



## The Informal Meeting of independent cultural spaces in the Arab World

Tangier, Morocco  
From 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2006

The Arab countries have witnessed a gradual rise in the number of independent artists working outside the mainstream: the governmental, where official culture is promoted, and the commercial which is dictated by a monopoly of supply and demand.

Those artists attempting to carve out a space for their independent artistic productions suffer from lack of resources and of venues for presentation and exchange. Many independent culture organizations were founded throughout the region to meet increasing demands by those independent artists who are developing a new artistic sensibility and critical engagement with their socio-political circumstances.

The fact that most of the countries in the region are speaking the same language and similarities in terms of shared history and current socio-cultural conditions generates endless possibilities of distribution and mobility of artistic productions and can create a significant impact on the work of the artists.

Although more than twenty five independent cultural spaces exist now in the Arab World, very few exchanges of programs and touring take place due to the lack of information and funding dedicated for mobility within the region. These spaces and organization are forming the basis for a potentially wide regional cultural market that allows artists to present their work on the regional level and create a better diffusion system for their creations.

Moreover, during the last few years, many international donors such as European Union, delegations of the European Commission in the south Mediterranean countries, Anna Lindh Foundation....etc are encouraging more regional collaborations and supporting projects based on partnerships among three or more organizations in different countries.

Since its establishment, Young Arab Theatre Fund, YATF is working actively not only on supporting young artists to realize their productions but also to encourage them to present their work as many times as possible, locally, regionally and internationally. On the premise that both performing and interacting with diverse audience would enrich the artistic quality of the artists' work and strengthen their status as independent artists within the local environment.

In collaboration with the Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM) and the Cinémathèque de Tanger, YATF is organizing a meeting in Tangiers, Morocco for programmers of independent spaces in the region with the support of the Delegation European Commission in Damascus and the Ford Foundation. The



meeting aims at promoting networking and exchange of programs among independent spaces in the Middle East and North Africa and to connect them with existing networks in Europe and around the Mediterranean basin.

Programmers of twenty five spaces and organizations will get together from the 17<sup>th</sup> till the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2006 to exchange information on their spaces and programs, brainstorm on ideas that increase mobility within the region and identify possibilities and constraints that they face within their local environment in different peer-learning working groups.

The meeting will take place in hotel Continental in Tangier where six working sessions will be held on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Two training sessions will be organized on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> of March.

In addition to the working sessions, the agenda of the meeting is designed to keep free time for informal networking between participants. A Catalogue that includes information on each of participating organization will be distributed during the meeting.