

6 Artworks to See at Marrakech Biennale

BY SAMIRA LAROUCI MARCH 4, 2016

The sixth edition of Marrakech biennale has the bar set high. Curated by the Guggenheim's Reem Fadda, the biennale is a harmonious cross-pollination of contemporary and street art in a city renowned for its rich history of arts and craftsmanship.

You can't turn a corner in Marrakech without finding a carpenter hand-carving a table or a silversmith intricately working a patterned detail onto a sheet of metal. Art is intrinsically part of everyday culture in Morocco.

The biennale serves as a way of bringing art to the people, from opening day and over its 11-week run, the biennale is for the public.

Unlike the Venice Biennale, Marrakech's installations aren't housed in 16th Century palazzos, instead they're scattered in underground catacombs of the city's 12th Century Koutoubia Mosque and the ruins of El Badi Palace.

Finding the pieces is an adventure in itself, with many small galleries nestled somewhere deep in the souk. Though near impossible to find with data roaming off, they prove to be worth the hunt – behind some unassuming door you'll find poetry by writer and visual artist Naeem Mohaiemen.

An hour from Europe and only six from America, Marrakech is the perfect long-weekend trip. Drink mint tea, eat fresh pomegranates and blood oranges and check out some of Africa, Europe and America's best contemporary art. We've rounded up six of our favourite installations to check out.



Untitled, c. 1975, mixed media, 66 x 74 inches

Al Loving

American artist Al Loving rose to fame in the 1960s, during which time he gained a solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art and was the first African American to do so. Shortly after, he discarded his abstract illusionistic work he had become famed for and moved into a new folk-infused aesthetic, utilising textiles on a monumental scale. The torn canvases shown at Palais El Bahia are reflective of the key moment when Al re-positioned his work into the realm of addressing issues such as poverty, war and consumption.