



Whether you have flown home or gone back to your daily routine in Morocco, it is perhaps time to reflect on the five busy days of the Biennale. The front desk has been packed away and the Riad El Fenn courtyards are tranquil once again. The 3rd Edition of the AiM International Biennale has been launched.



Having watched the final farewells between attendees, participants and staff, it was astonishing to witness the countless exchanges made between friends, most of whom had only known each other for the five days. This display of camaraderie spoke volumes about the unified group of artists who, along with those who attended, have exchanged ideas, stories and opinions; bridging gaps between their cultural and artistic diversities. It has been nothing short of spectacular. The unique forum created during AiM can be attributed directly to the open dialogue between those who participated and those who attended the events. In a very real sense we are all responsible for the success of this year's AiM.

To mention every highlight of the film programme would take another five days, however, the discussions with Julian Schnabel, John Boorman and James Marsh seem to have been the pinnacle of many people's experience. Not forgetting the packed discussions with John Hillcoat, Danny Moynihan and Kim Catrall. Also having Joana Hadjithomas, Eric Fellner and Ahmed El Maanouni discuss their work at the film school was an invaluable experience for students and festivals goers alike.

The visual art exhibition *A Proposal for Articulating Works and Places* at the Palais Bahia, received great critical acclaim - boldly juxtaposing an ancient Moroccan Palace with challenging contemporary art curated by Abdellah Karroum. Pieces by Francis Alÿs, Seamus Farrell and Nouredine Amir are just a few of the striking works which have engaged both AiM goers and the hoards of Palais Bahia visitors on their guided tours. It is hard not to be overwhelmed by this ground-breaking exhibition. It should be mentioned that the challenges of working in a public monument were embraced with good humour and ingenuity by all artists involved.

As well as the visual art exhibition, we were spoiled for choice with many unique and experimental events, often with Marrakech and North Africa as their inspiration. Sketch and Taverna Especial created a total sensory experience at Ksour Agafay with Younes Baba-Ali's site-specific installation and their participatory and ideological kitchen. With the crumbling backdrop of the old majestic Theatre Royal, we sat in contemplation on rugs to see Isaac Julien's

powerful and profound multiscreen installation *Western Union: Small Boats*. Even travel was transformed into performance art as storytellers wove magical tales in taxis as part of the 'Stories of Order & Disorder' event.

The Literary discussions provided some of the most intimate yet passionately debated events during AiM. The chance to discuss the work of so many prominent writers, such as Ahdaf Soueif, Abdellah Taia and Andrew O'Hagan to mention but a few, was relished by all.

Equally, many will cherish the time spent with Rebecca Lenkiewicz and her powerful performance of *The Nature of Love* with Hardeep Singh-Kohli, leaving us all affected by its honesty and poignancy.

The visualisation of the biennale was perhaps best encapsulated through Loredana Longo's *Nothing is as it seems*. The mirrored prison cell hanging dramatically in the middle of a blackened room at ESAV reminded us all of the suppression and set backs that many of the writers, artists and filmmakers have endured throughout their respective careers. To end the Biennale around this moving and powerful piece, dancing and celebrating seemed fitting and equally liberating.

To those of you who came to the 3rd edition of AiM, this letter will only affirm its triumph. Similarly, to those of you who were unable to join us, I hope by now you are deeply envious, but equally eager to attend AiM in two years time!

As we all bid each other farewell for another two years, we will take home our extraordinary memories, unforgettable experiences and new friendships from AiM and Marrakech. See you all in 2011!



A few comments from this year's festival:

The energy and dynamism of this year's festival was marvellous – Shezad Dawood

What a festival of richness and diversity! – Anneka Rice

You should have been on the plane back to London, it was alive with conversation amongst new friends. – James Marsh

I think the co-habitation of writers, visual artists and film makers, creates such rare opportunities for conversation – Omar Berrada

Aim has become a key platform for Marrakech and the rest of Morocco to promote contemporary creation on a national and international level. – Geraldine Cosnuau

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For more information, please go to www.aibliennale.org
www.riadelfenn.com