incentive grant gave impetus for each institution to think through and implement a set of activities that contribute to their sustainability, based on their particular priorities and inspired by the ACE program. The flexible methodology allowed for richly curated workshops through presentations, exchanges with external actors across sectors, hands-on group exercises and individual reflections, peer visits, networking and cultural events, and public live-streamed talks which opened up diverse ways in which skills and knowledge are imparted. It also contextualized learning for each entity to take what was relevant and to the level of detail needed. The specialized public webpage with diverse audio-visual content captured the gist of the workshops and included 5 TED-talk style videos featuring several experts, 2 workshop trailers and presentations and reference material of each module, benefiting a wider pool of interested practitioners. In addition, two public live-streamed talks were open to

a wider audience animated by two renowned speakers, Robert Wolfe and Rob Burnett, on Storytelling. In parallel but intimately linked to the main theme of the program was the research on individual giving and specifically looking at crowdfunding in the region which will be made public early 2020. Throughout the cycle, organic networking flourished among the stakeholders. For instance, one of the participants from Morocco (Atelier Kisseria) was invited to give a workshop at a peer institution that was visited in Beirut (Waraq), and a professional collaboration on an upcoming new performance took place between the Minwal theatre group from Lebanon and Nowhere Online Music from Egypt. In addition, one of the external stakeholders, Richard Shediach was solicited as a mentor to the Beirut Art Residency, from Lebanon. A fourth collaboration is underway between Nowhere Online Music from Egypt and SJ Productions from Palestine.

Following the first workshop in November 2018, the second workshop was held February 27 - March 3, 2019 in Beirut, comprising a 5-day hands-on program replete with eye-opening sessions on design thinking, revenue-generation and prototyping, business models, strategic planning, and demonstrating impact. The workshop was animated by Amsterdam-based Leadership Coach and Storytelling Expert Robert Wolfe, and facilitated by New York-based independent cultural advisor Moukhtar Kocache. The ACE participants had the opportunity to interact with peers from UK Lebanon Tech Hub, Hammana Artist House and Ashkal Alwan during interactive exchange sessions that widened their perspectives and created relevant connections to their respective contexts. Additionally, a public talk entitled "Re-imagining Storytelling" at the UK Lebanon Tech Hub was delivered by Wolfe on the sidelines of the workshop and was live-streamed via our YouTube channel, attracting 254 views and attended by a diverse audience from creative industries including design, start-ups in IT, arts and culture, and the general public.

The third workshop at Hammana Artist House (8-12 July) marked an important milestone in the first cycle of ACE. The sixteen cultural managers from the eight participating institutions met one last time and got immersed in intensive, interactive sessions over five days on building public narratives, storytelling techniques, communication strategies, and reflections on sustainability and resource mobilization, delivered by regional and international experts. The workshop opened with a full-day session animated by Nairobi-based Rob Burnet, the founder and CEO of Emmy-award winning media brand Shujaaz. Participants had the chance to engage in methods of storytelling and to strengthen their narratives and work on their own stories. Burnet also presented a public talk at Antwork in Beirut, entitled "Driving Change Through



Storytelling", to a diverse audience sharing his experience in how to harness insights and data for storytelling to create social and economic value for youths in Kenya and Tanzania. The talk was live-streamed and available on the AFAC YouTube page. Rahaf Abu Doha and Rania Sabbah from Jordan-based nonprofit association Ahel shared steps how to build public narratives as a culmination of the Story of Self, Story of Us and Story of Now. A session on communication strategies, including positioning and identity, was animated by Hatem Imam and Maya Mounme of design and art direction Studio Safar, while Ouafa Belgacem from Culture Funding Watch worked with the group on resource mobilization and sustainability. The participants went on a peer visit to the Foundation for Arab Music Archiving and Research (AMAR) benefiting from a discussion on their institutional challenges and possible solutions envisaged.

The first workshop of ACE program's second cycle (2019-2020) which was set to take place in Beirut November 1 - 5, 2019, was postponed to January 2020 due to the October uprisings.

## Research on the Arts Program

As part of the professional support dedicated to this program, AFAC and ACSS jointly convene a workshop in Beirut bringing together grants of a cycle and members of the jury committee. The workshop aims at providing a forum for the selected grantees to engage in critical debates and receive feedback on their research topics in open discussions with fellow grantees as well as during one-on-one meetings with RAP jurors. In addition, the RAP grantees benefit from a session on Research Ethics in the Social Sciences delivered by the ACSS team.

The workshop was postponed to January 2020 due to the nation-wide uprisings in Lebanon that started in October.

"The jury saw in the winners' projects the tendency to innovate and extend the boundaries of music fields, and the will to produce innovative works in relation to the Arab region. (...) The jury identified in many projects an attempt to break out of the familiar and consumer forms; some through audio, documentary and educational works, others through heritage revival in traditional and creative ways, in addition to a large presence of music fusion."

Music Jury



# Knowledge Building and Sharing



As part of AFAC's Strategic Plan 2017-2021, one of the five strategic areas of work is Knowledge Generation and Sharing. This was inspired by a ten-year evaluation and recommendations concluded and shared in December 2017. Through various activities, AFAC seeks to foster and contribute to a more intellectually aware, knowledgeable, critically engaged arts and culture sector with the wider public. The long-term aim is to contribute to advancing, preserving, activating and sharing the collective memory of the contemporary arts and culture landscape in the Arab region and accompanying critical discourses on artistic and cultural productions.

One of the strands that AFAC is currently focusing on is the production and circulation of in-house and commissioned critical analytical papers, research and creative writings (English and/or Arabic), disseminated both by the use of online and offline channels, that inform on trends, topics, and phenomena related to artistic and cultural practices and productions based on AFAC's database.

AFAC kick-started its first in-house research starting with the Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP) to generate knowledge about this discipline and what this program has contributed to date, providing a regional and international context for the development of documentary photography to situate and assess the importance of ADPP. Following an extensive data mining, a survey was addressed to the 48 grantees of the period 2014-2018, out of which 30 completed the survey (62.5% response rate) – 13 women

and 17 men. In terms of overall impact, the survey showed that 96.7% found the ADPP program excellent and when asked how likely they would recommend this program to a friend, the positive response was 4.83 out of 5. A written research document will be published by mid-2020 elaborating the context, challenges and current situation of documentary photography in the Arab region and how ADDP responds and contributes to professionalizing this sub-sector, as well as looking at future trends and priorities.

Another strand involves capturing and diffusing inspiring stories, good practices and training material that are relevant to a wider audience of cultural practitioners in the region. In the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship program, seven TED talk style of 5-minute video presentations were released online. Renowned local and international experts who were trainers on specific modules of ACE workshops shared their experiences on topics related to entrepreneurship and sustainability. Mike Van Graan from South Africa, talks about how art makers can avoid becoming victims of cultural policies, and rather influence the policy formulation process. Carla Fonseca from Brazil explores what companies look for when investing in arts and culture and what is the impact of technology and globalization in this respect. Arundhati Ghosh from India describes the context in which artists and cultural practitioners survive and thrive using India as a case study and extrapolating the impact that economic, political, social and technological shifts have on the ways in which individuals and collectives are building solidarities and sustainability. Robert Wolfe from The Netherlands introduces design thinking and storytelling as innovative tools to harness and structure creativity whether dealing with societal challenges or as skills for 21st century leadership. In the last series for 2019, Moukhtar Kocache from Lebanon/Syria looks at how leaders often lack the tools, techniques, time and luxury to think about the outputs, impact, goals and objectives of their work. The perspective he offers, based on impact, outcomes, and indicators, is about generating evidence of the success or failure and limitations of one's work which he heeds arts institutions and their leaders to examine more closely.

Another example of sharing stories and experiences has been the diffusion of diverse bold themes that AFAC has supported and their impact on the respective realities of the artists. "Stories Boldly Told" revealed 15 projects from 2017 that have challenged various social, political and economic contexts throughout the Arab region and placed arts and culture in the center of the battle for social change. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 artists from the Arab region whose works served as beacons of hope in their environments. The stories collected, across all artistic categories and spanning diverse critical areas of the region, were captivating and awe-inspiring in their

boldness and fervor. A documentary film camp in war-torn Yemen mentors 12 aspiring filmmakers from different walks of life in Yemen over 6 months, who unfold their stories in 12 compelling short films that are touring the world. One photo documentary from Syria portrays the utter Abnormal that has turned into Normal in the day-to-day life of refugees. Another documentary photographer from Egypt presents the suffering of Wadi El Qamar residents and mobilizes the global community in their support. A Palestinian laboratory of visual innovation launches an "Impact Data Lab" for the generation of infographics and info pods that tell arresting action-driven narratives. In cinema, a Moroccan filmmaker sheds the light on marginalized yet vanguard Moroccan filmmaker, poet and writer Ahmed Bouanani, in an active attempt to revive collective memory in Morocco. Another film, the award-winning debut film of a Lebanese director, literally scratches beyond the surface of the current reality in Beirut, searching for the thousands of people who disappeared during the Lebanese Civil War. A young Palestinian alternative rock band crosses borders with their music and challenges Arab youths to take a stand against oppression, corruption, displacement and travel restrictions.

AFAC is in the process of rolling out a three-year funding of \$320,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the initiative on "Knowledge Generation and Sharing". It aims to generate knowledge around the contemporary cultural and artistic practices in the Arab region and to share it with art practitioners, scholars, researchers, educational institutions, and the general public, within the Arab region as well as internationally. It emanates from the database of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture which is home for more than 14,000 project proposals and 1,441 supported projects over the past 13 years. The Project comprises two main strands: 1- the production and circulation of in-house and commissioned critical analytical papers, research and creative writings that inform on trends, topics, and phenomena related to artistic and cultural practices and productions based on AFAC's database; 2- the organization of an annual symposium that serves as a platform to: a- bring cultural and artistic producers together to contribute to a critical discourse on the arts by choosing a topic for each symposium that is pertinent to the sector; b- provide a space for artists and cultural producers (especially the AFAC grantees) to present their works (finished as well as in progress) related to the topic at hand; and c- present the findings of the in-house and commissioned research.

# Outreach and Cultural Advocacy

AFAC carried out the following activities in 2019 in its efforts to promote arts and culture from the Arab region; whether by initiating or participating in forums and events, or establishing partnerships and collaborations that benefit its diverse grantees:



## Sharjah Film Platform

Sharjah, January

AFAC’s executive director participated in the Sharjah Film Platform in January on a panel entitled “Funding for MENA Artists and Filmmakers” at the Sharjah Film Platform, where she laid out the current landscape of funding for filmmakers in the region and beyond.

## Dubai Photo Week

Dubai, February 4-9

The Dubai Photo Week received wide acclaim. AFAC joined forces with Gulf Photo Plus (GPP) and Alserkal Avenue to showcase compelling projects from the Arab world at the headline exhibition of the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of GPP Photo Week in Dubai in February, in association with the Prince Claus Fund and Magnum Foundation. Entitled “The Shortest Distance Between Us: Stories from the Arab Documentary Photography Program”, the headline exhibition featured 7 photographers from AFAC’s Arab Documentary Photography Program (ADPP), curated by ADPP’s coordinator Jessica Murray of Al-liquindoi, and included the works of Lebanese photographer Elsie El Haddad, Stranded: On Life After Imprisonment; Moroccan Hicham Gardaf, Intersections. Infertile Crescent; Jordanian photographer Nadia Bseiso, Infertile Crescent; Syrian photographer Omar Imam, Live, Love, Refugee; Tunisian photographer Zied Ben Romdhane, West of Life; Egyptian photographer Mohamed Mahdy, Moon Dust; and Egyptian photographer Heba Khalifa, Homemade.

## Talk at the OSF Regional Office in Amman

Amman, February 13

The Executive Director of AFAC gave a talk to the team of the OSF Regional Office in Amman, February 13, 2019, where she presented AFAC, its programs, highlights of its grantees and a selection of impact stories.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Arab Arts and Culture Informal Donors Meeting

Beirut, March 5-6

AFAC joined the 12th Arab Arts and Culture Informal Donors Meeting in Beirut, March 5-6. The 2-day convening,

organized by Ettijahat and Mophradat, comprised of sessions around donor updates, donor funding and networks and ecosystems, in addition to a session entitled “Future of country-specific funding: How to continue to support local institutions & diasporas? Case studies of Algeria, Egypt, & Syria” which Executive Director Rima Mismar contributed to with a presentation, alongside Abdullah Alkafri from Ettijahat and Helena Nassif from Al Mawred.

## Doha Institute for Graduate Studies Visit

Doha, March 21

AFAC Executive Director Rima Mismar visited Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar, March 21, where she met with the Institute’s Provost, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, the Director of Research and Grants, as well as the students, introducing them to AFAC and its programs.

## Donors’ Forum Planning Consultation Meeting

Beirut, April 11

AFAC took part in the Donors’ Forum Planning Consultation Meeting in Beirut, April 11. The meeting advanced a dialogue among funders of Arab research and development, especially in education and the social sciences and humanities, in order to create an “affinity group” that could align efforts to solve commonly shared challenges.

## International Donors Meeting

Beirut, April 12-14

The International Donors Meeting gave AFAC a platform to discuss ways of supporting and improving conditions of knowledge production in the Arab Region.

## Taawon Day in Amman

Amman, April 18

AFAC participated in Taawon Day in Amman, April 18 during which AFAC’s executive director was the main speaker of the Culture session entitled “Preserving Culture and Heritage in Countries of Conflict”. The Taawon Day aims to create a platform for dialogue and discussion between members, the executive team, and various experts and

stakeholders in related fields to harmonize and fine-tune the organization’s future strategic approaches and operations in line with global developments.

## African Cultural Fund and Fonds Maaya

Beirut, May 23-24

AFAC hosted a two-day peer-to-peer learning program for the directors of the African Cultural Fund and Fonds Maaya, both based in Bamako, Mali in May, in Beirut. The program included exchanges with AFAC team members as well as external interlocutors and venues related to cinema and photography.

## Academics Visit organized by Artasfoundation based in Zurich

Beirut, May 14

AFAC hosted a group of 20 academics, practitioners and donors in a visit in May organized by Artasfoundation based in Zurich. This was part of a further education course, “Arts and International Cooperation” at the University of Zurich, about arts in conflict. The group (from 7 countries with diverse professional backgrounds) learnt about AFAC’s experience and approaches in supporting arts and culture in challenging contexts. One of the participants was the representative of the Stanley Johnson Foundation whom AFAC has been discussing with for a potential pilot partnership.

## Cultural program for patrons “Circle of Friends” of Kaserne Basel

Beirut, May 17

AFAC organized a 4-day cultural program for 25 patrons “Circle of Friends” of Kaserne Basel - center for free contemporary theatre, dance and performance scene, and for innovative popular music in Switzerland - on their visit to Lebanon in May, and hosted the group for a presentation and discussion on AFAC’s work in the region. The group was exposed to over 10 AFAC grantee projects and artists.

## Sundance Institute Visit

Beirut, May 7

A team of 5 executives from the Sundance Institute visited AFAC offices in May to discuss further a partnership on adapting two Sundance labs to the needs of the region

“This generation of filmmakers re-examines the past with contemplative eyes, sifting through overlooked archives and marginalized narratives. Their proposals do not call for reliving the past, however, but suggest an alternative future rooted in the “here and now”. It is an active generation that sees in cinema a tool to forge the future and an entryway for their involvement in the transformations that our region is experiencing.”



around editing for creative documentary and storytelling to be launched by the end of 2020..

### Ettijahat meeting

Beirut, July 3

AFAC contributed to the collective discussion at the Ettijahat meeting in Lebanon in July on their new program Maharat that will give young people the opportunity to begin careers in production arts and provide resources for everyone in the field to broaden their education and experience and create peer connections. The participants discussed how the role of performing arts can be enhanced if there is strengthened production professionals through three components – training, online library on resources of production arts in Arabic, and an online job platform.

### Beirut Cinema Days

Beirut, March - April

AFAC was present at the Beirut Cinema Days in March-April and attended The Good Pitch which involved over 100 cinema and documentary film professionals from the Arab region.



### Shubbak Festival of Contemporary Arab culture

London, June - July

AFAC participated in the Shubbak Festival of contemporary Arab culture in June-July in London where 8 AFAC

grantees in performing arts, cinema and documentary films were showcased. Supported shows and screenings included “Jogging” by Hanane Hajj Ali, “May He Rise” by Ali Chahrour, “X-Adra” by Ramzi Choucair, “Panoptic by Rana Eid, “Evolvo” by Yara Boustany, as well as “Erased\_\_Ascent of the Invisible” by Ghassan Halwani, “Strange Cities Are Familiar” by Saeed Taji Farouky, and “The Reports on Sarah and Saleem” by Muayad Alayan.

### El Gouna Film Festival

El Gouna, September

AFAC showcased nine supported films at the third edition of El Gouna Film Festival in El Gouna resort town on the Egyptian Red Sea coast, in September. Two Sudanese films competed and won prizes in the festival: “You Will Die at Twenty” by Amjad Abu Alala in the Feature Narrative Competition, and “Talking About Trees” by Suhaib Gasmelbari in the Feature Documentary Competition. Additionally, Palestinian director Larissa Sansour’s “In Vitro” participated in the Short Film Competition. On the industry front, the Festival also ran the third edition of its CineGouna Platform, aimed at supporting upcoming projects in development and post-production. The Lebanese films “Yalla, Baba!” by Angie Obeid and “Harvest” by Ely Dagher featured among the projects in development, while four other films were among the films in post-production: “A Long Breath” by Remi Itani (Lebanon), “Another Day in Baghdad” by Maysoon Pachachi (Iraq), “Mica” by Ismael Ferroukhi (Morocco) and “Our Dark 70s” by Ali Essafi (Morocco). In related news, “Mica” picked up the El Gouna Film Festival Prize at the Final Cut in Venice Workshop.

### Drosos Partner Meeting

Beirut, October 7

AFAC attended the Drosos Partner Meeting in October, in Lebanon and contributed to the discussion with partner organizations based in four countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia) on how to further support and advance the development of the creative economies in the region so that the sector can live its potential and positively impact people’s lives and society.

### Les Journées Musicales de Carthage in Tunis

Tunis, October 11

AFAC participated in Les Journées Musicales de Carthage in Tunis in October for professional encounters, where



AFAC presented its programs to Tunisian artists and cultural operators, at Al Badil - Alternative Culturelle and the Cité De La Culture De Tunis. For more details, see the Carthage Music Festival.

### Dream City Festival

Tunis, October 4-13

AFAC attended performances at the Dream City Festival organized by L'Art Rue (one of its former grantees) in Tunis, in October, on the margins of one of the NACP jury meetings (for Tunisia), and attended several dance and music performances from the Arab and African regions.

### AFAC Film Week

Dubai, September 27-October 5

AFAC organized the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the AFAC Film Week in October in partnership with Cinema Akil in Dubai, and screened 11 supported films from 5 Arab countries, in some cases followed by a Q&A session with the director. The film week was attended by 641 persons. This follows six successful editions in Beirut, Cairo, Tunis, Morocco, Sudan and Algeria, and offered a rich program of contemporary feature narratives, documentaries, and shorts including A Kasha, a romantic drama directed by Sudanese filmmaker Hajooj Kuka; What Comes Around, a documentary by Lebanese-Egyptian director Reem Saleh

highlighting the strength in community support in one of Cairo’s poorest neighborhoods; Soudade Kaadan’s powerful Syrian drama The Day I Lost My Shadow; Tunisian feature documentary Railway Men directed by Erige Sehiri; and the Libyan documentary Freedom Fields by Naziha Arebi, which follows the journey of a group of women who, in spite of the political climate and their differences, join together to form Libya’s first female football team. Two special screenings of Twenty Eight Nights and a Poem by Lebanese director Akram Zaatar, a documentary on photography, memory and culture will also be on the program, in addition to five short films from Lebanon, which will close the film week under the section “Lebanon in Focus”: The Street of Death and Other Stories by Karam Ghossein, I Crossed the Hallway by Rabi El-Amine, Silence by Chadi Aoun, Waves 98 by Ely Dagher, and Free Range by Bassem Breish.

### AFAC’s Board Meeting and end-year event

Tunis, December

AFAC’s Board Meeting and end-year event took place in Tunis in early December, on the sidelines of the Carthage Film Festival (which witnessed the participation of 13 AFAC-supported films), and closed with a celebration animated by AFAC grantees – dance performer, Rochdi Belgasmi and music group, N3rdistan, in the presence of key stakeholders of the Tunisian arts and culture scene.

“We have found a consistently high quality as well as a wide diversity in approach. Although many of the topics and concerns were shared it was truly uplifting to notice that individual sensibilities remained pertinent. Applicants reflected a sensitivity to formal languages, a heightened self-awareness and criticality, originality of thought and a seriousness in approach that was remarkable.”

# Communication



The exciting new website of AFAC is fully responsive on all devices, has concise menu and main pages, and supports embedded videos. It provides extensive control over the design of the pages mostly controlled through the Content Management System and by the AFAC team without any interference from outsourced developers. For applicants, the new application templates can be accessed directly from the program page, and provides a user-friendly preview and submission process.

In line with the rebranding and new logo, a new social media strategy and plan was devised with a tone of voice reflecting AFAC's values and positioning. A selection of weekly thematic posts features AFAC's rich database of supported projects, in addition to periodic highlights. This has solidified AFAC's presence on social media and increased its visibility. Our reach is roughly 522,150 per month in 2019, compared to 142,000 in 2018. The hit was NACP with a 28,220 reach, 241 reactions, 70 comments and 85 shares. More than 60% of referrers are through Facebook with 44,582 followers to date (compared to

37,400 in 2018). In terms of users, the highest viewers are Egypt (9,296) followed by Tunisia, Algeria, France, Palestine and Iraq (2,127). There are ten times as many Instagram followers this year (11,400) than 2018. AFAC also featured on a number of media platforms, including the Daily News in Egypt, The Daily Star in Lebanon, Gulf News, The National - Arts&Culture of the UAE, and Al Modon (online newspaper from Lebanon) for its work on entrepreneurship in the sector, its Film Week in Dubai and promotion of documentary photography.

As part of the documentation deliverables of the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) Program, seven TED-like videos have been completed, featuring Mike Van Graan from South Africa, Carla Fonseca from Brazil, Arundhati Ghosh from India, Robert Wolfe from The Netherlands, Moukhtar Kocache from Lebanon/Syria, and Rob Burnet from Kenya. In order to inform and entice potential applicants, a series of short jurors' interviews are also available online, reflecting on their choices but also trends and discoveries. A detailed review of 2018 was published

in an English annual report, with a commissioned preface that extrapolates from 2018 the role of AFAC within the sector. It emphasizes the infrastructure AFAC provides as a funding body that supports artistic practice and allows it to grow, and situates AFAC within an ecosystem that inherently compels it to steer and change in order to maintain well-being and balance. .



# Expert Videos

This section features the series of expert videos produced in the framework of the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship program, where international experts from Brazil, the Netherlands, South and East Africa touch upon burning topics that concern the arts and culture sector.

## Ouafa Belgacem

on Resource Mobilization

[Click here if you can't play video from PDF](#)



## Rob Burnet

on “Changing Society through Conversations | Stories from East Africa”

[Click here if you can't play video from PDF](#)



## Moukhtar Kocache

“Planning for Impact: Making the Case for Arts and Culture”

[Click here if you can't play video from PDF](#)



## Robert Wolfe

“How Do We Harness Creativity?”

[Click here if you can't play video from PDF](#)



## Mike Van Graan

African Perspectives on Cultural Policy

[Click here if you can't play video from PDF](#)



## Carla Fonseca

Deconstructing Corporate Involvement in Arts and Culture

[Click here if you can't play video from PDF](#)





# Resource Mobilization



Our gratitude extends to our individual donors, but also to a new private sector partner – the Bank of Palestine in addition to our institutional supporters: The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, DOEN Foundation, Prince Clause Fund, Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, the Arab Council for the Social Sciences, Drosos Foundation, Boghossian Foundation, and the latest new donor to AFAC – the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

In addition to retaining existing donors and philanthropic foundations, AFAC pursued a three-pronged approach in terms of cultivating new supporters. This included reinforcing partnerships with Arab institutions such as Asfari Institute and Culture Resource on a conceived conference on Critical Cultural Journalism and an ensuing

support scheme; approaching corporations to support punctual events such as photography exhibitions and the AFAC Film Week or to partner on a program such as ACE; and strengthening the circle of individual Arab donors.

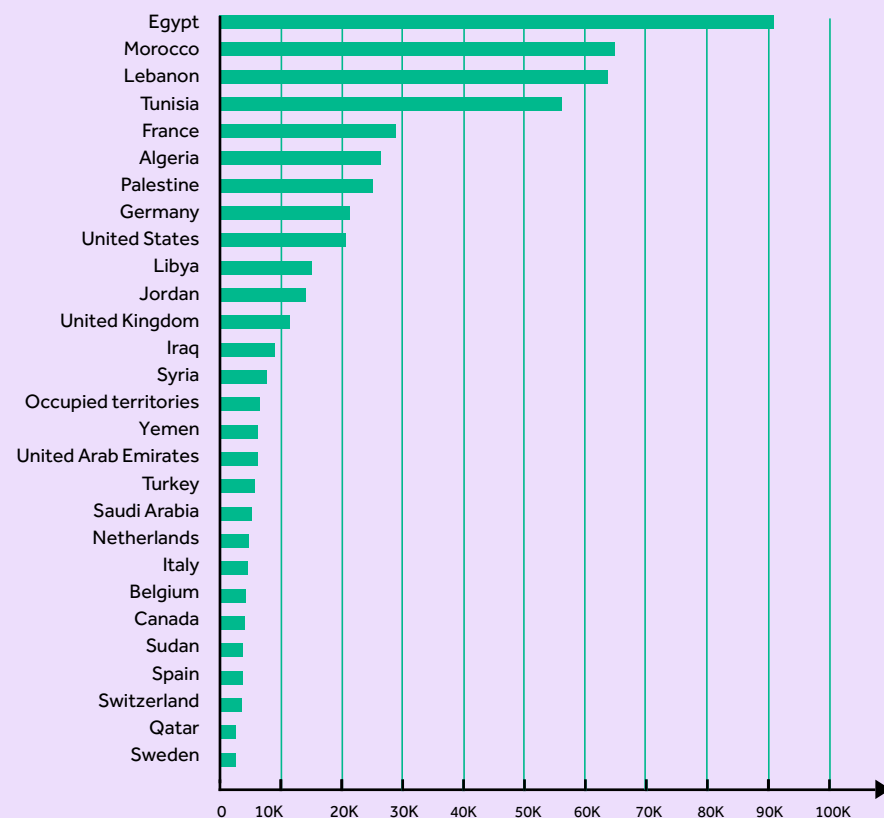
Persistent efforts to mobilize individual donors were through one-on-one meetings, personalized e-updates and postal packages containing key publications. During our field visits to Morocco and Tunisia, we seized the opportunity to meet with a number of philanthropists, five out of which are being closely cultivated. A more concentrated roll-out of the individual and institutional fundraising plan with new communication tools, including a call for donation on the website, coupled with targeted letters was interrupted following the start of the uprising in October which compelled the team to focus primarily on essential operations.



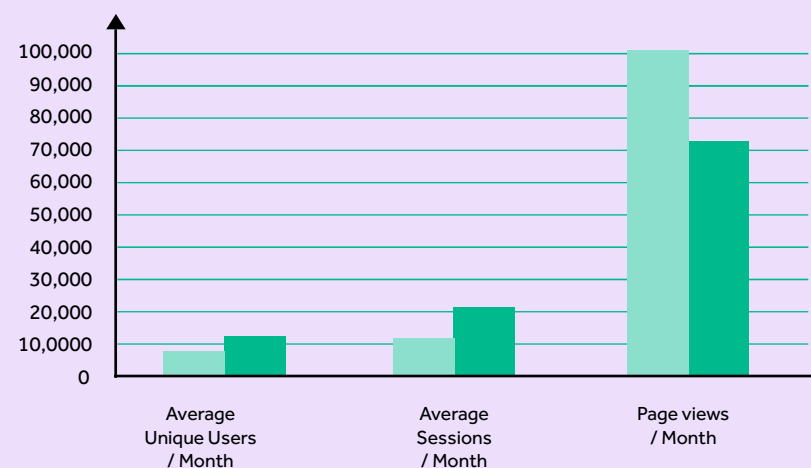


# Web Statistics

## Page Views by Country

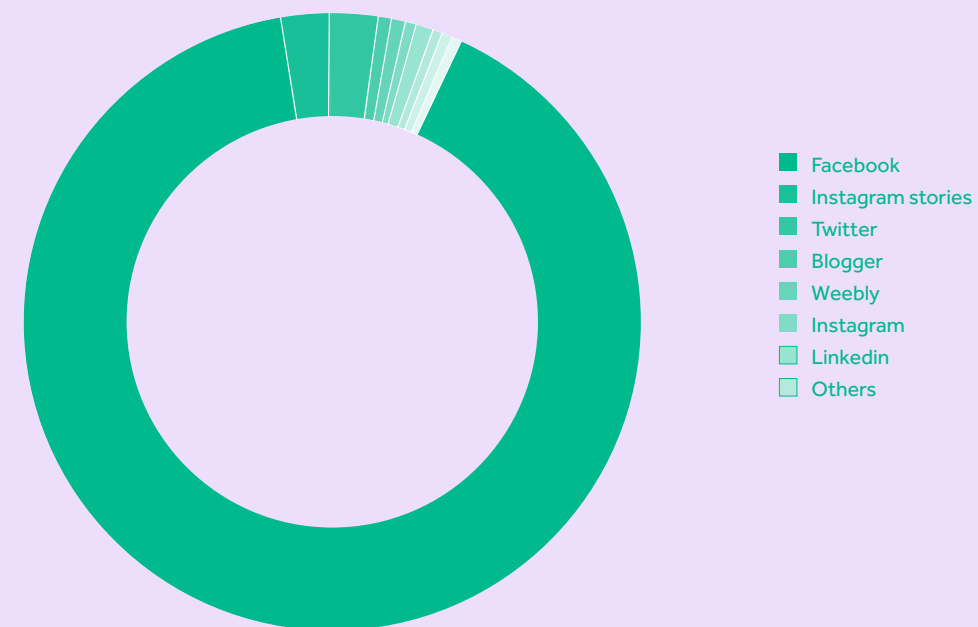


## Website users, sessions, and page views



# Social Media Statistics

## Social Media Referrals



### Facebook

Likes 2019      Likes 2018  
**44,582 / 35,504**

### Instagram

Followers 2019      Followers 2018  
**11,400 / 1,682**

### Twitter

Followers 2019      Followers 2018  
**3,045 / 2,491**

### Youtube

Subscribers 2019      Subscribers 2018  
**981 / 666**

# Why Invest in Arts and Culture?

Creative expression has the power to inspire new visions for our region, provoke important questions, and re-invent Arab societies that are open, self-sustained and have the power to produce their narratives.

AFAC is about conveying broad geographies of the mind and imagination from the Arab region. We proliferate diverse narratives about urgent topics through words and images. We instigate critical thinking to create more open societies. We stimulate local economies by cultivating audiences and engaging professionals. We spur on new technologies to make arts and culture more accessible.

In thirteen years, we invested in 1,752 talents and independent voices from the Arab region and in diaspora. Join to expand the creative space for many more emerging artists and established practitioners through performing arts, visual arts, documentary photography, documentary film, cinema, music, creative and critical writings, arts and culture entrepreneurship, research on the arts, and training and regional events. AFAC supports Arab artists in exile through local collaborations, such as our active engagement in Germany through the Arab European Creative Platform.

If you are not yet an AFAC supporter, join our circle of supporters by making your first contribution. If you are already an AFAC supporter, renew your esteemed support to scale up opportunities for artists and cultural practitioners from the Arab region.

Write to us on [support@arabculturefund.org](mailto:support@arabculturefund.org) or visit our Support page: [www.arabculturefund.org/support](http://www.arabculturefund.org/support)





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AFAC ARAB FUND FOR  
ARTS AND CULTURE  
الصندوق العربي  
للثقافة والفنون

## More About AFAC

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