

CROSSING POINT

Around 15 artists from the Maghreb recently participated in *Horizons Croisés*, a show which juxtaposed the work of the region's Modern founders with that of its Contemporary pioneers. **Rebecca Anne Proctor** reports from Asilah in Morocco on how these artists strive to create a new artistic modernity.

A few months have gone by since the uproar caused by the 10th edition of the Tunisian art fair *Printemps des Arts*. The curated exhibition of works by independent Tunisian artists prompted thousands of protesters – led by ultra-orthodox Salafist Muslims – to take to the streets in the worst wave of violence since the 2011 revolt, which ousted President Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali. The Islamist zealots scorned and vandalised works of art which they deemed contrary to their religious faith.

The fall of some of the region's autocratic dictators last year has given rise to new fundamentalist groups yearning to maintain order and tradition in the face of social and cultural change. Even so, the desire for artistic expression has simultaneously prompted the staging of ex-

hibitions that seek to uncover the Maghreb's rich art history. One such show was *Horizons Croisés*. Curated by Brahim Alaoui at the Centre Hassan II in Asilah, a town situated on the northwest tip of Morocco, it was the first show ever to take place in Morocco that was made up of entirely of Maghreb artists. As part of the 34th edition of the Asilah International Cultural Festival, an event which presents a series of cultural manifestations to celebrate the Maghreb's art scene, *Horizons Croisés* showcased works by around 15 artists from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, all from different generations of the 20th century and with the aim of offering a global vision of Contemporary art in the Maghreb.

"The idea was to integrate art into everyday life," explains the Mayor of Asilah, Mohamed

Below, left and right: Zoulikha Bouabdellah. (Detail) *Chérif, Ash'ar* (I feel) and *Al-Hobb* (love). 2007. An installation of 365 words in Arabic. Braamel on paper. Each 30 x 30 cm.

Facing page: Driss Oudahi. *Lumière pour la nuit* (Light in the Night). 2010. Oil on canvas. 190 x 240 cm.

