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 to work for arts 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 past.
- 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 of 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.
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 works 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 1,596 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, case studies, and its newsletter.
- 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 transformative power of creative expression.

Institutional Donors:
AFAC is grateful for the generous contributions of the following individual donors:
Nabil Qaddumi, Amr Ben Halim, Sawsan Jafar, Hani Kalouti, Abla Lahoud, Houssem Aoudi, Reem Z. Renno, Elizabeth Kassab, Charles Aoun

Individual Donors:
AFAC is also most grateful to a number of philanthropists who prefer to remain undisclosed.

Please visit our website www.arabculturefund.org for more details.
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.

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.

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.
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.
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 on-site meetings and discussions with various cultural and tourism actors across the five countries that comprise the North African region: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. The goal was to develop strategies for the launch of the NACP, an initiative that was 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 infrastructure that are already in place, and a regional fund to facilitate cross-border cooperation and networking.

Of the 28 different cultural entities that were chosen, 21 were awarded funds that were divided between institutional strengthening support, either solely or in combination with programmatic support. Only 7 were awarded funds for programmatic support alone. This was a strategic choice, in line with our core mission of building capacity in such a way that funds are used for projects that have a clear beginning and end, as opposed to open-ended long-term 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 which is offered programmatic support alone, might be able to effectively manage the event in question and even be funded 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.

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 17 different organizations across North Africa and other regions.

Hence, a cultural entity in need of institutional support, but which is offered programmatic support alone, might be able to effectively manage the event in question and even be funded 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.

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.
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.
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

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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 Gender

- 56% Male
- 44% Female

Juror Recurrence

- 92% One-time Juror
- 7% Two times Juror
- 1% Four times Juror
- 0% Three times Juror

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

- 88% One-time Grantee
- 17% Two times Grantee
- 3% Three times Grantee
- 1% More than Three times Grantee
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 (NACP). Responding to a huge gap in long-term demand for our on-going programs with over 1752 applications received in 2019, and a successful completion of the Arts and Documentary Photography Program (NACP). Responding to a huge gap in long-term demand for our on-going programs with over 1752 applications received in 2019, and a successful completion of the Arts and Documentary Photography Program (NACP).

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 occupied 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 56% 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); 235 in Music (compared to 148 in 2018); 145 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 committees per country, were evaluated by the jurors’ observations. This adds to AFAC’s growing network of jurors and their valuable impact as testified by the jurors’ observations. This membership (55% of whom were women) embodies promising and influential practices. These projects hand-picked by 50 independent jury committee members (50% of whom were women) embody promising and influential practices.

The total grants amount for 2019 was roughly $5 million compared to $5 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) offered the eight 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 Tunisia in the presence of Chairperson Ghassan Salamé, AFAC Board Member Amr Ben Halim and Swiss Federal Councillor 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 elaborated 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 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 – 5, 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 - $50,000 per institution), distributed among the five countries.
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 Culture Entrepreneurship (ACE) Program, six TED-like videos that will be released on a bi-monthly basis.

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 different 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 of 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, Moukhitar 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.

Resource Mobilization

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.

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 Dronos (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 $150K (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 Manoo, both based in Ramaka, Mali benefited from good practices and tools of AFAC; Artsfoundation 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 based, 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 Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (support to NACP), and the German Federal Foreign Office (support to ACE).

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 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, corporations, 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 Claus 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.

**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.
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.


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 Sursock Museum, Beirut.

February

Talal Derki's documentary "Of Father and Sons" was nominated for the 91st 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 69th 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.

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 41st 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 16th 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 premièred 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 Nazihya Arebi (Libya) also screened at the festival.

The 10th 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 51. Lebanese duo Abded Kobeissy and Ali Hout (Two or the Dragon) as well as the performance “A Universe Not Made for Us” by Yalda Younes and Khym Allami featured in the festival’s program.

April


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 Abdso 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 Zouqq 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 58th La Biennale di Venezia – Art edition 2019, which opened on May 10 in Venice, Danish-Palestinian artist Larissa Sansour presented her latest work, “Heirloom”.

Kuwait playwright and director Sulayman al-Bassam participated in the 56th 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 was selected among six projects for the Sundance Institute New Frontier Story Lab.

The short film “Bab Sebta” by Moroccan director Khodr Serandrei was picked up by Sudanese director Ahmad 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 Glossein was the grand winner at the 34th 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 7th Final Cut in Venice.

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-Dabaghh and Shaima Al-Tamimi were awarded Women Photograph + Nikon awards for 2019.

The short film “Bah Sebta” by Moroccan director Randa Marouf 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 Al-Salah was selected among six projects for the Sundance Institute New Frontier Story Lab.

September

Four AFAC-supported films featured in the 44th 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 Kamnoun 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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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

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

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”.

November

December
Milestones of 2019

JANUARY

January 13 + 23
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 ( ACE P)

FEBRUARY

February 04
AFAC launches its new brand identity, following a 10-day social media teaser campaign

February 05 + 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 Rифαι

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 ( ACE P)

April 22
AFAC and Drosos Foundation launch the new ACE program

MAY

May 05
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 03
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 ( ACE P)

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 04
AFAC announced 34 new grantees for Training and Regional Events

September 27
The 7th AFAC Film Week kicks off in Dubai, with 11 films from 5 Arab countries

OCTOBER

October 04 + 06
AFAC and ACSS announced the 6 selected research projects for the second cycle of the Research on the Arts Program ( RAP) projects for Cinema

October 24
AFAC announced 32 new film projects for Cinema

NOVEMBER

November 09
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 03
AFAC announced 22 new film projects for Cinema

DECEMBER

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 32 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 Drossos Foundation, launched the Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship (ACCE) 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 Syria, and since 2016, AFAC offers a multidisciplinary 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

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: 18/6
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
Italy: 2/2
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 Grants
  - 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
- 29/24 Grants
  - 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
- 24/23 Grants
  - 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
- 9/9 Grants
  - Egypt (3), Sudan (1), Lebanon (1), Bahrain (1), Kuwait (1), Algeria (1), and Yemen (1)
- Total amount of Grants: $45,000

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship
- 8/8 Grants
  - 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
- 21/5 Grants
  - 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 Grants
  - 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
- 28/23 Grants
  - Egypt (16), Syria (6), Morocco (2), Palestine (2), Lebanon (1), and Tunisia (1)
- Total amount: $215,650

Research on the Arts Program
- 6/9 Grants
  - Morocco (2), Egypt (1), Tunisia (1), Lebanon (1), and Sudan (1)
- Total amount: $150,000

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship
- 0/8 Grants
  - Lebanon (2), Egypt (1), Morocco (1), Algeria (1), Tunisia (1), and Yemen (1)
- Total amount: $200,000

North Africa Cultural Program – National Fund
- 28/28 Grants
  - Morocco (7), Algeria (4), Tunisia (6), Libya (3), and Egypt (8)
- Total amount of Grants: $2,499,000

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

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship 8/8
- 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), Algeria (1), Tunisia (1), and Yemen (1)
- Total amount: $200,000

North Africa Cultural Program – National Fund 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

- 68% Individuals
- 32% Institutions

Grantees by Type

- 29% Female
- 32% Institutions
- 58% Male

Jurors by Gender

- 55% Female
- 45% Male

By Country | Arab Spread

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
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<td>Morocco</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Palestine</td>
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<td>Algeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arab Spread

- 220 projects in Arab spread

Non-Arab

- 59 projects in non-Arab spread

Geographic Spread

Europe 3
North America 2

Total Number of Grantees

- 225 General Programs and North Africa Cultural Program National Funds
- 19 Grantees from 19 Countries

Arab region-based projects

- 166 projects

Projects in diaspora

- 59 projects

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

- 5 activities in 2019
- 8 activities in 2018

Total amount $150,000
2019 Granting Schedule

Visual Arts
- Open Call: February 11th
- Close Call: May 7th
- Announcement of Grantees: July and August

Performing Arts
- Open Call: February 11th
- Close Call: May 7th
- Announcement of Grantees: July and August

AFAC Documentary Program
- Open Call: February 11th
- Close Call: May 7th
- Announcement of Grantees: July and August

Arab Documentary Photography Program
- Open Call: February 11th
- Close Call: May 7th
- Announcement of Grantees: July and August

Creative and Critical Writings
- Open Call: February 11th
- Close Call: May 7th
- Announcement of Grantees: July and August

North Africa Cultural Program
- Open Call: May 16th
- Close Call: August 1st
- Announcement of Grantees: November 25th

Cinema
- Open Call: May 1st
- Close Call: August 1st
- Announcement of Grantees: December 24th

Research on the Arts Program
- Open Call: May 17th
- Close Call: August 1st
- Announcement of Grantees: October 25th

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship
- Open Call: May 16th
- Close Call: August 1st
- Announcement of Grantees: End of February 2020

Music
- Open Call: June 1st
- Close Call: September 1st
- Announcement of Grantees: November 25th and 27th

Training and Regional Events
- Open Call: June 1st
- Close Call: September 1st
- Announcement of Grantees: November 25th and 27th

Application submission based on nomination

Announcement of Grantees
- July and August
- December 24th
- October 25th
- End of February 2020
- November 25th and 27th
- August 8th
- November 25th and 27th
- November 25th and 27th
- August 8th
- November 25th and 27th
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**  
- Mohammad Shawky Hassan (Egypt)  
- Iman Issa (Egypt)  
- Farah Khelli (Tunisia)  
- Walid Sti (Iraq)  
- Athar Jaber (Iraq)  
- Nadia Kaabi-Linke (Tunisia)  
- Mahmoud Khaled (Egypt)  
- Khaled Barakah (Syria)  
- Dina Javeidni (Egypt)  
- Shakeeb Abu Hamdan (Lebanon)  
- Heba Khalifa (Egypt)  
- Nâssim Azarzar (Morocco)  
- Adel Abidin (Iraq)  
- Abdelaziz Zerrou (Morocco)  
- Nahlia Tabbaa (Jordan)  
- Mohamad Omran (Syria)  
- Sari Elifalotti (Libya)  
- Nidhal Chamekh (Tunisia)  
- Salwa Aleryani (Yemen)  
- Shahir Yarah Khelil (Egypt)  
- Iman Issa (Egypt)  
- Nadia Kareth Jaber (Egypt)  
- Mahmoud Khaled (Egypt)  
- Khaled Barakah (Syria)  
- Dina Javeidni (Egypt)  
- Shahir Yarah Khelil (Egypt)  
- Fathia Mahmoud Al Jabeery (Egypt)  
- Hassan Khan (Egypt)  
- Basma AlSharif (Palestine)  
- Monira Al Qadiri (Kuwait)  
- Sadik Rahim (Algeria)  
- Monir El Demerdash (Egypt)  
- Fatimah Al-Fikhr (Bahrain)  
- Vahida Anabtawi (Jordan)  
- Nidhal Chamekh (Tunisia)  
- Basma AlSharif (Palestine)  
- Monira Al Qadiri (Kuwait)  
- Sadik Rahim (Algeria)  
- Monir El Demerdash (Egypt)  
- Fatimah Al-Fikhr (Bahrain)  
- Vahida Anabtawi (Jordan)

**Project Title**
- Shall I Compare you to a Summer’s Day?  
- Proxies, with a Life of Their Own  
- Effet de Serre  
- Walid Sti”  
- Lubumbashi Biennial  
- The House Museum of an Unknown Crying Man  
- Abandoned Property  
- Where is the Fun in Contemporary Art?  
- _x’s Trip Down the Plughole  
- Thrown into the Sea  
- Bonne Route  
- Heroine  
- Tea Time: Chemistry of History  
- Daffar Asfar  
- Sculptures’ Trip  
- Tahafut - Incoherence  
- Mnémé - Le Battement des Ailes  
- Variations on Pressure, or a Thought for Your Perve  
- Figures of Accidental Loves  
- Cup of Tea with Fathi Mahmoud

**Type**
- Audiovisual Essay  
- Sculpture Installation  
- Exhibition  
- Artist Book  
- Residency and Exhibition  
- Site-specific exhibition  
- Artist Book  
- Exhibition  
- Exhibition and Publication  
- Artist Book  
- Exhibition  
- Public Installation  
- Sketchbook  
- Exhibition  
- Exhibition  
- Interactive Installation  
- Artist Book  
- Exhibition

**Countries**
- Egypt  
- Palestine  
- Iraq  
- Germany/ Iraq  
- Lebanon  
- Tunisia  
- Moroccan  
- Syria  
- Jordan  
- Libya  
- Yemen  
- Tunisia

**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 Boîte 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)*

Click here if you can’t play audio from PDF
Performing Arts

Number of Applicants 133

Number of Grantees 29

11 Females
13 Males

5 Institutions

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 Zak Lebanon The Elephant in the Dark Performance
Aisha Brahim Mauritania Theatrical Days of Nouakchott Festival
Hannah Khalil Palestine Scenes from 71* Years Play
Dina Matta Lebanon This Is Not A Memorized Script, This Is a Well-Rehearsed Story Play
Felsa Serhal Lebanon Suspended Between the Second and the Third Kiss Dance
Mattia Louloudi Von Kohl Palestine No One Likes An Ugly Revolutionary Performance
Hoof Malas Syria Dust Performance
Essia Jabli Tunisia Let’s Do it Again! Play
Forat Alhattab Syria Tales of The Other Half Interactive Performance
Lean Hasham & Alexandre Paulikovitch Lebanon Night Prayer Dance and Poetry Performance
Ali Chahrou Lebanon Told by My Mother Dance
Tarek Atmadour Algeria Dasister Play
Fadi Toufik Lebanon Je Ne Suis Pas Vanessa Tay Performance
Ramzi Chahr Lebanon And I Went into Slumber for Three Days and Three Nights Play
Mounzer Baalbaki Lebanon Reconciliation with Om Kolthoum Performance
Assad Fouadkdar Lebanon Dance
Sinan F D Mansour Palestine Garbage Gar Gar Dance
Sulayman Al Bassam Kuwait Media Madia Play
Adham Hafez Egypt In 50 Years Or So Dance
Jauoud Essiounani Morocco Fadma/ About a Cheikha Play

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

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 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 Abdul Sattar Naji shares his general observations on the pool of applications evaluated by the jury committee. (In Arabic)
Creative and Critical Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haytham el-Wardany</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>If Beasts Could Speak</td>
<td>Critical Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amira Badawy</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Six Qiblahs for Prayer</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<td>Abed Arahman Shabaneh</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Interpreting</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<td>Ahmed Shawky Hassan</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>The Video Museum</td>
<td>Critical Study</td>
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<td>Ayman Al Zorkany</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>The Day of The Monkey Rumpus</td>
<td>Critical Study</td>
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<td>Walea Fathy Hassan</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Despite Being a Regular Wristapping Task Why was “Elamin Ghareeb” Shocked and Chilled?</td>
<td>Theater Play</td>
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<td>Muhammad El-Haj</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Two Stories on Panicking Masculinity</td>
<td>Short Stories</td>
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<td>Salma El Tarzi</td>
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<td>You Know You Want It: Representation of Desire and Normalization of Sexual Violence in Egyptian Mainstream Cinema</td>
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<td>Anis Abu Rahma</td>
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<td>Sound as a Tool in Modern Arabic Poetry</td>
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<td>Mohamed Abdelmoula</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Marginalized Visual Arts in Tunisia: Caricature, Comics, Book Coverts, Postage Stamps, Movie Posters</td>
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<td>Mohamed Salem</td>
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<td>Sons of the Sea</td>
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<td>Maher Raji</td>
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<td>Chocolate Covered</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<td>Nawal Alahab</td>
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<td>Representing War, Revolution and Exile in the Arab Novels Published Between 2010 and 2019</td>
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<td>Soukaina Habib Allah</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Maybe Tomorrow</td>
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<td>Ahmed AlSadik</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>Ahmed Salah</td>
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<td>Amr Elazay</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>The Language of the Virtual Reality Novel</td>
<td>Critical Study</td>
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Jurors:
- Rana Issa (Lebanon) - Assistant Professor of Translation Studies at the American University of Beirut and poet; Ayman EI Desouky (Egypt) - Chair of

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..."

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)

Rana Issa

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

Sinan Antoon
AFAC Documentary Program

**Number of Applicants:** 210

- 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 Houidi  | Morocco  | The Mother of All Lies  | Feature Documentary in Development
Dalal Kawass  | Lebanon  | Queens of Beirut  | Feature Documentary in Development
Angel Obeid  | Lebanon  | Yalla, Baba!  | Feature Documentary in Development
Zakaria Sedrati  | Morocco  | Bilma  | 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
Mahdi Hami  | Tunisia  | Fovudh  | Feature Documentary in Production
Bassel Ghandour  | Jordan  | Five Football Dreams  | Feature Documentary in Production
Jumana Manna  | Palestine  | Foragers  | Medium-Length Documentary in Production
Jihan Kikha  | Libya  | Searching for Kikha  | Feature Documentary in Production
Mohamed Sabbah  | Lebanon  | Embodied Chorus  | Feature Documentary in Production
Abdul Rehman  | Syria  | Take Me to the Cinema  | Feature Documentary in Production
Abdulhadi Al Khalib  | Syria  | The Tarmouk 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 Zoubi  | Palestine  | At the Palestinian National Theatre  | Feature Documentary in Production
Ahmed Sawaydeh  | Iraq  | The Fifth Story  | Feature Documentary in Post-Production
Nadim Mishalawi  | Lebanon  | Eye of the Architect  | Feature Documentary in Post-Production
Carole Mansour  | Palestine  | Aida Returns  | Short Documentary in Post-Production
Amine Kouti  | Algeria  | One, Two, Three, Viva ‘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

**Number of Grantees:** 24

- 10 Females
- 14 Males

**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

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."

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)

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

Grantee Name | Nationality | Project Title
--- | --- | ---
Thana Faroq | Yemen | Some Quiet Noise
Somaya Abdelrahman | Egypt | A Permanent Wound
Salih Bashier | Sudan | The Home Seekers
Mohammed Alkoush | Kuwait | Fataka
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

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

Number of Applicants: 92
Number of Grantees: 9
6 Females
3 Males

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

Total in Grants
$45,000 (In addition to professional support costs equivalent to $159,000).
Research on the Arts Program

Number of Applicants: 47
Number of Grantees: 6

Grantee Name | Structure | Nationality | Project Title                                                                 | Type                  
---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------
Yassir Mahmoud Abdal-Naim Othonin | 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 Ghrib | Team | Tunisia | Arabic Sources on Music | Music               
Jana Tlaboulsi | 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)

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)
Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
<th>253</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Grantees</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Females</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Males</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Institutions</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toufic Farroukh</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Nothing Personal</td>
<td>Jazz Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajsha Dghaili</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Ardennes Festival</td>
<td>Music Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teddy Tawi</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>TEDTEDTED</td>
<td>Electronic Music Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Nasser</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Al Hamra</td>
<td>Jazz Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar El Ouayr</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Musik Sextat</td>
<td>Jazz Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Muslih</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Wasi Album</td>
<td>Archive of traditional Maqams and Recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranine Chiayr</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Ranine</td>
<td>Pop Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salma Mahmoud</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Sawa Sawa</td>
<td>Electronic Music Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sami Saltoun</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Sham Trio</td>
<td>Classical Oriental Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makram About Hosn</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Transmigration</td>
<td>Jazz Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yousra Mansour</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Bab L'Bluz</td>
<td>Gnawa Album</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joulel El-Khoury</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Must be sol</td>
<td>Jazz Album</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mohamad Sala</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Ibtihalat</td>
<td>Electronic Music Album</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maurice Louca</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Elephantine Arab World Tour</td>
<td>Tour and Concerts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amir ElSaftar</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Rivers of Sound - Sonoluminescence</td>
<td>Experimental Jazz Album</td>
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<td>Nancy Mouhir</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Nozhet El Nofous</td>
<td>Experimental Album</td>
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<td>Mohamed Khachnaoui</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Dendri Stambeli Movement</td>
<td>Classical Traditional Album</td>
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<td>REFLECT:fest Foundation</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Festival REFLECT: fest</td>
<td>Music Festival</td>
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<td>Gaseil Bal3arab</td>
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<td>El Sellem</td>
<td>Teaching Platform</td>
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<td>Mastaba Center</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Sham El Nesim Festival</td>
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<td>Overboys ‘Over Boarders’</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>International Percussion Festival</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<td>Egypt (4)</td>
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<td>Palestine (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan (1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total in Grants $311,500

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.”

Jury:
- Fadia Toub-El Hage (Lebanon) – soprano singer and voice coach;
- Rami Abadir (Egypt) – music producer and writer for Ma3azef; and
- Zied Zouari (Tunisia) – musician and composer.
Cinema

Number of Applicants: 250
Number of Grantees: 22

- 10 Females
- 12 Males
- 4 Development
- 16 Production
- 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 Khayari | Morocco | The Shadow of the Butterflies | Development
Ameur Fikher El Din | Syria | Passerby | Production
Rima Allamadd | Syria | Goodbye Lapis Lazuli | Production
Humaid Alsuwaidi | UAE | Dama | Production
George Peter Barbari | Lebanon | Death of a Virgin, and the Sin of not Living | Production
Muayad Alayan | Palestine | A House in Jerusalem | Production
Maikel Benlama | Algeria | The Mersault Investigation | Production
Faouzi Bensaidi | Morocco | Deserts | Production
Zahra Berrada | Morocco | Ali | Production
Mariam Jooibe | Tunisia | Motherhood | Production
Scandar Copti | Palestine | Happy Holidays | Production
Mounia Aki | Lebanon | Costa Brava, Lebanon | Production
Yasmine Benkiran | Morocco | Queens | Production
Lotfi Achour | Tunisia | Severed Head | Production
Marim Al Farjani | Tunisia | Ad Libitum | Production
Razan Al Salah | Palestine | The Greatest Wait | Production
Esmaïl Zalat | Egypt | Chained Prey | Production
Ghassan Safab | Lebanon | The River | Post-Production
Ayten Amin | Egypt | Souad | Post-Production

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."

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.

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)
Training and Regional Events

**Number of Applicants:** 143

**Number of Grantees:** 24

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

**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

**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."
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.”

Arts and Culture Entrepreneurship - ACE

Number of Applicants: 38
Number of Projects: 8
Grantees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fanni Raghman Anni</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Performing Art</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comna Films</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axxam n-dida Ali - Uncle Ali’s house</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolis Art Cinema</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanarout</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waraq</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekia Music</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection for Arts, Training and Development</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Countries:

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

Total in Grants: $200,000
(In addition to professional support costs equivalent to $220,000)

Jury: 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)

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

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.

Number of Applicants (National Fund): 122
Number of Grantees: 28
Institutions: 4
Countries: Morocco (7), Algeria (4), Egypt (6), Tunisia (6), Libya (3)
Total in Grants: $2,499,000

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 Tunis 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 - $300,000 per institution) as well as 10 smaller initiatives ($15,000 - $50,000 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.
**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.

**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.
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 the independent cultural sector in Algeria. We remain confident about a better future for this sector in Algeria, and salute the quality of the four submitted projects, which reflect a certain dynamic in a sector that is gradually catching on for some time.

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 potential. 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 transcenders, 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 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 came into being within the framework 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.
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 3rd 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 font 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 decepions and defeat? 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.

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.

Training & Regional Events Jury

“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.”

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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 were the opportunity to document complex stories, 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 Mhammed 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 Hamoud 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 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 new participating young documentary photographers, amongst 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 Faroq (Yemen) focuses on undocumented asylum seekers in the Netherlands, while Somaya Mohamed’s “A Permanent Wound” confronts genital mutilation in Egypt. Salah Basheer (Sudan) depicts Sudanese refugees in Cairo and their inwards search for “home” in “The Home Seekers”. Mohammed Alsheik (Kuwait) documents a lost island in Kuwait in view of preserving its heritage with “Falakat”. “Here, There, or Elsewhere” by Dania Hany (Egypt) evokes questions of national and personal identities and histories. Fatih Haws (Egypt) reflects on youth struggles in marginalized cities of Egypt in “Margined in a Supposed Green”, while Lola Khalb (Algeria) addresses the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Algeria in “Ja’ Talime Hic”. Mariam Alarar (Bahrain) brings the underlying identity crisis of Bahraini 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 Mounir. 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 at 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 incorporation, generating opportunities from existing or potential services. The incentive grant gave impetus for each institution generating opportunities from existing or potential service.

Exploring business models for growth and better income-terms of governance and finance/administration, but also priorities mainly related to strategic planning, restructuring

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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. The report to all stakeholders, 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 (in 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 ADPP responds and contributes to professionalising 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 over the past 13 years. The Project comprises 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.

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.

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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:

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 15th edition of GPP Photo Week in Dubai, 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 Romdane, West of Life; Egyptian photographer Mohamed Mahdy, Moon Dust; and Egyptian photographer Heba Khalifa, Homemade.

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.

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. The program included exchanges with AFAC’s executive director, whom AFAC has been discussing with for a potential pilot partnership.

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.
Arab region.

Shubbak Festival of Contemporary Culture

London, June - July


El Gouna Film Festival

El Gouna, September


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, Babi” by Angie Obied 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 Rami Itani (Lebanon), “Another Day in Baghdad” by Maysoon Pachachi (Iraq), “Mica” by Issam 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 Beirut, and contributed to the discussion with partner organizations based in four countries; Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and 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 7th 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 Hajoj 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 Days I Lost My Shadow; Tunisian feature documentary Railway Men directed by Erige Sehili; and the Libyan documentary Freedom Fields by Nahla Arabi, 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 Zaatari, 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 Ghossain, I Crossed the Railway by Rabih 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.

The have found a surprisingly high quality, as well as a relatively strong diversity in approach, although many of the works clearly reflect a sensitivity to formal languages, a heightened self-awareness and criticality, originality of thought and a seriousness in approach that was remarkable.”

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**OUTREACH AND CULTURAL ADVOCACY**
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
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

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

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

**Robert Wolfe**
“How Do We Harness Creativity?”

**Mike Van Graan**
African Perspectives on Cultural Policy

**Carla Fonseca**
Deconstructing Corporate Involvement in Arts and Culture
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 Claus 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**

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**Social Media Statistics**

**Social Media Referrals**

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**Page Views by Country**

**Website users, sessions, and page views**

- Average Unique Users / Month
- Average Sessions / Month
- Page views / Month
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 or visit our Support page: www.arabculturefund.org/support
PHOTO CREDITS


p. 27: All photos by my Mother, Performing Arts, Lebanon, 2019. Photo credit: Myriam Boulos.


p. 6: Tunis, December 2019.


p. 77: Scoping visit to T unisia, 2019.


p. 108: Scoping visit to Egypt, December 2018.


p. 113: Journées Musicales de Carthage, Tunis, October 2019.


p. 115: Sundance visit to AFAC, May 2019.


More About AFAC

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