**Marrakech plays down Arab Spring**

**Event is strong on site-specific works but weak on political engagement**

The Marrakech Biennale marks the 25th anniversary of the 1986-1987 student protests in Morocco, and artists working at Marrakech have evolved into a wider context for art. This year's event featured performances, installations, and the first major art show in a new gallery in the city. The spectrum is a particular focus this year, with a group of artists and策者 (curators) under the label "Habibi" (until 30 Nov), which attempt to create an "inclusive" and "transdisciplinary" space, and also to be "conscious of the socio-political context." Virtually all of the artists in the show are from the Arab world (three are Moroccan) and have worked on shows that were curated and created in situ and produced in collaboration with local producers. The curators made sure to include the two sites that has been under wild fires in recent years, and they have also worked on projects that were created in the city and in the region. The biennale is an opportunity to create an international biennial that responds to the region, rather than being a series of local events. Contemporary art permeates the city in a way that is not seen anywhere else. There are artists who have been working in the city and in the region, but the biennale is a way to showcase the work of local artists and to create a space for them to be seen.