

PRESS RELEASE

AZALAI – Laboratoire Nomade

Project supported by the Culture programme of the European Union

MALI – EUROPE – MAROC: A cultural caravan

Closing conference

M'hamid el Ghizlane, Morocco, 16 November 2013

Promoted by :

Fondazione Fabbrica Europa, Florence

Festival Exit, Novi Sad

Festival Roots/ Melkweg, Amsterdam

Festival Sfinks, Anvers

Festival Sziget, Budapest

Festival Wazemmes l'Accordéon, Lille

*AFTER TWO YEARS OF RESEARCH, CREATIVE RESIDENCIES AND
PERFORMANCES ACROSS FRANCE, ITALY, SERBIA, THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM
AND HUNGARY, A CULTURAL CONFERENCE IN THE MOROCCAN DESERT*

*AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH EXPERTS AND INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS
ON THE POTENTIALS OF TRANSCULTURAL RESIDENCIES FOR DEVELOPING
LONG-TERM AWARENESS, PEACE AND DIALOGUE*

After two years of researches and activities, the project AZALAI – Laboratoire Nomade, supported by the Culture programme of the European Union, will end on November 16 with a conference in M'hamid el Ghizlane, Morocco, during the Festival Taragalte (15-17 November). The conference will offer a moment of reflection – with the partners of the project and other professionals and international experts – on the role of culture in the economic and social development of African countries and in the pacification of conflicting areas, on interaction and collaboration strategies at an artistic level between institutions and professionals of culture from Europe and Africa, on the promotion of human rights and peace through forms of cultural cooperation and in particular through immaterial goods.

Azalai – Laboratoire Nomade is the result of the collaboration between six cultural organisations: Fondazione Fabbrica Europa of Florence, Festival Sziget of Budapest, Festival Exit of Novi Sad, Festival Wazemmes l'Accordéon of Lille, Festival Sinks of Anvers, Festival Roots/ Melkweg of Amsterdam. Its objective is to create an interactive platform, for the building and the expression of African identities beyond the continent and at the light of new cultural relations with contemporary Europe through actions of musical creation in residency, training, concerts, conferences, cultural exchanges.

The conference will host the delegates of the six European festivals and others specialists. The project also foresees a residency with some artists who have participated to the project AZALAI – Laboratoire Nomade, who will meet some Malian musicians from the Festival au Désert and some Moroccan artists from Festival Taragalte.

During the night, on stage : Saïd Tichiti (Morocco/Hungary) – Dimitri Grechi Espinoza (Italy) – Oum (Morocco) – Khaira Harby (Mali) – Amanar (Mali) – Kiran Ahluwalia (India) – Lise Hannik (France) – Aziz Fayet / Aflak (France/Morocco) – groupe Ganga (Morocco) – Mallal (Morocco) – Charky Blues (Netherlands) – Mariama Kone - Taragalte (Morocco)

MALI – EUROPE – MOROCCO: A cultural caravan

A dry but culturally fertile land, a free zone, an historic place for the passage of caravans full of salt, gold, knowledge and visions of the world, the Sahara desert is the source and the symbol of two festivals known for their work in education, cultural exchange and artistic creation: the **Festival au Désert** of Timbuktu (Mali) and the **Festival Taragalte** of M'Hamid el Ghizlane (Morocco). From those Saharan festivals, this conference will offer an occasion to valorize mobility, nomadism, geographic and cultural movement, as carrying a richness and stability that is as strong at the dawn of the XXI century as it was during the epoch of big caravan commerce.

Conceived as transversal and transcultural, the testimonies of the founders of the two Saharan festivals will be enriched by those of their guests, including the directors of six important European festivals gathered together thanks to the AZALAI project: a “musical caravan” that during the past two years has travelled through Italy, France, Serbia, Hungary, Belgium and the Netherlands with artistic residencies and musical encounters that enabled the musicians to extend the forms of their inherited African identities through new exchanges with contemporary Europe.

Together and with the support of other experts, the cultural professionals from Africa and Europe will reflect on forms of cooperation and cultural interaction that works toward the stabilization of social and political tensions, the promotion of transcultural dialogue and peace, a better management of questions relating to identity, marked as they often are by tensions that both unite and separate the two continents: from the recent shipwreck of Lampedusa, that caused the death of hundreds of men and women at the boundaries of Europe, to the Malian conflict, that has temporarily stopped the cultural expressions of the North of the country. How can it be possible to break the old fixed boundaries of diversity, of belonging, of recognition towards imagining an oasis in the desert, composed of new flexible communities able to elaborate collective answers to the crucial questions of the present? And what role culture can play in this game?”

Marta Amico, Project Manager AZALAI-Laboratoire Nomade

Programme:

16 November

h 11:00 – 11:15

Welcome

H. 11:15 – 13:00

Morocco: a cultural crossover. Experiences of encounter and mixing in the Sahara desert and beyond

Driss ALAOUI MDAGHRI (Morocco) – President of the World Cultures Foundation, poet, professor, ancient minister

Issa DICKO (Mali) – Expert in Sahel-Saharan cultures

Saida AZIZI (Morocco) – Founder of the Moroccan Center for popular patrimony and manuscripts

h 15:00 – 17:00

Festivals in the Sahara and AZALAI. For a cultural nomadism between Africa and Europe

Manny ANSAR (Mali) – Festival au Désert director

Rockyatou ATTAYE (Mali) – Festival au Désert responsible for the environment and local development

Halim SBAI (Morocco) – Zaila association president and Festival Taragalte director

Hibrahim SBAI (Morocco) – Festival Taragalte artistic director

Marta AMICO (Italy) – AZALAI project manager

Maurizio BUSIA (Italy) – Festival au Désert/Presenze d'Africa of Florence artistic director

Maurizia SETTEMBRI (Italy) – Festival Fabbrica Europa artistic director

Fruzsina SZEP (Hungary) – Festival Sziget artistic director

Adrienn HILLER (Hungary) – Festival Sziget program coordinator

Danka VAN DODEWAARD (Netherlands) – Festival Roots /Melkweg

Edo WOUTER BOUMAN (Netherlands) – Festival Roots /Melkweg

Vladimir VODALOV (Serbia) – Festival Exit program production

Biljana BILIC (Serbia) – Festival Exit stage manager

Patrick N'KIALA SIESE (Belgium) – Festival Sfinks

Milena DABETIC (France) – Festival Wazemmes l'Accordéon

Dimitri GRECHI ESPINOZA (Italy) – Musician

Said TICHITI (Morocco/Hungary) – Musician

Projection AZALAI photo reportage by Barbara LOMONACO

h 17:00 – 17:30

AZALAI unplugged. Dimitri GRECHI ESPINOZA (sax) and Said TICHITI (guembri-voice)

h 17:30 – 19:00

Projection film "Woodstock in Timbuktu" by Désirée VON THROTA

h 20:00

Concert/creation «Caravan Blues»

The AZALAI artists «Saïd Tichiti (Morocco-Hungary) and Dimitri Grechi Espinoza (Italy)» – Oum (Morocco) – Khaira Harby (Mali) – Amanar (Mali) – Kiran Ahluwalia (India) – Lise Hannik (France) – Aziz Fayet / Aflak (France/Morocco) – groupe Ganga (Morocco) – Mallal (Morocco) – Mariama Kone (Mali) – Charky Blues (Netherlands) – Mariama Kone - Taragalte (Morocco)