

# **MOHAMED FARIJI**

## **portfolio**

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# biography

Mohamed Fariji was born and lives in Casablanca. He is a graduate of the Tetouan National Fine Arts Institute (Morocco), and the Lotja School of Art and Design, Barcelona (Spain). Fariji is a founding member of La Source du Lion, an artist collective and art space in Casablanca, Morocco. Seeking to respond to the local need for new production structures in Morocco, in 2011 Fariji founded the Atelier de l'Observatoire ([www.atelierobservatoire.com](http://www.atelierobservatoire.com)), which supports socially-engaged and research-based art practices, designed as a staging ground to foster and guide contemporary creation.

Fariji develops long-term artistic projects which question the role of the artist and the individual in shaping his/her city and environment. Working in a variety of media, he also questions the involvement of public officials and policy makers in this process. Fariji's conceptual works go hand in hand with civil action initiatives and grassroots environmentalism, which evolve over the course of his workshops, performances, or during the creation of participative site-specific works in the public space. His work questions the role artists play in cities, in power relations and in public institutions. Following on from his earlier project, 'The Imaginary Aquarium', which took as its subject the former aquarium of Casablanca, Fariji continues to collect traces of public spaces in Casablanca that have disappeared, or been forgotten or excluded from official discourse.

# projects

## THE COLLECTIVE MUSEUM

2015-present, mixed media

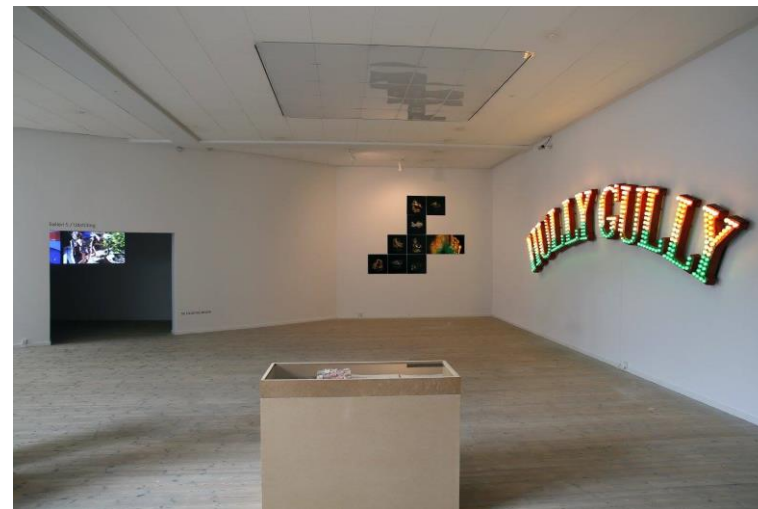


**The Respiro Carousel.** May 2016.

Recovered from the former Yasmina amusement park in Casablanca and restored by Fariji.

The Collective Museum consists of a series of acts of recovery and collection of documents, photographs, objects, films, and memories from family and intimate life in cities, and from abandoned or former public spaces linked to daily family life.

The Museum welcomes recovered objects and documents soon to disappear from view. It is regularly nourished by further collecting, salvaging and research, carried out through workshops, and by the artist, his collaborators and all those wishing to entrust their “memory-objects” or propose acts of collecting. This participative act is characterized by a will and desire for the creation of a collective memory. It is conceived as an alternative way of writing history, as an alternative to an “official history”, through a focus on collective and individual stories.



**Above : (L) Recovery action at the former Yasmina amusement park.**  
Casablanca, Morocco, 2015.

**(R) Exhibition at Kunsthal Aarhus, Denmark, 2016**

**Below : The Collective Museum: Madrassa. Mixed media vitrine, 2015.**



# THE GREENHOUSE

2012-present, installation



The Greenhouse is an open and participative ephemeral space measuring between 150m<sup>2</sup> and 200m<sup>2</sup>, installed in the public space. It seeks to support the development of new projects, voices and ideas in an environment sheltered from dominant visions, and independent of political, economic and social constraints.

The Greenhouse invites the general public, artists, students, researchers, cultural operators, scientists and local residents to collectively invest this shared space, to carry out and participate in meetings, screenings, listening sessions, project presentations, workshops, radio shows and other artistic interventions. The Greenhouse includes a library, a meeting and screening area, workshops, a photo studio, a listening point, and a small café with Wi-Fi and picnic rugs.

The project also includes the Mobile Greenhouse, a mobile eco-garden on three wheels, proposing itinerant workshops to introduce the Greenhouse to inhabitants of urban and rural areas, and to assist in the creation of eco-participative gardens.



(L) : Greenhouse at the Arab League Park. Casablanca, Morocco, 2015.

Workshops at the Greenhouse. Casablanca, Morocco, 2016.

(R) : Screening inside the Greenhouse. Casablanca, Morocco, 2015.





**The Mobile Greenhouse.** Casablanca, Morocco, 2015.

# THE IMAGINARY AQUARIUM

2014-16, mixed media



**Il neige sur Casablanca (It's Snowing in Casablanca).**

Water, wood, plexiglass, printing on plexiglass, 2014.

The Imaginary Aquarium takes the form of a collection of objects, posters, snow globes, pinball machines, puzzles, maps, real and fictional archives, reproductions and other new installations, collected and created by the artist which narrate an imaginary world of the former Casablanca Aquarium, closed to the public since the 1980s.

The proposition of an imaginary museum, blending symbols of the city of Casablanca and Moroccan aquatic life, finds its roots in the void left by the closure of aquarium, and in the possible pasts and futures of the space.

Through this aesthetic investigation, the artist engages in a discussion on repurposing abandoned public spaces, asserting the right of citizens to participate in their future.





(L) : **Replay**. Ceramic tiles, paint, mixed media on a pinball machine, 2014.  
 (R) : **L'Aqua-Dream**. Cylindric aquarium, babysharks, water, and decorative elements, 2014.



Sardines (Identity Card), 2016.





**The Cut**, Metal industrial pipes, water, 2014.



# MOROCCO

2005/2015, mixed media sculpture and installation



(L) : **Camouflage Pinball Machine.** Paint on pinball machine, 2015.

(R) : **Information Desk.** Resin, plexiglas, 2016.



**Puzzle. Paint on wood, 2005.**

# 1001 LIONS

2005, **sculpture**



Plaster moulds, 2005.

1001 Lions formed part of the Hermitage Park Project (2002-7), a group effort lead by the Source du Lion (an artist collective based in Casablanca), to rehabilitate the Hermitage Park gardens in Casablanca, Morocco, through performances, discussions, conferences, site specific works, publications, and interventions.

1001 Lions involved the creation of a scale model replica of the lion sculpture found in the park. It was Inaugurated in the presence of city officials, and a fictitious business was created allowing local residents to make 1000 miniature lions and trade in them, at the symbolic price of 5 dirhams, to their friends and neighbours.





Scale model replica, 2005.

# ATELIER DE L'OBSERVATOIRE

2012-, [www.atelierobservatoire.com](http://www.atelierobservatoire.com)



The Atelier de l'Observatoire is a Moroccan non-profit association co-founded by Fariji in 2011. The association designs, produces and disseminates projects conceived as tools to support Moroccan contemporary creation nationally, and internationally. It seeks to create the necessary conditions for projects unsuited to the current systems of artistic, academic and cultural production in the region to flourish, and to present these projects to a Moroccan and international audience, bringing together artists, researchers and the general public.

The Atelier de l'Observatoire works in and around the city of Casablanca, with artists, students, researchers and local, regional and international institutions. It experiments with alternative methodology through educational programs, support for emerging artists, research programs, and participative art projects in the public space, rural locations and on city outskirts. The proposed research contexts and circumstances take the form of long-term projects, in constant renewal.

# MOHAMED FARJI C.V.

Born in 1966 in Casablanca, Morocco. Lives and works in Casablanca.

## // EDUCATION:

2002: Master of Fine Arts, sculpture, Escola de la Llotja, Barcelona, Spain

1991: Bachelor of Fine Arts, Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Tétouan, Morocco

## // SOLO EXHIBITIONS (selection):

2017:

Collective Gallery, Edinburgh

2016:

*Collective Museum: Sharjah*, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE

*The Greenhouse: Jardin des Brigittines*, Brussels, Belgium

*The Greenhouse: Hay Mohammedi*, Casablanca, Morocco

*The Greenhouse: Marrakech Biennale*, Morocco

*Collective Museum: Algiers*, a.r.i.a artist residency, Algeria

2015:

*Collective Museum: Madrassa*, Thinkart, Casablanca, Morocco

*The Greenhouse: Arab League Park*, Casablanca, Morocco



2014:

*L'Aquarium Imaginaire (The Imaginary Aquarium)*, Galerie Fatma Jellal, Casablanca, Morocco

*Urban Gardens*, Centre Culturel Sidi Moumen, Casablanca, Morocco

## // GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection):

Something to Generate from, Kunstal Aarhus, Denmark (2016)

*Partir*, Atelier 21, Casablanca, Morocco (2016)

*Moroccan Touch*, Atelier 21, Casablanca, Morocco (2015)

*50 ans d'art contemporain marocain*, Mohamed VI Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rabat, Morocco (2014)

*Flag*, Atelier 21, Casablanca, Morocco (2014)

*Maroc 20*, Parallel program, Marrakech 5th Biennale, Morocco (2014)

Festival La Mar de Músicas, Cartagena, Spain (2010)

*Sacré Cœur*, Casablanca, Morocco (2008)

Espace Actua, Casablanca, Morocco (2007)

FAD, Barcelona, Spain (2002)

Artothèque de Schiedam / Weeshuis-Regentkammer, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2002)

Galerie Mc2, Bordeaux, France (1997)

## // AWARDS (selection):

Winner of the Visual and Performing Arts Grant from the Arab Fund for Art and Culture (2015)

Jury Prize, 5th International Contest of Ice Sculpture, Pas de la Casa, Andorra (2001)

First prize for the 50th anniversary of the National Fine Arts School of Tetouan, Morocco (1997)

## // ART SPACES:

2011-present: Co-founder and co-director of the Atelier de l'Observatoire: an art and research workshop and residency, Morocco.  
[www.atelierobservatoire.com](http://www.atelierobservatoire.com)

2003-2011: Creation and direction of Divers, espai de creació i mediació artística, a workshop and art space fostering creative diversity and artistic mediation in Barcelona, Spain.

1996: Founding Member of La Source du Lion, an artist collective and art space in Casablanca, Morocco.  
[www.lasourcedulion.com](http://www.lasourcedulion.com)

## // LINKS:

[The Imaginary Aquarium](#), article published in Ibraaz (2014)

[Mohamed Fariji rend hommage au légendaire Aquarium de Casablanca](#), article published in Telquel (2014)

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