

Chouftouhonna: Tunis International Feminist Art Festival

Second edition, the 13th, 14th and 15th of May 2016

Report



”
Bien trop de femmes dans
bien trop de pays parlent la
même langue : le silence.
Anasua Sengupta “

13 // 14 // 15 Mai 2016

**CHOUF -
- TOUHONNA**

2^{ème} édition

Festival international
d'Art féministe
de Tunis // L'Espace Mad'art Carthage

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
Die grüne politische Stiftung



Mad'Art. Lez'Art
Cultural center of Carthage
Av. Habib Bourguiba Carthage Demech

*"Too many women in too many countries speak the same language :
Silence." - Anasua Sengupta.*

INTRODUCTION

Chouftouhonna, the Tunis International Feminist Art Festival was born from a group of women who questioned themselves on the conditions of access to art and culture for them and their sisters in the current context of the country.

The way towards production or towards work's consumption is fraught with pitfalls. These pitfalls are called religion, patriarchy, etc. And from them derive discriminations and violences we have to face every day.

These obstacles, we have decided to confront them. The best way to fight against fear is knowledge. And to reach it, art and culture are privileged ways whose access have been refused to women for too long, and even though this era is over, we still can feel its scars.

Chouftouhonna does not claim to compare itself to the festivals that are held in the country, in the region or in the world. It's first of all an activist, and not only artistic, initiative.

The definition of activism is : a political commitment which chooses direct action. And this is what Chouftouhonna is about : to act directly in order to take by ourselves the rights we have been denied.

And in a period as the one we are going through, with all the upheavals it implies and all the "revolutions", it has become unthinkable that women, who today are a majority, only have minor spaces of expression. We are in an era of questioning. Therefore, it's about time that we ask these questions by ourselves.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

Chouftouhonna took place in Mad Art's spaces, in Carthage, Tunis the 13th, 14th et 15th of May 2016; a wide media, and most of all, radio coverage, and a long communication worked in advance made of this edition a success, with a continuous flow of visitors during three days and a wide participation for the theatrical and music performances, as well as for the movies projections and the workshops.

Two panel discussions have been held around different forms of feminism and the importance of networking for the organizations who are active in the area.

A selling-exposition for craftwomen was installed outside Mad Art's main entrance, to create a link between the artistic knowledge and the craft knowledge of Tunisian women. The permanent installation within several spaces of Mad Art included a plastic exhibition of photography, works of art, as well as two spaces for the continued distribution of the graphic and musical work.

The number of visitors and the presence of many artists from different countries make us consider the first goal of the festival, which is to highlight artistic productions of women, as reached. The workshops of graffiti, audiovisual production and sculpture have seen the enthusiastic participation of a young and varied public.

The experience of the craft selling-exposition allowed the development and the extension of the contacts of the craftswomen who participated, the whole with an immediate economic return for them.

The round tables have touched varied and actively interested audience and gave us the chance to underline once again the importance of creating links between art et activism in the framework of a festival thought by women for women.

In June 2016, representatives of Chouftouhonna Festival have been invited by the Italian Feminist Festival Lilith to introduce their project in order to highlight feminism beyond the borders.

STEPS OF THE PROJECT

The preparation of Chouftouhonna Festival took a lot of time and involvement to the organizers, who were considerably helped by the volunteers, who were for the greatest part young women interested in the project. Some of them already were active members or sympathizers of Chouf, the others discovered the organization thanks to their involvement in the Festival, which allowed the organization to extend its base of members.

The **first step** for the realisation of the project was the writing and spreading of the call for participation, during the month of January 2016.

Once receipt the request for participation, **the second step** was the selection of the artists and the artworks, through inclusiveness and involvement criteria, but also quality criteria to assure a competition with a satisfying artistic level.

The **third step** was the communication and spreading on social medias and national and international press of the festival; to better meet this goal, the organizers have chosen a professional press-secretary, who organized many interventions on Tunisian radio stations (National, express Radio FM, RTCI, Radio Sfax, ...) and a press conference a few days before the festival.

The **fourth step**, which happened at the same time as the third one, was the follow-up with the artists, the reception et organization of the artworks, the preparation of the exposition and projection spaces, the organization of the workshops and the research for the physically necessary equipment for the good success of the festival.

The fifth step was the welcoming of the artists coming from abroad and the implementation of the exhibition in Mad Art spaces, as well as the rent and implementation of the stands for Soukouhonna .

After all these preparatory steps, the organizers, helped by the volunteers, put a lot for the good progress of the festival, thanks also to the availability and to the support supplied by the staff of Mad Art.

The organization team put a lot during the festival into the tasks of logistics, coordination between the artists and the technical team, in particular for the scenic performances, the projections of movies and the evenings, but also for the housing, the transport and the meals of the artists coming from abroad or from other cities of Tunisia, which were among 50.

The organization team was in charge after the festival of the dismissal of the plastic works, as well as the follow up with the various artists for their return in the best conditions.

CHOUFTOUHONNA IN FIGURES



32 countries



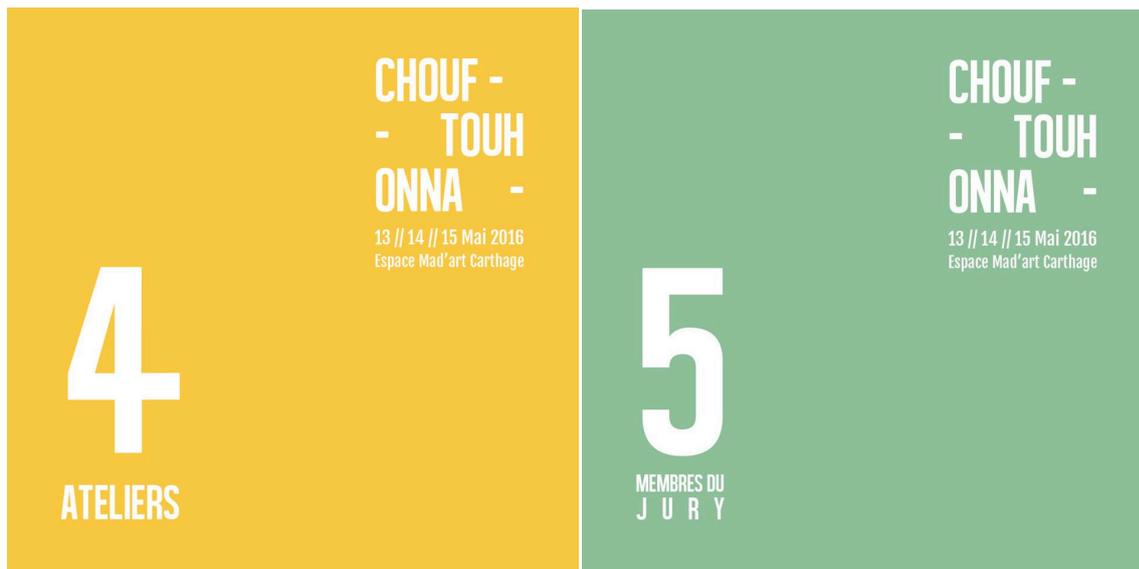
116 participants



2 conferences



6 DJ's



4 workshops

5 jury members

BUDGET

For the use of funds, the established amount was totally respected, therefore it has been distributed according to criteria different from those which appear in the budget. More precisely, the expenses dedicated to the hosting were appreciably reduced compared with the budget esteemed in advance, while those dedicated to the meals exceeded the planned amount.

Such change was made considering the change of the number of the foreign artists welcomed by the organization of the festival. The budget had been esteemed on a forecast of about ten artists to welcome. In the practice, the coming from abroad artists were more than forty.

Therefore, Chouf chose to give up on the planned hosting in hotel rooms, to rent at an appreciably lower price the whole complex of the youth hostel of La Marsa. The place was chosen for its location in a quiet and secure zone, for the convenience in the organization of the transfer of the artists coming of and going to the festival, for the availability of the persons in charge of the inn to rent the whole establishment for the period of the festival and for the good offered value for money.

Thus, the saved amount was invested to pay the meals for the artists and the present volunteers on the spot during the progress of the festival.