

French Colonial Art Education in Morocco

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French art education in the Protectorate of Morocco (1912-1956) played a major role in supporting the colonial agenda in this North African country. The tendency to locate Moroccan art production within an explanatory frame of fine arts—understood in its narrowest sense—and with little or no reference to the larger political and economic conditions of its production, has led a number of contemporary Moroccan art historians and critics to offer only partial explanations of the country's art production during this important and formative period. In attempting to address the formation of Moroccan art production, my aim is to provide, instead, some wider parameters by focusing on art education in relation to the much larger economic and social processes of craft industry. This essay draws mainly from archival material that, up till this date, has not been published in either book form or essays.

The Two Publics: The Medinas and Villes Nouvelles

A major policy of French rule in Morocco was to segregate Moroccans in the old medinas (Moroccan walled cities) from the French and European communities in the villes nouvelles (or colonial settlements). To keep Moroccans separate from the French necessitated the strengthening of their traditional craft economy, involving the leather industry, carpet weaving, embroidery, pottery, metal and brass smithing, wood and stone sculpting, ceramics, and tile making. To this end, the Protectorate Administration reorganized Moroccan craft workshops and shifted their control from the traditional guilds to officials in the French administration. This reorganization also led to the formation of generations of Moroccan craftsmen trained in vocational trade schools introduced by the French, who adopted French recommendations as well as their modes of production. The French calculated that the vocational schools would prepare Moroccans to develop their sector of the economy in the medinas and gain economic independence, thus keeping them separate from the French larger colonial plans for the development of the Protectorate. Once they had graduated, students introduced French techniques and work habits into the medinas' workshops where they were employed.

However, to secure a lasting control of the workshops, the Protectorate had to assure continuous enrolment in the vocational schools. This necessitated the creation, within the Service of Youth and Sports, of a system of open workshops that recruited unschooled Moroccan children throughout the country and introduced them to drawing and painting as a hobby. It assumed that they would eventually enroll in the vocational schools.

The development of the *villes nouvelles*, next to the old medinas, and the new colonial cities of Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakesh, Fez, Meknes and others, required a trained Moroccan labor force able to work in the new building trades required by the new European forms of architecture and building construction. The Casablanca School of Fine Arts, created for this purpose, enrolled Moroccan high school graduates and channeled them into applied art sections where they specialised in professions such as carpentry, architectural drawing, related to industries needed for developing the *villes nouvelles*. As I have shown elsewhere,¹ these educational institutions performed an instrumental role in diffusing French colonial cultural hegemony throughout the colonial society. In addition, field studies and administrative reports, written by French scholars as well as colonial men and women administrators also maintained this hegemony. All of these officials embraced the colonial agenda of the Protectorate while claiming to sympathize with the Moroccans. The scholars judged Moroccan crafts as being inferior to French art, thus legitimizing their reorganization. However, there are chastening examples in which these schools and scholars selectively segregated Moroccan from both the French and Europeans. Their motive was not to educate Moroccans so that they could compete fairly with the French or Europeans, but to produce a subordinate work force that served the interest of the colonial state. However accomplished, whether directly or indirectly, such action smacked of “manifest destiny,” and today would be labeled as racist. I conclude by examining the role played by Moroccan artists in creating a counter art culture that has resisted the French art paradigm and contributed to cultural decolonization.

Moroccan scholarship on the formation of the country’s visual culture has, in my view, been quite simplistic in restricting its focus to the field of the “fine arts,” conceived in a narrow and also unproblematized way that pays insufficient attention to the historical development of that concept. This essay proposes a more nuanced position. It call for the examination of the various French colonial institutions and individuals who managed these art schools and their curricula, and the ways in which each responded and embraced the colonial agenda. In the pages that follow I provide a short historical background on the establishment of the Protectorate and some discussion of the colonial concepts through which the French achieved their colonial hegemony over Morocco. This is followed by a discussion of contemporary Moroccan scholarship on Moroccan art production. I then provide an analysis of the aims of French colonial art education.

The Establishment of French Colonial Hegemony over Morocco

Until the turn of the twentieth century Morocco was to remain the last North African nation not to fall under colonial rule. The European conquest of North Africa had begun with the colonization of Algeria in 1830. Tunisia became a French Protectorate in 1881. Beginning in the nineteenth century France, Spain, and Germany had all shown a keen interest in colonizing Morocco be-

cause of its strategic position, rich resources, and potential trade. Morocco's resistance could be explained by its topography, which deterred invasion, and by the country's powerful ethnic groups, which formed its army and also proved to be a potent fighting force against foreign invaders. On the other hand, the Moroccan Sultans also had enough diplomatic skill to play off the European powers against each other, even though they lacked a sound economic policy. However, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Sultans failed to obtain steady sources of revenue and were forced to rely on French banks for loan in exchange for concessions, primarily consisting of commercial privileges and immunity from Moroccan laws being granted to foreigners (or protégés).

Under the rule of Sultan Moulay Abdel 'Aziz (r. 1894-1908) the crisis increased; he failed to introduce the needed economic reforms or to revitalize the Makhzen (the Moroccan government and administration). Instead, he relied on European, particularly French, banks and business firms, for advice. In 1906, the Algeciras conference, attended by the European colonial powers, pressured Morocco to open its internal markets for international trade. In 1904 France acknowledged Spain's interests in northern Morocco. Three years later, in 1907, a large number of Moroccan ethnic groups rebelled against the hegemonic power of the European protégés and banks, as well as the heavy taxes imposed by the Makhzen. In the same year, under the pretext of protecting French residents and their properties, General Hubert Lyautey (who became the first Resident General of the Protectorate of Morocco, 1912-1925) intervened with French troops from Algeria and, subsequently, occupied Casablanca and Oujda. Within a year, he had assisted Moulay Hafid in deposing his brother, Moulay 'Abel 'Aziz. Over the next four years, France concluded secret agreements with England and Germany in preparation for the occupation of Morocco. On March 30, 1912, Lyautey surrounded the capital city, Fez, and forced Sultan Moulay Hafid (r. 1908-1912) to sign the Treaty of Fez. In this way, France established its "Protectorate" over two-thirds of Morocco's territory, with Spain controlling the remaining one third in the north and the Sahara in the south.

Lyautey established the beginnings of French hegemony over Morocco. He introduced a set of reforms which were put in place by a large group of French colonial administrators and others whom he had carefully summoned from the metropole, Algeria, and Tunisia. These included military men, scholars, bureaucrats, urbanists, educators, and financiers, among others. These colonial officials were to create a base for a colonial infrastructure that was ultimately to infiltrate Moroccan society. This group succeeded in initiating a passive revolution in Morocco by following the Tunisian, not the Algerian, model of government and, as a result, transformed Morocco from a "Protectorate" into what the French historian, Charles-André Julien, has called a "nominal" colony.² The French controlled the military, police, and finances, the offices of trade, agriculture, and the colonization of new land; they were also in charge of education, health, public works, Fine Arts, the protection of historical monuments, and urbanism

(including urban planning), as well as municipal, postal, and civil control services. As for the Moroccans, they managed the *Habous* (pious foundations for religious or charitable purposes), the *domaines* (administration controlling land and estate), religious education and institutions, and the local justice system. This reorganization allowed Lyautey to exercise colonial power over Moroccan society through consensus rather than through force and coercion while, at the same time, claiming to respect local customs and culture.³

The Protectorate of Morocco well illustrates the Lyautean paradigm of peaceful colonization. The French colonial historian, André Colliez, in providing an explanation for this paradigm, explains that “France colonized [Morocco] not with a ruler and a square but through the help of [native] men and the local environment.”⁴ The resulting recomposition of Moroccan society signaled the passage of power from the historical block of the *Makhzen*, to the French Protectorate Administration.⁵ The hegemonic theoretical model has been used by a number of North African and French scholars and applied to case studies in sociology, history, and political science.⁶ This paradigm has yet to be developed in relation to French art education in Morocco.

Yet, how were these mechanisms employed to bring about this passive conquest based on the example of Tunisia, as opposed to the direct colonization of Algeria? There the French had attempted to completely assimilate the Algerians by obliterating the traditional social structures and culture. What were the colonial strategies deployed by the Protectorate to mobilize and absorb the different aspects of Morocco’s precolonial craft industry, as well as the Moroccan male and female labor force, into France’s political ideology and hegemonic culture? To what extent did the Protectorate’s reform of the guilds, craft and fine art education impinge on the Moroccans? How did it mold them into the Protectorate’s productive forces and, subsequently, produce a distinctively colonial visual culture? And to what extent were these developments and techniques influenced by those already in use in the metropole and in other colonial empires?

Michael W. Doyle, a student of empires, has observed that imperial rule could be “formal” or “informal.” Whereas formal imperial rule relied on direct colonization, informal rule could be achieved when a state controlled another state through political and economic collaboration, and cultural dependence.⁷ The Protectorate of Morocco exemplifies a case of informal rule. In Morocco, Lyautey was to provide the French administrators with what Edward Said has called a “structure of attitude and reference.”⁸ French soldiers, orientalist, explorers, archaeologists, ethnographers, historians, real estate speculators, and profiteers, all charted the country, each through a discourse that confirmed already known data or created new ones in order to incorporate the different aspects of Moroccan historical, social, economic, and cultural fields into the French colonial vision. The resulting scholarship created a discourse of both discovery and confirmation, a discourse and form of knowledge that was to become an authoritative form of reference on which the Protectorate Administration was

to rely in order to manage Moroccan affairs.

Lyautey's colonial experience in Algeria had prepared him well for the Moroccan task. The experience transformed him into what contemporary French historian, Daniel Rivet, has categorized as a colonial "alchemist," one who knew how to operate "a synthesis made of contraries."⁹ In his attempt to control the Makhzen, he created an opposition between the *bled al-Makhzen* or the urban centers, which were considered Arab, and the *bled al-Siba*, the countryside, considered Berber. Lyautey hypothesized that the Berbers might remain free from the grip of Islam's tenets, be more open minded than the Muslim Arabs and stay closer to the Europeans in race and in temperament. The Berbers, hence, needed to be shielded from Arab contamination; the only way to do this was through the practice of what Julien has called a "cultural greenhouse."¹⁰ This attempt to draw the Berbers into French culture pressured the Moroccan Sultans to collaborate and submit to French demands from fear that the rural groups would ally with the French against the Makhzen. The opposition between the *bled al-Makhzen* and the *bled al-Siba* is reflected in the French analysis of the country's craft production.

Lyautey's experience in Morocco also transformed the colonial cultural politics of the French Empire from within. He deemed that in Morocco, French colonial politics should no longer "found" new institutions but "restore" older ones.¹¹ Preserving the old medinas and keeping the different Moroccans segregated from the French settlers, while allowing them to gain economic independence would, Lyautey calculated, keep them from interfering in the French designs for the colony.

Eventually, he helped Moroccans to partially achieve their economic independence by strengthening their traditional economy, which generally consisted of craft manufacturing, so that it could meet the challenge of the modern market. Lyautey mobilized the Moroccan traditional economy through fragmentation, reduction, and the suppression of the traditional power that monitored the guilds, namely, the *amin* (head of the guild) and the *muhtasib* (market inspector). Lyautey and the Residents after him deemed that whatever was not useful to the politics of the Protectorate government were unproductive, or possibly dangerous. Without doubt the reforms of Morocco's traditional craft industry consisted in sustaining the guilds sufficiently so that Moroccans could manage their local sector without reliance on the French. They were busy transforming the Atlantic facade of Morocco . *l'américaine*, particularly in Casablanca, Rabat, and Fedala (today's Mohammedia) and encouraging French capital to relocate from the metropole to the Protectorate.

The following statistics from *Afrique Française*, the monthly journal and propaganda organ of the Protectorate government, illustrate how the French projected the image of Morocco as a rich "petite Amérique" and as a lucrative market.¹² From 1913 to 1915, Morocco exported to the metropole 52.964.007 francs worth of wheat, barley, beans, chickpeas, corn, eggs, almonds, spices, wax, gum arabic,

leather, and wool. It imported 218.002.995 francs worth of tea, sugar, candles, wine, dried and canned meat, fish, and vegetables, shoes, cotton and silk fabrics, petroleum for industrial and domestic consumption, papers, books, soap, shopping bags, sheet metals, iron and wood for construction and carpentry, hardware supplies, furniture, automobiles, trucks, and rails.¹³ Ten years after the establishment of the Protectorate, Morocco's export and import exchange with France grossed 237.466.425 francs and 777.675.725 francs respectively, or a total of 1.015.142.154 francs.¹⁴

Meanwhile, during World War I, the Protectorate proved to be a vital source of supplies. In addition to 23,380 Moroccan soldiers it contributed to the French army,¹⁵ Morocco provided the metropole with food supplies consisting of wheat, barley, and corn. Moroccan wool—particularly the “aboudia” type which “equalled France's finest wool”—and animal skins equipped the French army at the European front with the necessary raw material for clothing and shoes.¹⁶

Morocco's wealth, however, was not limited to agriculture. The metropole found in the Protectorate a wealth of fish of which 24.5 million kilograms were exported to France in 1936. Fish exploitation launched the construction of twenty-four factories and eight canning shops, mainly in the Atlantic regions, that employed 6,000 workers. Morocco's wealth also consisted of mines, including phosphate (exploited from 1921), iron, lead, zinc, manganese, and cobalt.¹⁷ The French helped the Moroccans develop their traditional craft industry based on French reforms of the guilds in order to fully concentrate on furthering agricultural and mine exploitation.

Reforms of Moroccan guilds involved politicians, administrators, industrialists and, to a large extent, Moroccans, all of whom contributed consciously or unconsciously to establishing an expanded definition of the nature of craft, its relation to art, and its social role. It should be noted that the Protectorate educators mobilized these concepts and drew pedagogical guidelines for the vocational trade schools, the open workshops, and the Casablanca School of Fine Arts. It is my argument that, only by obtaining insights into these reforms and the ensuing colonial discourse they engendered, can we gain an insight into how the French constructed their value judgments vis-à-vis Moroccan crafts in particular and Moroccan visual culture in general.

Mustering Morocco's traditional industry to the Protectorate's guidelines was accomplished with the assistance of the Makhzen. French sociologist, Jacques Berques, has noted that historically the Makhzen relied on keeping a stable balance among rivals forces in an “eternal movement of swing.”¹⁸ It is, therefore, understandable that the Makhzen opposed some French reforms deemed to violate its desire of maintaining this social balance. Hence, the extent to which French colonial power dominated Moroccan society was partially contingent upon the degree to which it was checked by the Makhzen as well as the way it was divided between the Moroccans and the French. The disparity in power between the French and the Moroccans, indeed, must be taken into account if

we wish to accurately understand the making of colonial visual culture, including crafts—subjects which, as I will point out, have remained undiscussed by postcolonial Moroccan art historians and theoreticians. What I am suggesting also is that the relationship between the French and the Moroccans should not be regarded solely as an unequal relationship between unequal parties, between the protector and the protected. To locate the essence of the Protectorate, we need to define this relationship as a dynamic between two interlocutors. We also need to see it as a point of entry into studying the formation and meaning of particular visual cultural practices which, as we will witness, would either be adopted or rejected by today's Moroccan artists.

Contemporary Moroccan Scholarship on Moroccan Art Production

The kind of art education that is briefly investigated is precisely that which opens in a variety of ways onto the domain of Moroccan artistic culture as a whole, including fine arts education as well as craft training. To state the case slightly differently, the art education, which I focus on and, in certain instances, work to bring to the foreground, not only acknowledges but embraces crafts as a major form of Moroccan art production.

The growing corpus of contemporary literature by Moroccans on local art production is largely predicated upon the denial of such artistic expression. Additionally, the literature overlooks the larger political and colonial conditions. The prevailing view is that art production in Morocco in the past hundred years has been the outcome of the country's contact with Western artists. Abdelkebir Khatibi, a sociologist and literary critic, for example, argues that the work of European artists such as Eugène Delacroix, Henri Matisse, Paul Klee and Nicolas de Staël who visited Morocco in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries has been particularly influential in contributing to the construction of local art.¹⁹ Brahim Alaoui, Curator at the Paris Institut du Monde Arabe, agrees, claiming that European colonists introduced modern painting throughout the Arab world beginning with the colonial expansion in the early twentieth century. In Morocco, such contact resulted in the formation of an art that has followed a Western hierarchic model. Hence, Alaoui categorizes Moroccan artists in two groups, figurative and abstract. By stressing this explanation, he neglects the specific historical, political, and cultural context in which Moroccan art was formed.²⁰

Although El Fathémy, artist and art critic, attributes the emergence of modern Moroccan art to the establishment of the Protectorate, he maintains that its true beginning was in the early 1950s, a period during which a number of Moroccan artists, including Ahmed Cherkaoui, Jilali Gharbaoui, and Mohamed Serguini, began studying art as a profession and became aware of works by renowned European artists such as Piet Mondrian, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and others.²¹ Toni Maraini, art historian and art critic, agrees with these

propositions which emphasize the importance of the French and other European Orientalist artists. She explains this development within a Hegelian reading of stylistic development which privileges art above craft.²²

Surprisingly, this literature focuses on the elitist aspects of Moroccan art production and, as a result, neglects the legacy of French colonial art educational institutions that introduced new artistic practices into Morocco. Instead, the various writers suggest additional alternative factors that help to explain the formation of a national visual tradition, namely, the appropriation, during the 1940s, of pictorial elements by Moroccans from the Turco-Islamic tradition of miniature painting, and also a growing interest in, and development of, a mature mural painting tradition by young Moroccan artists around the same period.

Moroccan artists have developed similar arguments. In the early 1960s Farid Belkahia, Mohamed Melihi, Toni Maraini (Melih and Maraini were married at the time), and Mohamed Chabaa returned to Morocco after completing their studies in studio art and art history in Europe and the United States. Belkahia headed the Casablanca School of Fine Arts and the latter three taught painting, art history, and interior design and decoration respectively. They became known as the Casablanca group, and initiated a set of discourses that revisited Moroccan art. The Casablanca group, in drawing public attention to the richness of the local visual heritage also addressed the urgent need to protect it. In collaboration with the Marrakesh *Centre Marocain pour la Recherche Esthétique et Philosophique* they published *Maghreb Art*, in the mid-1960s, a bi-annual journal which focused on the discussion of architectural monuments, popular arts, and artifacts. The group believed that these and similar monuments and arts represented a definite “plastic tradition” that could initiate the inception of an “authentic” Moroccan art, provided that they were wisely studied and exploited. Above all, the group defined the role of the journal as “revalorizing our artistic heritage and contributing to the emergence of a new national art,” as well as offering a “response...to those [Moroccans] who condition the development of modern Moroccan painting solely by assimilating the model of Western art.”²³

Through illustrated articles, *Maghreb Art*, (no longer published), aimed to establish the foundations on which a revision of the history of Moroccan art could be grounded. The third issue, for example, focused on popular arts, namely, interior wooden paintings in mosques and zawiyas (lodges of religious brotherhoods) in the Southern Sous region dating back to the seventeenth century (figs. A.1-4). What interested the group, according to Mohamed Melihi, was the variety of decorative motifs which went beyond the repetitiveness found in crafts and underscored, instead, the freedom of gesture and richness of surfaces that succeeded in combining graphic and painterly elements and was just as pictorially involved as contemporary Western art.²⁴ During this same period, Belkahia began focusing on ways to decolonize Moroccan art from Western influences. He declared that Moroccan artists could investigate and employ their

local artistic heritage, including media such as henna, saffron and leather, material that remained a “virgin terrain” instead of Western art supplies (canvas, oil paints).²⁵

These attempts made by Moroccan scholars and artists, however, have appeared insufficient to other Moroccans who believe that local art production lacks a “solid” identity. The art critic, Edmond Amran El Maleh, for example, observed in 1988 that because modern painting had been imported relatively recently into Morocco “in the trunks of colonialism” it was still “very young, fresh, stuck to the hands, and [consequently] could not be submitted to the test” of historical analysis.²⁶

Unlike El Maleh, Maraini maintains that painting existed in Morocco before the arrival of the French and Europeans. In an attempt to legitimize the existence of a competent local modern art, she asserts that Moroccans employed painting as a complete aesthetic system, comprising both conceptual rules and manual processes.²⁷ Traditional local arabesque design was “a complex” and “plastic elaboration of a synthetic conception involving time, space, and movement” and, similar to Western art, based its pictorial structure on the grid. She rejects the claims that grounded Moroccan art in “sudden leaps, sudden disruption, and sudden births,” arguing that to truly underpin the source of Moroccan modern art, one needed to go back in time thousands of years for its foundation was in the cultural “roots which dive deep into the ‘organic soil’ of the nation and its history.” Maraini refutes El Maleh’s claim, explaining that what the French and the Europeans imported were a different technology of visual representation. In order to locate such “origins” she cites Rudolf Arnheim’s remark that modern Western art resulted from a long historical evolution and multiform aesthetics. In fact, Maraini imposes Arnheim’s paradigm on Moroccan art in an attempt to trace its formation in what she calls “a chain of psycho-cultural events” ranging from prehistoric archaeological markings and artifacts to the first local tattoo designs, weaving, and ceramics. Maraini infers that what differentiates these expressions from their Western counterparts is the fact that, instead of western artistic supplies and tools (brushes, industrially manufactured paints, and canvases), Moroccans have employed a wide range of similar, but not compatible materials, namely, their own versions of brushes, local colour pigments, and varnishes with which they decorated plaster and wooden surfaces, leather, mosaics, and fabrics. These local materials and supports constitute the basic components of a specific technology of a local visual representation. Taken as a whole, Maraini’s essay invokes the specificity of Morocco’s visual culture as residing, essentially, in the particularity of the country’s sociological and cultural foundations.²⁸

When she discusses the local representational arts, Maraini recalls that the country also produced a flourishing school known as the Moroccan-Andalusian miniature school, the prototypes of which were imported from Turkey and the Middle East and which depicted a variety of subjects ranging from scientific

illustrations to sacred and profane images. Moroccans also created popular image-making in public places, including cafes and public baths, a visual expression that was the outcome of individual efforts. Though this latter art form was essentially “non-academic and non-learned” it nevertheless relied on a certain know-how and produced a “sub” and “para” popular visual culture. Modern painting as a technology (i.e. industrially produced colors, canvas, stretchers, and easels), on the other hand, was introduced in Morocco, beginning in the 1920s, as a result of the encounter between French artists and young Moroccans who practiced painting as hobby. The first of such encounters, according to Maraini, occurred between the French Orientalist painter, Edouard Brindeau, and Abdeslam Ben Larbi el Fassi when the former was painting in the famous Jamaa Lafna in Marrakesh, an encounter that would subsequently transform el Fassi into “the first modern Moroccan painter.”²⁹

In spite of these different opinions Moroccan scholars acknowledge the vitality of a return to local crafts and materials as a legitimate inspiration. Yet with the exception of a single essay by Maraini, crafts have been marginalized in their writings. Maraini is the most portentous art critic in Morocco because, for the past thirty some years, she has attempted to provide a coherent analysis of Moroccan contemporary art. In this essay, surprisingly, she locates her subject not in Morocco, as one would have imagined, but in Europe with casual references to Greece, China, India, and Latin America, in a period reaching from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. She states from the beginning that crafts were an ambiguous subject to study. This ambiguity was due to the fact that crafts were always “wedged” between art history, which for a long time refused to consider them as art, and anthropology and ethnography that focused on the study of popular culture. Throughout the article Maraini claims that art history, a discipline concerned with aesthetic shifts, attended mainly to the cultural accomplishments of social minority groups (a term she uses to define the cultural elites) comprised of the merchant class, the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy, and the priesthood. Nevertheless, it was archaeology that became interested in examining all types of cultural production, including that of the masses. According to Maraini, our misunderstanding of these latter artistic expressions became more cumbersome because crafts, as opposed to art produced by the elite, were, for the most part, made of fragile materials that easily deteriorated with the passage of time.³⁰

When categorizing crafts, Maraini submits them to a male and female gender classification and opposes the craftsmen to the artists based on stylistic notions of differentiations. She defines craftsmen as technicians who practiced their trade in “anonymity,” and produced artifacts that respected old precepts and forms. Additionally, she views crafts as a pre-industrial practice and a cultural expression that was “uniform” and inscribed in a routine technology.³¹ Maraini’s remarks, in addition to investigating craft from an elitist approach, reflect the opinions of French colonial scholars who investigated Morocco’s traditional industry.

French Colonial Art Education in Morocco

A review of the visual history of Morocco reveals that the French Protectorate Administration exercised its most powerful colonial hegemony through education. French archives are replete with cases indicating how the Protectorate constantly promoted its educational programs for the Moroccan masses as a humanitarian gesture. The complexity of colonial exploitation can, at times, be difficult to discern completely because the Protectorate carefully disguised its true aim and represented its mission in Morocco as one of altruism. In reality, the Protectorate had little stake in bettering Moroccan lives. Correspondence in the archives of the General Administration of Public Education is remarkably tactful with regards to outright exploitation.

It is not my intention to suggest that whatever the French had managed in the field of exploitative education was their doing alone. In fact, one of my main arguments is that the Protectorate's reforms perpetuated the "informal" colonization of Morocco and was assisted, in part, by Moroccan collaboration. Here it should be made very clear that the Makhzen contributed to the establishment of the educational reforms both willingly and unwillingly. Willingly, because these reforms worked for their benefit; that is, by designing a variety of educational offerings for different Moroccan ethnic and social groups, the Protectorate maintained the social order that had existed in pre-protectorate Morocco. Unwillingly, because, as already noted, the Makhzen was always fearful that it would meet the same fate as the Algerians (i.e. it would be eliminated) if it refused to implement the French recommendations. Lyautey and the Residents after him held that because colonial authority based on the threat of physical might alone had no power, it required new techniques of civic vigor and a new reform of methods of public education in order to transform the Moroccans into efficient parts of the colonial productive process. The schools established by the Protectorate specified the status of each Moroccan social group and assigned to each a different type of learning relevant to a particular social role.

The Moroccan elite, mainly the aristocracy and the Makhzen officials, looked for a modern education in the Franco-Arab schools in order to preserve their social prestige. In fact, under the supervision of French officials, the educated elites managed the lower levels of the Protectorate Administration in their roles as clerks in the civilian branch and as auxiliary police officers. They accepted their subordinate role and believed for years that the politics of the Protectorate represented their own interests. The educational reforms were, thereby, sustained by the fact that they were grounded in the principles of colonial assimilation, a process that aimed to instill in Moroccans the inability to conceive of any alternatives to French policies.

The vocational schools were established for the Moroccan poor and created what Michel Foucault has called "disciplinary careers"³² in which various educational and pedagogical methods set in motion a process of work regulation and ethics.

At the end of the program the skills and social behaviour of the trained Moroccans became predictable. The schools seem at first to have been guided by a powerful, if imprecise, notion that Moroccan crafts were autonomous from their historical, social, and cultural contexts. Their administrators made constant references to themselves as participating in reviving Moroccan visual culture in a way that supported, elaborated, and consolidated French cultural hegemony.

Earlier plans concerning a rational organization of the vocational schools for Moroccan men date to 1915 when the Protectorate Administration attempted to mobilize a number of master carpenters and wood sculptors. These schools responded to the specific industrial needs of the city and the region in which they were established. In a sense, their personnel constituted “technicians of behaviour [and] engineers of conduct”³³ who formed the artistic taste of the Moroccan workers.

The Protectorate General Administration controlled the schools by recruiting an army of subalterns, directors, inspectors, instructors, and controllers, a great pyramid on top of which stood the General Director and his regional inspectors. Historian of imperialism, Robert G. Wesson, has observed that the study of imperialism leads to a study of the power relation in its internal structure.³⁴ In this sense, the Administration relied not only on the willingness of the Moroccans to assimilate its teachings and directives but also on the internal hierarchy of power in the schools, a tradition of administrative recruiting that had been established by Lyautey and George Hardy, the second General Director of Public Education and “the principal creator” of the education system in Morocco.³⁵ The schools functioned as a stepping stone in the colonial hierarchy. The schools’ officials exercised power over those below and in return pledged allegiance to those above; the General Administration hired them more for their loyalty than for their qualifications. The schools’ bureaucracy remained throughout the Protectorate a complex organization with many grades and subordinations. Their members strove to bend and shape Moroccans to their pedagogical beliefs and, in return, the General Administration opened to them avenues of advancement in the colonial social hierarchy. The organization of the schools lacked professionalism and suffered from internal problems and corruption.

Analysis of the administrative organization of these schools reveals that the Protectorate Administration structured mass education not to enlighten Moroccans but to expedite their integration into the job market and hence the Protectorate economy. In pre-protectorate Morocco, craft professions were what the social historian, Ernest P. Thompson, called “task-oriented activities.” Craftsmen practiced their crafts in ways similar to those in which they fulfilled other daily duties and coordinated their time schedule according to weather conditions and the availability of the materials. Similarly, women had an imperfect sense of the time they spent producing artifacts, because they had to attend to other household chores. However, the vocational schools taught their male and female apprentices that the time they would spend in professions would equal the

money their future employers would pay them. Hence, a task-oriented activity became “timed labor.” In this context, the wages and tight schedules induced preventive measures against idleness. The vocational schools inculcated in the Moroccans a respect for “time-thrift,” subsequently incorporating them into the French capitalist system of production.³⁶

However, it cannot be unqualifiably stated that the Protectorate caused intellectual and economic stagnation of Moroccans. The guild reforms and vocational teaching methods somewhat eased the economic predicament of the medinas, contributed to a revival of local crafts, and transformed Moroccan craftsmen into the best workers of the French empire. The reformed guilds and the vocational schools certainly accomplished impressive things but we should not expect them to be flawless.

The General Administration’s officials also contributed to the formation of French scholarship on Moroccan arts and crafts and the ability or inability of Moroccans to produce artifacts of artistic value. They claimed that urban Moroccan Muslims had artistic “instincts,” a good sense of stylizing natural forms, an easiness with inventing geometric compositions, and a dexterity that was “special to their race.”³⁷ Literature shared by the different parties of the General Administration attests to the fact that the goal of vocational training was to develop and discipline Moroccans on the precision of observation, the rigor of measuring, the clarity of perceptual representation and the skillfulness and dexterity of the hand. The Administration also deemed that the schools’ theoretical training, consisting partially of learning drawing and tracing from memory, was enough to prepare Moroccans to be skilled workers, ready to be incorporated into modern colonial life.³⁸

Whereas the different social classes of Moroccans seem to have sought education for their sons, some of them had strong social and cultural prejudices against educating their daughters. The Moroccan aristocracy, for example, did not conceive of educating their daughters in the early days of the Protectorate from fear that the French would corrupt their moral conduct. When they allowed them to enroll in schools, they decided that they should be educated with girls from the same social background, thereby maintaining and reinforcing the pre-protectorate caste system. Inasmuch as the aristocracy opposed the education of women, the poor supported the schools because they would teach their daughters a skill that would allow them to contribute to the family’s income.

The impetus behind the creation of vocational schools for Moroccan women was to establish contact with the feminine milieu. Using their students as intermediaries, the schools’ female directors and instructors infiltrated the feminine milieu and, subsequently, facilitated their assimilation in French social behaviour.³⁹ Renée Bazet, the director of the Rabat women’s school, for example, explained that the direct contact with Moroccan families was precisely the political role for which the women’s schools were created.⁴⁰

Similarly, the school of fine art and the open workshops were created with the goal to muster the Moroccan milieu to the French agenda. When construction in the Casablanca colonial city grew, it multiplied the demand for Moroccan craftsmen trained in European crafts related to construction including carpentry, metal smithing, and masonry. In fact, the Casablanca School of Fine Arts was created in the early 1920s (though it was not officially inaugurated until 1951) at a time when the *ville nouvelle* of the city began attracting settlers and their capital from the metropole, thus pressuring the Protectorate Administration to expand urban development. To meet these new demands, the school discouraged young Moroccan high school graduates from pursuing higher education in the French universities in the metropole. The school enrolled both Europeans and Moroccans. However, whereas European students pursued a fine arts education and were prepared to take the exam at the Paris *École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts*, their Moroccan counterparts were channeled in the section of applied arts to become trained masons, carpenters, or assistants to French architects, maquette builders, and graphic designers.

The open workshops, on the other hand, strove to mobilize students for the professional schools to revitalize the Moroccan economy. Thanks to the diligent efforts of two young French women, the Services of Youth and Sports succeeded in establishing these workshops throughout the protectorate. The workshops reached young Moroccan children from the shantytowns and the rural villages who did not frequent any schools. The heads of the workshops encouraged them to appreciate Moroccan crafts by encouraging them to draw and paint decorative motifs they were familiar with in their homes and neighborhoods. They calculated that such activities would inspire the children to choose a craft career, thus ensuring enrollment in the vocational schools.

These tasks that French colonial women performed in the vocational schools or the open workshops have gone unnoticed in numerous studies dealing with the protectorate. Here I wish to mention only a few examples. In her book on the city of Oujda in Northeastern Morocco, French historian, Yvette Katan, covered the ways in which the city's economy, demography, and social relationships changed under the Protectorate. Katan drew particular attention to colonial education and the types of schools that were created in Oujda.⁴¹ Kenneth Brown, the American urban anthropologist, studied a hundred year history of the city of Salé, focusing mainly on the roots of French colonialism, the formation of Moroccan nationalism, as well as traditional industry and education as contested sites between the French and the Moroccans.⁴² Similarly, Daniel Rivet's first book, a three-volume work, concentrated particularly on the establishment of the Protectorate and Lyautey's infiltration of the Moroccan Administration.⁴³ Though these authors relied on primary archival materials, they stopped short of acknowledging French women as active players in the French colonial Administration. In his last book Rivet cites the experience of Jacqueline Brodskis, one of the founders of the open workshops, but he does so in only a few lines and his testimony lacks historical grounding.⁴⁴

In a different context, art historian Reina Lewis, in her study of Western Orientalist women, generalized her claim that women Orientalists did not have direct access to the superior positions that colonial men held vis-à-vis the colonized subjects.⁴⁵ As argued elsewhere, this is not true. French colonial women had an immediate influence on the course of the Protectorate's educational programs including those of the vocational schools and the open workshops, and their vision was guided by the same colonial ideology that defined that of French colonial men. In fact, the Protectorate opened up to these women positions in which they became producers of definitions of Moroccan feminine crafts in the vocational schools as well as the categories of Moroccan art in the open workshops. They based their textural production on the presumed superiority of Western art versus Moroccan crafts, relying on concepts of differentiations of gender, ethnicity, and class. It was, therefore, these differentials that allowed them to emerge as producers of colonial culture. French colonial women understood themselves as part of a colonial machinery of scholarship.

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Citation Format

Irbouh, Hamid (2001) French Colonial Art Education in Morocco. *Ijele: Art eJournal of the African World*: 2, 1. <http://www.icaap.org/iuicode?114.2.1.4>