

Kamel Ghabte

Eleven Crossings Between Two Shores

Eleven works of interaction design · Euro-Africa Biennale

ANFA PARC · CASABLANCA · 15–18 OCTOBER 2026 — FRENCH-MOROCCAN DIGITAL ARTIST · AR / VR / XR · CREATIVE CODING

A practice that already lives between Europe and Africa, from Bordeaux to Casablanca. For the Euro-Africa Biennale, French-Moroccan digital artist **Kamel Ghabte** presents eleven works of interaction design that make *passage* their very material: memory that circulates, the body that becomes an interface, the medina that reinvents itself, the living world that speaks in data — and an axis dedicated to climate issues.

A single intuition runs through them all: heritage is not a relic but a **system of rules** — a grammar that can be executed, altered, replayed. Here, zellige becomes an algorithm, the carpet a data structure, the cart an interface, the plant an author. This gesture — moving ancient knowledge into the computational field — belongs as much to anthropology as to code: it reminds us that the thinking of forms, in the Maghreb as elsewhere, long predates the computing that claims to have invented it.

The journey reads in three movements: **memory and territory** (KOUTCHI, DERB.EXE, Medina Cybercity, Leave Me a Message); the **body and the living** (The Augmented Cube, Phyta, The Word_Broker); and an axis devoted to **climate** (Data Rug, Lost Echo, Wind Echoes). Finally, Zellige Artcade opens the proposal to the widest audience. These works do not ask to be looked at — they ask to be crossed.

01 · PHYGITAL INSTALLATION · VR · 2026

KOUTCHI — Memory in Transit

Art & the memory of exile

“The reins no longer steer a horse. They navigate a memory.”

A metal Moroccan cart — a *koutchi* from Casablanca dated 1978, once pulled by a horse and then a donkey — becomes a haptic interface. The visitor grips real leather reins, wired to tension sensors, and travels in VR through a generative city of **six stations, six eras, one same gesture: to hold, to pull, to cross**. From the old medina to the port of transit, each threshold carries a cart-driver's voice, in four languages (French, English, Arabic, Tifinagh).

KOUTCHI places its navigation within a precise lineage — Debord's *dérive*, Bachelard's oneiric space, Halbwachs's collective memory, Ricoeur's trace — turning it into a **psychogeography of exile**. Its finding: nothing advances without real effort, and the closer one gets to the rupture, the harder the reins become to pull; the body re-enacts the wrenching of departure. At each station a thermal ticket prints — doomed to fade with time, like memory itself.

02 • COOPERATIVE ARCADE CABINET • 2026

DERB.EXE — The Ghost OS Running Moroccan Culture

Terminal 001: Atlas Berber Defender

“These forms are not relics; they are programs.”

What if zellige, the carpet and darija were not relics but **programs** — an operating system that has run in Morocco for centuries? *DERB.EXE* makes that hypothesis, and the arcade cabinet becomes its terminal. With *Atlas Berber Defender*, you do not consume images: you *execute* heritage.

The work makes cooperation its condition of entry: you play **two players, shoulder to shoulder**, and the ultimate mechanic — the **Baraka**, grace — is impossible alone. Each game weaves a unique generative carpet, signed by a seven-digit *seed*; then the system forgets. Neither nostalgia nor reconstruction: an **interactive archaeology** in which a territory's memory is replayed, altered, erased. Cooperative from age eight, with no account and no data collection.

03 • VIRTUAL REALITY • EVOLVING METAVERSE • 2024

Medina Cybercity

The virtual medina, mirror of a youth in transition

The traditional medina is reborn as a cybernetic city: ancient derbs, futuristic neon, speculative architecture. The work presents itself as a first “**brick of pixels**” — a core meant to grow into a full metaverse. Like **Moroccan youth**, this medina is at times structured, at times unstructured: a **third space** where tradition and modern aspirations coexist.

Often young audiences' first VR encounter, the work serves as initiation as much as aesthetics. Between science fiction and urban memory, it questions how a generation inhabits, at once, a dense past and an open horizon.

04 • INTERACTIVE IMMERSIVE INSTALLATION • 2022

The Augmented Cube

When the body becomes the interface

A cubic architecture in which spectators' movements **modulate sound and image in real time** — to the point of the sensation of *touching sonic matter itself*. At the heart of the cube, an interactive canvas of white lines, minimal and infinite in its connections, responds to the presence of bodies.

The Augmented Cube erases the controller, the mouse, the touchscreen: here, the body commands, and the visitor becomes the instrument of the work. The device extends a research into the **embodied interface** — against the abstraction of digital tools, it makes interaction intuitive, physical, shareable. An interactive odyssey where the real and the virtual intertwine.

Phyta — Living Zellige

The plant is the author, the human is the witness

“The plant is the author; the human is the witness.”

A living plant, a patch of electrodes, an acquisition board: its **micro bio-electrical variations** write a **generative zellige** in real time, modulate an ambient sound composition, and light up a controller like a slab of precious stones. The plant does not illustrate the image: **it writes it**.

Phyta is a deliberately **non-anthropocentric** gesture of interaction design: it cedes aesthetic initiative to the living and imposes its tempo — slow, contemplative. By linking an organism's conductance to the grammar of zellige, the work brings biology, heritage and code into dialogue: an ecology of attention, where to look is to accept the rhythm of a being that does not count time as we do.

THE WORD_BROKER

The algorithmic stock market of speech

“Here, you don't speak to be heard; you speak to be quoted.”

“In the attention economy, silence is a dead loss.”

Two intercoms from the 1970s, hacked, turned into **linguistic trading terminals**. The visitor speaks a sentence; the machine detects the monetizable words, assigns them to market categories and prints an invoice: *total speech value* — and, at the bottom of the ticket, this line: “No refunds on privacy.”

Created with **Gatien Leclère**, the work adopts a “**Dirty Tech**” aesthetic — red LEDs, exposed wiring — to dissect the **attention economy** and the *datafication* of the smallest scrap of intimacy. By literally trading in the voice, it makes a usually invisible mechanism tangible: the conversion of human expression into a financial asset. An embodied — not illustrated — critique of surveillance capitalism.

Leave Me a Message

The voice that remains

“Please leave me a message...”

Once essential, telephone booths have vanished from the urban landscape. *Leave Me a Message* gathers their echo: a **parallel circuit** where one leaves a ten-second voice message, made **visible on fabric**, like a nomadic sound capsule. The work takes a memory-fragment-collecting approach and revalues a telecommunication object otherwise destined for the scrapheap.

A work of trace and intimacy, it turns the recorded voice into an affective fossil and questions what technology leaves behind: those infrastructures of connection we stop using before we measure their loss. *Leave Me a Message* was presented at the Athens Digital Arts Festival (ADAF).

Three works that turn the data of the living and the climate into sensible matter

Data Rug · Lost Echo · Wind Echoes

08 · GENERATIVE ART · LIVE CLIMATE DATA · DEDICATED CREATION · 2026

Data Rug — Euro-Africa Edition

The carpet of Casablanca · 地毯成为城市

“A datum becomes a thread. A climate becomes a pattern. A city becomes a carpet.”

Amazigh carpets have encoded information in their patterns for centuries. *Data Rug* takes up that logic with contemporary data: a **generative carpet woven live**. Temperature chooses the color, humidity varies the density of the pattern, wind sets the speed of the weaving — a living tableau that never repeats.

The work summons a lineage the history of technology knows well: from the **Jacquard loom** — a recognized ancestor of the computer, programmed by punched cards — to today's code. For the Biennale, a Euro-Africa edition weaves the climates of both shores into a single cloth. A centerpiece of the climate axis, it belongs to the **materialization of data**. Kamel Ghabte stands here as a *craftsman weaver of data*.

09 · SOUND AND VISUAL SCULPTURE · 2024 · CLIMATE AXIS

Lost Echo

The satellite dish that tells

A satellite dish, alone, on a rotating base, connected to nothing visible: a relic of an era when these antennas were windows onto distant horizons and bridges between families. By **turning it**, the visitor captures fragments of a bygone time — a family gathered around the television set, presenters' voices, the clink of utensils.

A time machine that **awakens to the touch**, *Lost Echo* treats the soundscape as a **living archive** and questions our connection to others in an age of faster but sometimes less personal communication. A sculpture at once melancholic and political, it links human memory and the memory of territories.

10 · INTERACTIVE SOUND INSTALLATION · ART & RENEWABLE ENERGY · 2024 · CLIMATE AXIS

Wind Echoes — Slow-tech

Breath made perceptible

“Every gust of wind is a unique note.”

A weather station on a tripod, an anemometer, a Raspberry Pi: **wind, temperature and humidity** compose a live organic melody, **with no human intervention whatsoever**. *Wind Echoes* shifts environmental data from the dashboard to sensible experience — perhaps the condition for a climate empathy.

Claiming a **slow-tech** approach, the work invites us to slow down and listen to nature: it makes an invisible datum audible and turns renewable energy not into an argument but into **music**.

Zellige Arcade

Mediation through play

“A zellige tessera is the ancestor of the pixel.”

Heritage as a playable work: the audience scans a **QR code** and composes, together and in real time, a collective piece — **with no app and no account**. Eleven games, from the zellige constellation to the collective rhythm machine, from calligraphy to the 8-bit caravan. The principle is constant: **no game is won alone**.

Extending a long-standing research into zellige as a *system of rules* rather than ornament, *Zellige Arcade* is the **mediation** asset of the proposal: accessible, multilingual, free, requiring no equipment beyond the visitor's phone.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kamel Ghabte

A French-Moroccan digital artist, he works between **Casablanca and Bordeaux**. His practice — interaction design, creative coding, immersive scenography, AR/VR/XR — explores the intersections of cultural heritage and immersive technologies: Amazigh geometry, Arabic calligraphy, data-art and tangible interfaces give body to memory. A teacher and the author of *Creative Coding Morocco*, he regularly shows his work at international digital art festivals.

In **2020**, he won an **ADAF Award** at the **Athens Digital Arts Festival**, in the online category, for his project **Technotribalism**.

“I look for the point where the ancient gesture meets the pixel — where the hand that held the reins still holds something of us.”