

منصة مشاهدة النجوم

Stargazing Platform

This warm immersive space invites you in, holds you close, and together. It invites you to pause, untangle yourself and stay a while. It wants you to look across, around, and up, and still stay present. There is something bigger out there and more than our individual selves. The Stargazing Platform is a warm beautiful experience that held me in, even when I was outside of it.

Zahira Asmal

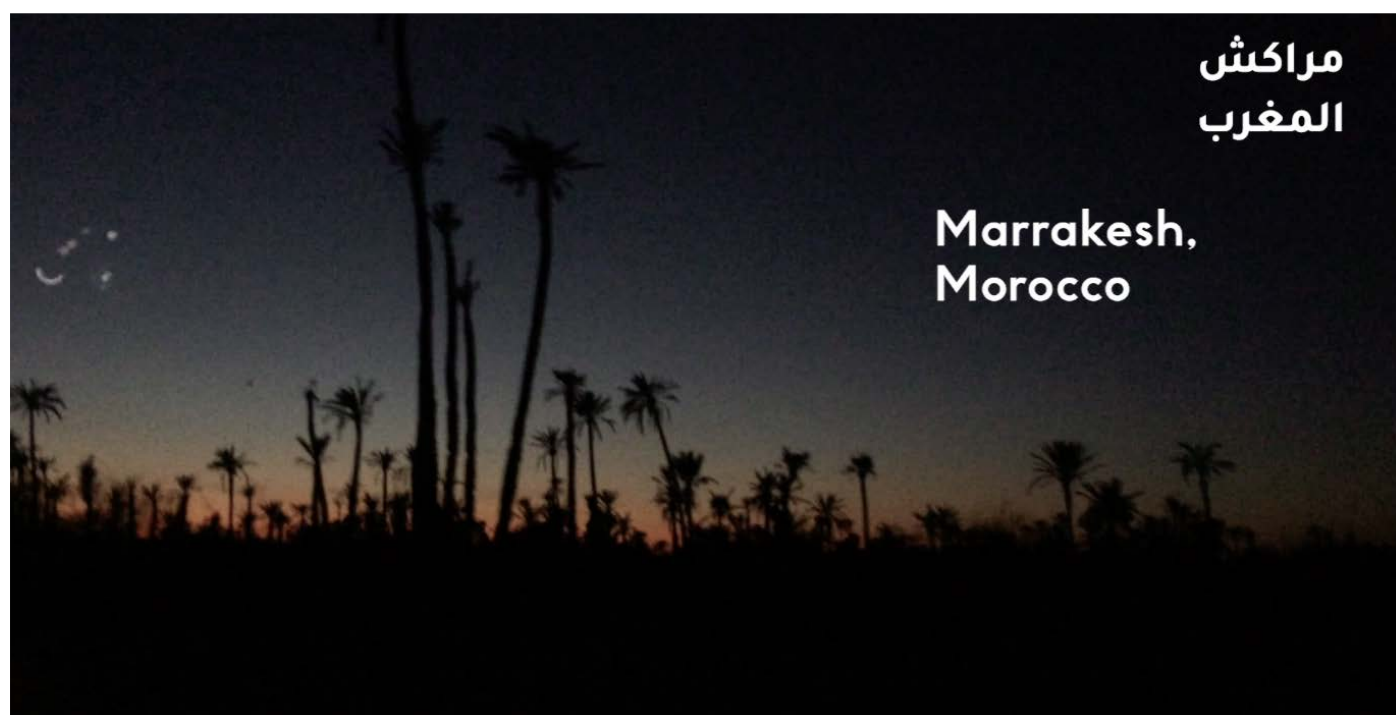
South Africa

report_intro

Stargazing Platform is a rooftop pavilion that aims to create a safe space for observation and reflection, revitalise the tradition of storytelling and promote social awareness on pollution. Conceived as part of the knowledge-exchange centre El Labana Gardens for the Open Call Egypt, the pavilion got the chance for realisation at the African Crossroads - Seminar organised by Hivos in Marrakech from 11. - 13. December 2019. The prototype focused on the performative discursive techniques touching up a range of topics co-created by the visitors/users....

collaborations

We had to grasp the opportunity to realise the prototype, made possible with generous support from the Creative Industries Fund. However, being constricted in time and moving on an unknown terrain, Marrakech, we searched for an Moroccan producer. Sara Essbai turned to be the key person in arranging the flows of communication, execution, material sourcing and the second life of the installation. As we wanted the installation to continue it's function after the seminar was over. Collaboration with the ENAM Ecole Nationale d'Architecture du Marrakech came through her contacts with the director Abdelghani Tayyibi and Mohamed Bennani. Eleven students came to help weave and disentangle the wool for the installation, which is now placed in the university courtyard. Renee Roukens from Hivos was instrumental caretaker for the installation on site. The tactility, strong colour and messy bushes of the Atlas wool enchanted the makers. Before 'weaving' the skin directly we needed to spend unexpected amounts of time disentangling the wool. Disentangling becoming meditative and addictive, the real thing.





disentangling blu Atlas wool * by (amongst many others) Ugandan electro dj Otim Alpha

**we used local material for this installation as we also plan to use an other local material in the future Cairo pavilion

visitors

African Crossroads was seminar open for carefully selected makers and practitioners from the entire African continent. An amazing and inspirational crowd or circa 150 persons, that all came through the installation on the first day of the seminar. The performative actions of disentangling the wool, became the way to engage in 'deep talk' with the workshop participants. Testing discursive and participative techniques of engagement with the public, asking advice for future community workshops in Cairo. Eye-catching position of the installation on the roof attracted attention. Few other workshops like the Innovations in Food and Energy in Africa, Contemporary storytelling and mid-size group talks made use of 'our' place. In spite of the cold nights, we tested real stargazing laying on the back (on the blue wool carpets), testing models of concentration and focus. The advice we got regarding community building communication in Cairo was to connect with diverse groups through an communal making activity.



Karim's tea-drinking practice with dates and pistachio

I very much enjoyed the installation, as its permeable walls felt both private from within and inclusive from outside. The rooftop setting, closer to the sky and away from the dramas of a hustling and bustling city below, catalysed a pensive mood, within myself that would have otherwise been tough to fabricate in an everyday room. In addition to this, the communal task facilitated a subliminal connection between myself and the other participants, allowing for greater intimacy and openness, in thoughts and conversation.

Lola Pedro
Nigeria



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Sara Radi, Egypt



topics

Social ecology, performative architecture, tactility, and safe space were the initial topics of the installation. The overwhelming amount of interesting issues at the seminar like: the politics of space development, digital ethnology, food initiatives, women at the lead, decolonisation, etc. informed the ambition for this project in the future implementation in Cairo. Student caretakers of the pavilion would be holding reflecting (critical) architectural talks in the second life of the installation. .

lessons learned

Trust intuition and dare to change the plan. This installation had worked well due to concentrated commitment of several people, which we were lucky to find. Otherwise an 'going with the culture flow' is recommendable attitude, first being able to recognize the flow.



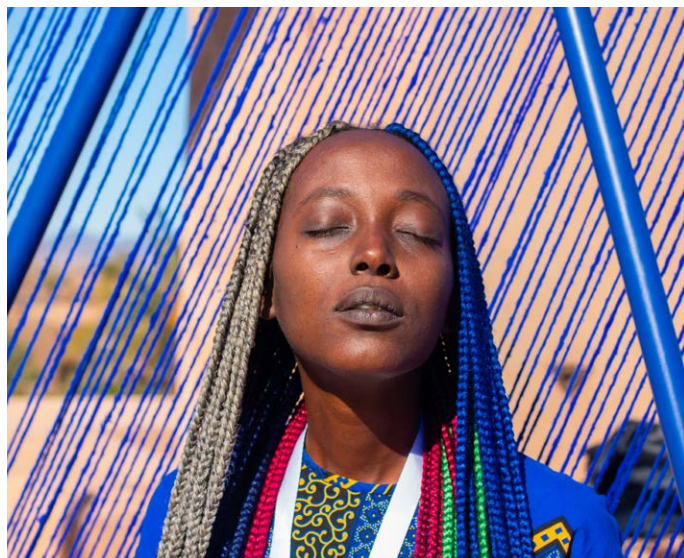
Sarah Essbai, Morocco

challenges

Main challenges lay in making steps in the right direction for the coming installation in Cairo. As



the best ESAM weaving team, Morocco



Darilyne Komukama, Uganda

the team is much bigger and Egyptian political and social conditions differ from wonderfully curated and safeguarded seminar, we need to safeguard the ambition of the proposal. We shall go real....

colophon

Stargazing Platform, installation
Marrakech, Morocco '18

performative design, safe space, urban ecology
architect/team Bureau LADA, Lala Studio, CILAS
with Lada Hršak, Sara Essbai, Sarah Radi, Karim Yassin Goessinger

ENAM Ecole Nationale d'Architecture du Marrakech
Abdelghani Tayyibi, Mohamed Bennani

students Zakaria El Morabit, Kenza El Hosni, Khaoula Admou, Achraf Nour, Alaa Kori, Hajar Achlaf, Kawtar Roussaky, Manal El Harnane, Walid Ouarbya, Asmae Mouayn, Majda Abida

client Creative Industries Fund, NL
Zineb Seghrouchni, Yasmin Kursun

event African Crossroads Seminar / Hivos
Arthur Steiner, Katie Bentivoglio, Renee Roukens, Ahmed Sameh

photography Nihal Ünsal, Sara Essbai, Lada Hršak

short texts Lola Pedro, Zahira Asmal

video-cast editing Rafe Copeland



Lada Hršak, Otim Alpha, Karim-Yassin Goessinger, NL, UG, EG

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