Imperial Morocco

Featuring
The 6th Marrakech Biennial

MARCH 8–19, 2016
Dear Member,

I invite you to discover a land of towering mountains, sweeping deserts, royal cities, and bustling medinas on this custom-designed journey through Morocco. Begin in Rabat with visits to the millennia-old Oudaya Kasbah and enjoy a curator-led tour through the Mohammed VI Museum for Modern and Contemporary Art (MMVI), the country’s first museum of contemporary art, which opened last year. Take in L’appartement 22, an independent space and artist residency, and see Zaha Hadid’s Grand Theatre, currently being constructed.

In nearby Fez, a World Heritage Site and the only medieval Arab city that’s still intact, explore the medina’s ancient palaces and hidden gardens, visit with an Islamic calligrapher, and tour the Dar Batha Museum—a magnificent Andalusian-Moorish building in Fez that houses a collection of superb traditional art including embroideries, carpets, sculptures, jewelry, coins, and pottery. Spend the night in a luxury tented camp in the Sahara Desert and watch a traditional Berber cultural performance under star-filled skies.

In Marrakech, explore its famed bazaar, meet with artists and artisans, visit the privately owned Maison de la Photographie, see the beautiful Bahia Palace and the 12th-century minaret of the Koutoubia Mosque, and explore exhibitions at the Marrakech Biennale—a celebration of creativity in a city that has been the focus of artistic exploration for centuries.

Space on this program is limited, and early reservations are encouraged. I do hope that you can join us.

Sincerely,

Aleksandra Matic
Associate Director of Member Travel

Art Institute Study Leader

Regina Mamou is a visual artist and contemporary art lecturer working at the intersection of photography, installation, and research practices. Mamou holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She received a Fulbright fellowship to Jordan and has traveled extensively throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in Makan Art Space (Amman, Jordan), Action Field Kodra (Thessaloniki, Greece), and the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (New York City), among others. Between 2006 and 2014, Mamou worked in museum education at the Art Institute of Chicago, where she lectured on a wide variety of art and special exhibitions. She continues to lead international travel programs for the Art Institute of Chicago and currently works as a lecturer for Art Muse Los Angeles. As an artist-cum-educator, she has a specialization in art that focuses on geographical and sociopolitical issues at a global level. Mamou lives and works in Los Angeles and Chicago.

This travel program is specially designed for Art Institute members. For more information or to become a member, please phone the Member Travel Department at (312) 443-3115.
Tuesday, March 8

Independent departures to Casablanca

Wednesday, March 9: Casablanca/Rabat

Drive to the stately capital city of Rabat, Morocco’s third-largest city. It’s a place where Moroccan history spectacularly collides with modern life and the country’s European roots weave themselves through its African heritage. In the afternoon, stroll through the cobblestone alleys of the millennia-old Oudaya Kasbah, a former lair of Barbary Coast corsairs, containing a beautiful Andalusian garden. Just a short walk up the hill, the vibrancy of the kasbah disappears into an enveloping history as remains of the old Roman city appear out of the earthy hills in the gardens of Sala Colonia in Chellah. Visit the colonial center and stop at the ornate mausoleum for modern Morocco’s “father,” Mohamed V, set on the grounds of a ruined mosque that dates back to the 12th century.

Enjoy a welcome cocktail at the hotel this evening followed by a gourmet dinner.

Spend the night at Villa Mandarine, the city’s premier boutique hotel, located in the Agdal diplomatic enclave beyond town. Each room opens up to a lush garden. (L, D)

Thursday, March 10: Rabat

This morning, visit the country’s first museum of contemporary art—the Mohammed VI Museum for Modern and Contemporary Art. The museum’s first exhibition, 1914–2014: 100 Years of Creation, explores a century of Moroccan artworks with over 400 pieces by 200 Moroccan artists, including Hassan Hajjaj, Safaa Erruas, Younes Rahmoun, Meriem Meziane, Tayeb Lahlou, and Ahmed Yacoubi.

Enjoy lunch at the Center for Cross-Cultural Learning, a private cultural institution founded and directed by Moroccan academics, and hear a lecture on Morocco’s artistic heritage.

After lunch, stop at L’appartement 22, a small independent space and artist residency. Founded in 2002 by Abdellah Karroum—now director of Mathaf, Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha—L’appartement 22 provides a platform for Morocco’s rising talents. The space has become a springboard for cultural activity around the country. Stop to look at Zaha Hadid’s Grand Theatre, currently being built in the city.

Dinner this evening is at local favorite Le Ziryab. (B, L, D)

Friday, March 11: Fez

Drive east two hours to the imperial city of Meknes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This 17th-century capital offers a fusion of color, culture, and history. Enjoy lunch at Villa des Pins, a manor set among vast olive and fruit tree groves.

After lunch, visit the tomb of great sultan Moulay Ismail. The entry room leads to the first of several interconnected open-air courtyards, where intricately carved plaster and delicately patterned zellij tiles adorn the walls.

In the midafternoon, drive a short distance to the vast ruins of Volubilis, the region’s commercial capital up to the third century. The Appian Way runs through these ruins along the paved stones of a road begun in 312 B.C.
Close by is the Chateau Roslane, the main production facility of Celliers de Meknes, Morocco’s largest winery. Enjoy a private tour and wine tasting.

Next, continue to the fabled city of Fez, Morocco’s 1,200-year-old spiritual capital, containing over 9,000 narrow streets and alleyways.

Spend your night at the Riad Fez, located in the medina and set in a magnificent palace combining the ancient and modern. The newer quarters offer a more contemporary atmosphere that remains unmistakably Moroccan. In addition to four harmoniously styled patios, the hotel boasts panoramic roof views of the sun rising over the Medina of Fez and the Atlas Mountains.

Enjoy dinner at the hotel. (B, L, D)

**Saturday, March 12: Fez**

After breakfast, meet for a lecture on preserving the medina. David Amster, director of the city’s Arab Language Centre, has lived in the Medina of Fez for more than a decade. He is passionate about ensuring that any renovation be completed to the same standards achieved by the original craftsmen. His work focuses on microreparation, and much of it is aimed at correcting badly done repairs of the modern era.

Spend the balance of the day exploring Fez, a World Heritage Site and the only medieval Arab city that’s still completely intact. Begin with 9th-century Fez. The centerpiece of the city’s extraordinary cultural and intellectual heritage is the Al-Karaouine University and its mosque (A.D. 859). Regarded as the oldest continuously used center of learning, Al-Karaouine is just one of dozens of medieval religious schools in Fez that reflect the achievements of the Islamic faith.

For lunch, visit Riad Idrissy, a project of John Twomey and designer Robert Johnstone. Accessed through a courtyard adorned with stunning mosaics, traditional zellij tiles, and stucco work, its four suites have been furnished with antiques, carpets, and objets d’art from all over Morocco.

After lunch, explore Nejjarine Square and the Nejjarine Museum of Wood Arts and Crafts. Located near the carpenter district in the middle of the medina, this beautiful square is dotted with Andalusian-style architecture dating from the 18th century. The museum showcases woodworking tools along with a collection of woodwork and cabinetwork, both ancient and modern, from various regions in Morocco.

Later, visit the 14th-century Merenid Tombs, which house many sultans and other members of the Merenid dynasty.

Dinner is at the Maison Bleue, one of Morocco’s most highly-regarded traditional restaurants. (B, L, D)
Sunday, March 13: Fez

After breakfast, meet with Mohammed Charkaoui, an Islamic calligrapher who was first introduced to the art in primary school. Learn more about this art form and have an opportunity to practice it yourself.

Visit the Dar Batha Museum, originally built as the summer palace of the sultan Moulay Hassan at the end of the 19th century. The Dar Batha is a magnificent Andalusian-Moorish building in Fez that houses a collection of superb traditional art created by Fez craftsmen. The collection focuses on embroideries, carpets, sculptures, jewelry, and coins. The centerpiece is the pottery room, which contains superb astrolabes and ceramic objects.

Dinner this evening is at leisure. (B, L)

Monday, March 14: Erg Chigaga Dunes

Take a morning flight to Zagora (connecting in Casablanca), entry point for the vast Sahara Desert. Zagora’s fame as a desert outpost remains indelible.

After lunch at La Dromadaire Gourmand, head south to the end of the road and our luxury tented camp for the night. Stop en route at Tamegroute. The town has been a religious center since the 11th century, and the madrassa here still has about 400 students preparing for university. The accompanying Koranic library houses 4,200 original manuscripts on everything from mathematics and philosophy to astronomy and linguistics.

End the day surrounded by the peaks of Erg Chigaga, the largest sand sea in Morocco, snaking along the horizon for 40 kilometers and bordered to the north and south by mountain ranges. This sea of golden crescents that peak at 300 meters hides our wonderful camp for the night.

Overnight at Erg Chigaga Luxury Desert Camp. (B, L, D)

Tuesday, March 15: Atlas Mountains

Before breakfast, enjoy an early-morning walk and explore the majestic surrounding dunes. Afterward, depart the camp and travel northwest.

After lunch, drive to Aït Benhaddou. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a striking example of southern Moroccan architecture; the earthen-construction techniques date back over 1,000 years.

Stop at Telouet, a rambling and decaying Kasbah built in the 1800s by the Glaoui family, which ruled the Drâa Valley until Morocco’s independence in 1953. Never inhabited, its interior reveals mosaics and intricate woodwork that could compete with the Bahia Palace’s. Very few tourists visit it, and it is well worth the trip.

Overnight at Ksar Ighnda (B, L, D)
Wednesday, March 16: Marrakech

Cross over the Tizi n’Tichka pass, a spectacular drive with vistas of deep green dales with adobe hamlets below snow-covered peaks. As you descend to the northern slopes, turn back into the mountains along spectacular roads first, to the Ourika Valley and then the Kasbah Bab Ourika, located at the mouth of the Ourika Valley, which affords staggering vistas of the Atlas Mountains.

Take a walking tour through walnut-shaded terraced fields to local hamlets, observing village life and the fieldwork of the Berber tribesmen—Morocco’s indigenous inhabitants, nearly unchanged for centuries.

Arrive in Marrakech midafternoon and enjoy an excursion into its bazaars. Begin by crossing the old city’s residential quarters, with their traditional public bakeries and steam baths, to the Ben Youssef Medersa. The largest of the theological schools built by the Merinids, it was recently restored to its original splendor and is a masterpiece of Moroccan architecture.

Enjoy dinner and an overnight stay at Riad El Fenn. The stunning property is owned by Vanessa Branson—sister of Sir Richard Branson, a former London gallerist and founder of the Marrakech Biennale—which accounts for the hotel’s fantastic design and art collection. (B, L, D)

Thursday, March 17: Marrakech

Our time in Marrakech has been scheduled to take advantage of the 6th Marrakech Biennale, a celebration of creativity in a city that has been the focus of artistic exploration for centuries. Arts enthusiasts organize stimulating conferences, interactive events, and world-class exhibitions.

Spend the day exploring the various exhibition spaces of the biennial and enjoy a visit to the David Bloch Gallery, one of the leading contemporary galleries in Morocco. Based in Marrakech, the gallery is a platform for modern artists exploring innovative forms and aesthetics through a wide range of artistic media. Find everything from graffiti, sculpture, abstract pieces, and more figurative works.

Dinner and the evening are at leisure. (B, L)

Friday, March 18: Marrakech

Begin exploring Marrakech at the beautiful 12th-century minaret of the Koutoubia Mosque—Marrakech’s iconic landmark, visible for miles. From there, proceed to the Bahia Palace, a prime example of Moorish-Andalusian architecture. It exemplifies the transition from tradition to modernity in Moroccan architecture at the turn of the 19th century.
For lunch, head toward the palm groves just outside the city to Jnane Tamsna, a little paradise of tranquility and the private home and luxury resort of Meryanne and Gary Martin, an ethnobotanist. Mr. Martin will lead a tour of his garden—a natural paradise of aromatic herb gardens, olive groves, lemon trees, date palms, vegetable gardens, and ornamental flower beds. Learn about his work in a valley of the High Atlas Mountains, with its orchards and Berber villages, and the programs he spearheads as director of the Global Diversity Foundation.

Afterward, drive to the upscale neighborhood of Guéliz to visit the Majorelle Garden, named after its creator, Jacques Majorelle, a French-born artist who settled in Marrakech in 1919 to continue his career as a painter. Majorelle died in 1962, and the gardens remained unkept until 1980, when French fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent and his partner, Pierre Bergé, bought the property and restored it.

End the day at the Maison de la Photographie. This extraordinary collection of 3,500 photographs focuses on 19th- and 20th-century Morocco. Sip mint tea at the maison’s secret rooftop café, which offers the highest sweeping panoramic views of Marrakech—a perfect respite from the chaotic medina below.

Enjoy a festive farewell dinner on our last evening in Morocco. (B, L, D)

**Saturday, March 19: Marrakech**

Transfer to the airport for independent flights home.
PROGRAM COSTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Price: $7,240 per person
Single supplement: $2,390 per person

Group size is limited to 20 travelers.

DEPOSIT & FULL PAYMENT

A deposit of $1,000 per paying participant is required to guarantee participation in the program. Deposit may be made by credit card or by check payable to Distant Horizons. Final payment must be made by check or money order.

To confirm your space on this trip, please fill out and sign the accompanying application form and return it to the Art Institute’s Member Travel Department with your credit card information or a deposit check in the amount of $1,000 per person and a legible photocopy of the photo page of your passport.

Your deposit is refundable up to 90 days prior to departure, less a $500 per-person administration fee.

Travel insurance information will be mailed to you upon receipt of your deposit.

This travel program is specially designed for Art Institute members. For more information or to become a member, please phone the Member Travel department at (312) 443-3115.

Mail application to:
The Art Institute of Chicago
Member Travel Department
111 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60603

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Reservations and payments: Reservations for this tour require a deposit of $1,000 per person and an application form signed by the participant. Full balance of the trip cost is due upon receipt of invoice no later 90 days prior to departure.

Tour price includes: Educational program of lectures and discussions, airfare on internal flights between Fez and Zagora, accommodations in hotels as outlined in the itinerary based on double occupancy, all meals listed, one drink with lunch and one with dinner, gratuities, bottled water kept on the bus, sightseeing and excursions as listed, transportation in a deluxe motor coach, the services of a tour manager, local expert guide, and Art Institute study leader, and all basic gratuities. Airport transfers in Rabat and Marrakech for those meetings designated group transfers.

Tour cost is based on rates of currency exchange at time of printing (July 2015) and is subject to change with or without previous notice. If there is a price increase prior to the day of departure in the basic costs, such increases may be passed on to the participant.

Tour price does not include international airfare, meals not specified in the itinerary, personal items such as laundry, email, fax or telephone calls, liquor, room service, independent and private transfers, and excess luggage charges. Any increases in the in-tour airfare (included as part of the program cost), security, or fuel surcharges imposed after the initial pricing of this program are not included. Airfare is subject to change without notice by the airlines.

Cancellations: Distant Horizons and the Art Institute of Chicago reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure for any reason, including insufficient number of participants, and to decline to accept or retain any person as a participant at any time. Should this happen, refunds will be made without obligation, although we cannot be held responsible for any additional costs already incurred by participants. If a participant cancels, the following refunds will be available upon written notice of cancellation to Distant Horizons:

- Notice more than 90 days prior to departure
  a refund less a $500 cancellation charge
- Notice between 89 days and 60 days prior to departure
  a refund less 50% of trip price
- Notice between 59 days and 30 days prior to departure
  a refund less 75% of trip price
- No refund shall be issued if cancellation is received less than 30 days prior to departure date.
- No refund shall be issued after the tour has commenced.
- No refund shall be issued for occasional missed meals, sightseeing tours, or any unused services.

Air Carriers Contract: The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time tour members are on board their planes or conveyances. The passage contract in use by the airline concerned when the ticket is issued shall constitute the sole contract between the airline and the purchaser of these tickets and/or the passenger.

Responsibility: Distant Horizons and the Art Institute of Chicago act only in the capacity of agents for the hotels, airlines, bus companies, railroads, ship lines, or owners or contractors providing accommodations, transportation, or other services. As a result, all coupons, receipts, or tickets are issued subject to the terms and conditions specified by the supplier. By acceptance of tour membership, the participant agrees that neither Distant Horizons nor the Art Institute of Chicago nor any of their subsidiaries shall become liable for any additional expenses or liability sustained or incurred by the participant as a result of the above mentioned causes.

Tour participant acknowledges receipt of a copy of these terms and conditions and signifies acceptance of, and consents to, all of the terms and conditions set forth herein, on behalf of any participants they may act for and for themselves when registering for, or making payments on, this tour.

Waiver and Release: In order to participate in the travel program, you will be required to execute an Art Institute of Chicago Waiver and Release form that will be provided to you prior to departure.
Imperial Morocco
MARCH 8–19, 2016

Name (as listed on passport) Birth date

Name (as listed on passport) Birth date

Address

City State Zip code

Daytime phone/Cell phone Office

E-mail address Fax

$ Number of persons Amount enclosed

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Art Institute and Distant Horizons will do everything possible to satisfy requests to share a room for single tour members. On occasions when it is not possible, the single supplement will apply.

☐ I will share a room with ☐ I want a single room.

Deposit by: ☐ Visa, MasterCard, or American Express ☐ Check (payable to Distant Horizons)

Card number expiration (mm/yy)

I have read the terms and conditions and agree to abide by them.

Signature Date