

CONTEMPORARY ARTS AND
AFTERLIVES OF COLONIAL-ERA MASS
HOUSING IN THE MAGHREB

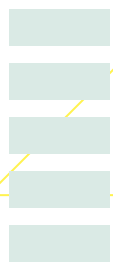
Katarzyna Pieprzak

Poetics of Repair



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Afterlives of Colonial-Era Mass
Housing in the Maghreb

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLITERATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French and Moroccan Arabic are mine. As common practice, I cite published English translations when they exist, but on a few occasions, I have altered those translations. Those instances are noted.

Transliteration of quotes from spoken Moroccan Arabic, Darija, follow the IJMES system for Modern Standard Arabic when possible. However, Moroccan and Algerian personal names and place names appear as they would most commonly figure in vernacular North African contexts.

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PREFACE: UNEXPECTED PATHS TO MASS HOUSING

Today Ben M'Sik is a bustling working-class neighborhood in eastern Casablanca. Dense low-rise concrete housing blocks with ground-floor shops and cafés line its wide central avenues and house its 131,883 residents.¹ At its origins in the 1920s, however, Ben M'Sik looked very different. A tightly knit settlement of small corrugated-metal-and-wood huts with no electricity or running water abutted factories and industrial sites. By 1953, this worker settlement, termed *bidonville* in French or *karian* in Arabic became the second-largest shantytown in Casablanca, housing over 50,000 people in a city of 713,000.² Home to workers from all over Morocco, Ben M'Sik also became a home to labor movements and political opposition. Claiming unsafe living conditions, the state started to dismantle the neighborhood, and in 1982, the process of rehousing its then 80,000 residents began. The political urban resettlement campaign turned into a drawn-out and fraught undertaking, and it wasn't until 2016 that the last homes were razed and their inhabitants evicted.³

Urban anthropologist Abdelmajid Arrif writes powerfully about the history and stories of this settlement neighborhood as well as the complexities of doing ethnographic research in a housing environment that has always been managed through state-maintained precarity.⁴ In one of Arrif's interviews, a then-resident who is facing resettlement repeatedly describes how no one takes the time to listen and understand him and his situation: "Tu sais, moi, si je pouvais tomber sur quelqu'un qui puisse me comprendre [*rwani*, lit. "me boire"] et que je le comprenne."⁵ (You know, if I could find someone who might understand me [*rwani*, lit. "drink me"] and who I understood.) Striking in his comments is his attention to understanding as an actively reciprocal process; not only does he want to be understood, he also wants to understand.

The Moroccan Arabic expression that he uses for understanding, *rwani*, can mean both “drink me” and “narrate me,” and both meanings speak to a desire for a deep and fundamental incorporation. This demand for the incorporation of excluded people, stories, and experiences sets important ethical and methodological questions for mass housing in all its forms: How do we approach mass housing as a subject of study? How do we narrate the lives of its residents? What terms do we use? And what are the effects of that approach both on knowledge about buildings and on the people they house?

The path to this book about art and mass housing started in Ben M’Sik in 2011 when I first visited the Ben M’Sik Community Museum at Hassan II University. The Ben M’Sik Community Museum is small and modest with an oral history archive as the basis of its collection, an exhibit space with objects that speak to the neighborhood’s history and cultures of rural migration, and a community meeting place for discussions of its present and future. The museum might be small and modest, but it is one of the most innovative museological spaces in Morocco in its work to remember a place, people, and built environment that many have ignored or would rather forget.⁶ The oral history collection archives the many voices of the marginalized neighborhood in a reparative gesture to silences in the historical record, and its ongoing relationships with the present community chart paths to the future. In so doing, the museum both uplifts and responds to the methodological and ethical questions raised by Arrif’s interview.

My visit to the museum came about through an invitation to talk with students at Hassan II University about my book *Imagined Museums* as part of a residency I was conducting with the Casablanca-based art collective La Source du Lion on the work of museums, marginalized memory, and participatory cultural actions in Morocco. Entering into the artistic ecology that is La Source du Lion became an entry point for me into the histories of mass housing and built environment in Casablanca. Led by artist Hassan Darsi and curator and art historian Florence Renault Darsi, La Source du Lion has changed shape over the almost thirty years of its existence, and its membership is both dynamic and elastic.⁷ What hasn’t changed however is its fundamental commitment to art practice as a form of participatory citizenship and relation building. The network of artists, writers, educators, and cultural actors that I met during the residency, as well as the artwork that I learned about during my stay with the collective, has fundamentally shaped how I approach the relationship between art and architecture, between art and people, between art and the city. It has also framed how I understand the potential of art

to see and engage the lives and experiences of the people and stories around us. With gratitude for what I have and continue to learn from them, I make the argument in this book that art invites us to see and imagine mass housing and its residents in a way that architectural history, political science, and sociology cannot. Art has the potential to trigger unexpected sensations and attachments, and in so doing, illuminate connective fibers and create relationships between built environments and the people and histories they shape. This, I claim, is a poetics of repair: an art practice that conjoins, connects, or simply brings closer together broken materials, separated people, and severed timelines. Art doesn't just make connections felt and visible, however. It can fundamentally transform mass housing and in turn propose new forms, new histories, and new futures.

The visual, literary, and performance-based art that I have chosen to explore in this book—photography, installation and video art, theater, graphic novels, poetry, and dance—comes from multiple points and places, speaks different languages, and does many different types of work. Sometimes the artwork is produced by residents and former residents of the mass-housing projects. Sometimes, it comes from the outside. Sometimes, it quietly awakens interest. Sometimes, it is troublesome. Sometimes, it recognizes and reassures. Sometimes, it calls people to unite politically to fight for dignity and tangible justice. By exploring well-known and established artwork alongside lesser-known and amateur video, song, and dance, I hope to show that the relationship between artwork, buildings, residents, and knowledge is both complex and multidirectional and has the potential to affect everything and everyone it touches.

So let us then turn to Ben M'Sik again, this time through art. In 1981, the Moroccan poet Abdallah Zrika wrote the poem "Danse de Ben Msik" (Ben M'Sik's dance). The year 1981 was the year after Zrika was released from prison for writing and reading poems critical of the Moroccan state to audiences that "often numbered in the thousands."⁸ The year 1981 was the year of what has been called the Casablanca bread riots, a social uprising to protest the price and conditions of life of the urban poor. The year 1981 was the year before the Moroccan state abandoned the NGO-led restructuralization project of the Ben M'Sik and adopted a resettlement program that would raze the neighborhood. In the poem "Danse de Ben Msik" (written in Arabic but to my knowledge accessible in published form only in the French translation by Moroccan poet Abdellatif Laâbi), we can see how poetic tension between shame and outrage about living conditions transform into an affirmation of worth and a direct call to action:

Ben Msik bois
la mort arrive aux lèvres avant l'eau
Ben Msik mange
entre toi et le pain une matraque
Ben Msik pieds-nus
sors et cherche des souliers
Ben Msik mets-toi en colère
les lettres qui te parviennent
passent au-dessus du feu
et s'embrasent
Ben Msik fou
imagine la voiture en flammes comme les arbres d'un jardin
Ben Msik échevelé
ton mal de tête
fait se dresser les cheveux
Ben Msik qui a saboté le téléphone
car ils t'ont oublié dans les tractations
Ben Msik qui a abattu les poteaux électriques
car ils t'ont oublié pour l'éclairage
Ben Msik l'obscurité
car une balle a éteint
la bougie dans ta tête
Ben Msik
tu es grand
car les balles sont petites
Ben Msik crie
tes morts ne sont pas partis
les oreilles bouchées
Ris
la vapeur de ton sang brûlant
tourne dans la tête
Chante
parmi les pieds de tes victimes
esclaffe-toi dans le chant de la mort
danse
car on ne danse vraiment bien que dans ta boue.⁹
(Ben Msik drink
death arrives to lips before water

Ben Msik eat
between you and bread, a bludgeon
Ben Msik barefoot
go out and find some shoes
Ben Msik get angry
the letters that reach you
pass over fire
and go up in flames
Ben Msik crazy
imagine the car in flames like the trees of a garden
Ben Msik disheveled
your headache
makes hair stand on end
Ben Msik that sabotaged the telephone
because they forgot you in the deals that were made
Ben Msik that knocked down electricity poles
because they forgot you for lighting
Ben Msik darkness
because a bullet has snuffed out
the candle in your head
Ben Msik
you are big
for bullets are small
Ben Msik scream
your dead have not left
ears clogged up
Laugh
the steam of your burning blood
turns in your head
Sing
amid the feet of your victims
burst out laughing during the anthem of death
dance
because we only dance well in your mud.)

This is not the first or only poem that Zrika devoted to Ben M'Sik. Though born in 1953 in the Carrières Centrales bidonville in Casablanca, Zrika spent his childhood in Ben M'Sik. Much of his poetry about Ben M'Sik speaks to the shame of poverty and the politics of exclusion; housing often figures in

negative terms and reproduces negative discourse. Zrika writes of shame: the shame of having no access to education, the shame of having no access to standard sanitation and health care, the shame of letters lost in its mud when the postman's bag spills.¹⁰ But in this poem, rather than primarily describing the neighborhood through the past and the memories and emotions it triggers, he instructs the neighborhood to act. The poet's series of commands ends with an exhortation to dance in the neighborhood mud: to find joy, belonging, and power through movement in the materials that have marked it with shame.

When Zrika wrote this poem in 1981, it was partly in response to the "bread riots" that had taken place earlier that year across Morocco and in which Ben M'Sik residents were active participants. We clearly see imagery of the protests and their suppression by the state: the bludgeon, the car in flames, bullets, and death. The death toll in Casablanca alone reached the hundreds. But the poem is not concerned with the dire economic conditions generally facing Moroccans across the country. It speaks specifically to a history of dispossession and resistance in the Ben M'Sik shantytown: a neighborhood without basic services, governed by the state through what Lamia Zaki has described as "management by absence." As Zaki writes: "By maintaining the inhabitants on the legal margin, the state creates a latent insecurity which sustains the shantytown dweller's fragility and limits the assertion of collective demands."¹¹ In this poem, Zrika refuses managed fragility and instead calls on the neighborhood to collectively assert its demands. Written against a shaming discourse of underdevelopment and poverty, during a time of potential political transformation, Zrika's poem shows how the very material of abjection is the material from which resistance and reparation emerge. And that insurrection takes the form of a life-affirming dance in the face of what Achille Mbembe terms "necropolitics": the "subjugating of life to the power of death."¹²

Dance as a form of protest and insurrection in the face of Middle East and North African political regimes has been powerfully theorized by curator and filmmaker Rasha Salti in her 2012 essay and series of talks "Shall We Dance? (Like It's Nobody's Business)." In that work, Salti observes how group dances, specifically the *dabkeh*, constituted a foundational insurrectional practice in 2011 Syria. She writes:

One can easily observe the centrality of the body in the daily chronicles of street protests in Syria. . . . Syrian insurgents perform a version of the *dabkeh* in which dancers stand side by side, their arms stretched on the shoulders of one another, forming a chain of solidarity and moving

in synchrony. . . . Dancing as an insurrectional practice has deeper implications beyond this recentering of the body. Foremost is the choice to claim moral high ground using a pacifist, festive, joyous, and life-affirming language.¹³

How might we read the poem “Danse de Ben Msik” as a life-affirming dance with Zrika the poet as choreographer? The structure of the poem centers around a number of imperative directions. Ben M’Sik is told to drink, eat, get angry, imagine, scream, laugh, sing, dance. These actions speak to core bodily actions that define humanity—from physical needs (drink and eat) to emotional and psychological elements such as imagination, voice, community, and their expression in anger, laughter, and song. Dance is not only a life-affirming language, nor is it just a centralization of the body; it is also a powerful reclaiming and creating of communal space and time through movement. When Zrika writes that “we only dance well in your mud” he reclaims the public space to say that there is value in this neighborhood and its people. He disrupts negative state discourses and in so doing starts a reparative process of radical self-revision positing ownership of the space and neighborhood identity. The poem works to redefine the very materials of its built environment, and in so doing, it reconfigures the body’s alienated relationship with the material conditions of its disavowal. It’s an act and a call for repair.

The poem “Danse de Ben Msik” is an act of social and political recognition, an expression of and call for dignity in the face of injustice. By using poetry, an art form central to cultural patrimony in the Maghreb, Zrika also works to repair the transmission of memory and the future imagination of the neighborhood.¹⁴ Moroccan poet Abdellatif Laâbi writes that “la poésie est tout ce qui reste à l’homme pour proclamer sa dignité” (poetry is all that is left for humanity to proclaim its dignity).¹⁵ What does it mean for inhabitants of mass housing to have their homes and lives valued as a part of cultural patrimony? To have poems, songs, plays, films, and visual art engage their reality, advocate for their full potential, and imagine other futures? Art stages this poetics of repair.

This is a book about housing that I have primarily experienced through art and its various modalities: images, texts, performances, museum exhibits, sound, music, and conversation. I have not lived or spent significant time in these housing projects.¹⁶ These housing projects are real. They are and were homes to many. The experience of living there changes across time and generations. And it matters. And yet, it is not my intent to test the veracity of artistic representations or evaluate their proposed repair work against real places.

What happens if we take artwork on its own terms? If we seek to understand the poetics that art builds? If we center the repair work of art and the worlds it makes and hopes to remake?

The image that hangs above my desk is a photocopy of a photograph featuring the paths that people make between buildings in housing projects, from a 2004 triptych entitled *Short Cuts* by Romanian-born artist Mircea Cantor. The image centers the well-trodden paths and sometimes surprising divergences from the asphalt walkways that building designers put in place. There is something about the texture of the dirt path as it emerges from the grass that resonates deeply with me. It triggers sensations and attachments that I can't quite name, perhaps emerging from incomplete memories of my early childhood in Poland living in these types of socialist housing landscapes. Perhaps more important though, Cantor's photograph speaks deeply to the pathways between buildings and their histories that I have centered in this project, well-trodden pathways of sound, image, and movement that produce powerful affects and kinships.

In an exploration of architecture and built environment, what does it mean to center the unexpected? Those ways of being and seeing that are created beyond the architect, planner, or even resident but also deeply in relation with them? Artwork has the potential to illuminate and create those pathways. Urban theorist AbdouMalik Simone writes that "sometimes a politics of care is a matter of concretizing new lines of connection."¹⁷ In illuminating and giving form to other pathways, artwork proposes a politics of care, a poetics that attempts to restructure broken relationships, conjoin severed histories, and concretize new lines for a habitable future.

This is a poetics of repair.

Introduction

Mass Housing, Maghrebi Art, and the Poetics of Repair

Dana Al Jouder, a Kuwaiti performance artist, architect, and novelist, dances through empty mass housing projects. In her 2013 video art pieces *Enfilade* and *Tiles*, she moves slowly on concrete and dirt, through hallways and courtyards, past mailboxes and toward elevator shafts. She is dressed in soft fabrics and shapes that both echo and disrupt the aesthetics of the buildings around her. Through choreography—the movement of her body through space and time—she creates a new space within, on top of, and in architectures of modernist housing. These apartment buildings could exist anywhere and in unmarked time, and at the same time, they are deeply sited. *Enfilade* is filmed in a forty-floor public housing development, the Tiong Bahru Estate HDB in Singapore.¹ *Tiles* is filmed in Kuwait in a “neglected expat housing complex in Hawalli.”²

In both *Enfilade* and *Tiles*, when Al Jouder’s moving costumed body comes into contact with mass housing, visions and affective intensities propose what might be different in and against these buildings. In *Enfilade*, she floats in richly colored and soft textiles across the hardness of white concrete and its seeming immobility. The title of the piece, *Enfilade*, references the architectural term used to describe a series of doors in alignment with each other, and Al Jouder describes the building’s austere intersecting corridors as “poetic enfilades, as if purposely designed to be haunted.”³ Indeed, the flash of a cat running down the white concrete stairs is the only sign of life beyond her own, and Al Jouder

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asks what absence is revealed through her presence, what vibrant, moving, playful, or mournful life has disappeared. In *Tiles*, her dress reflects the rectangular tiles on the building's colonnades, and Al Jouder's attention to geometric forms reveals other structures of containment: containment of the body and of capacious migrant cultures and lives.⁴ Both pieces are important interventions into gendered authorship and ownership of space; Al Jouder proposes female aesthetic agency and movement into an aesthetic environment conceived and built by men.

What do contemporary art interventions do to the architectural, political, and social histories of mass housing projects? What can they show us about past and future urban transformation? What feelings, emotions, and affects do they stir that make us look again, and differently? Artwork invites a different critical position on housing than that produced by the architect, resident, or academic researcher, even if the artist is one of the three.⁵ For art can, and indeed does, build different structures that reposition our relationships to the world.

In her article "Three Tenses: Mass-Housing in Contemporary Art," Carmen Popescu proposes that European contemporary art that engages mass housing "poetically contemplates our recent history."⁶ The words *poetic* and *contemplation* are important here. Art's primary engagement with mass housing is one of thoughtful looking and creative thinking over a sustained period of time, and Popescu defines time in three different tenses. Art that contemplates through a past tense shows how mass housing enters into the ruins of modernity and becomes an "architecture of unfulfilled promises."⁷ Art that looks in the present tense seeks to depict "the living space of the present."⁸ Art that thinks of mass housing with the future "takes time to see it differently" and asks, "What is to be done?"⁹ Building on Popescu's articulation, I propose that in all of their tenses, these acts of poetic contemplation bear the possibility of repair.

What does and can it mean for contemporary art to *repair* mass housing? In this book, repair is an invitation from the present to the future through the past. Above all, repair brings people, histories, objects, buildings, feelings, and geographies out of isolation and into relation with one another. In so doing, the process of repair names what appears broken and rehearses the tensions, ambiguities, and paradoxes inherent to practices of imagination, constitution, and revision.

This book explores how different forms of artwork—visual, literary, and performance art—in and of the Maghreb practice repair in their engagements with mass housing, and how, in turn, these engagements propose reparative-centered epistemologies of architectural sites and built environments. In creating



FIGURE 1.1. Still from Dana Al Jouder, *Enfilade*, 2013. Video.

relationality through both temporary contact and more permanent scars, this artwork attends to registers of intensities and incipience and opens up the possibility of potential ontological reshapings and epistemological transformations. Practices of repair become sites of (fleeting) documentation, (temporary) archives of becoming, and (ephemeral) glimpses into what might be and what might be different. Artwork not only responds to historically, politically, and socially produced accounts of lives and built environments; it also produces new accounts of mass housing that have the potential to shift histories and futures.

Of course, not all artwork repairs, and not all repair work is the same. In fact, in its variations, limitations, and even failures, the artwork in this book is more often than not a “fragile yet potent experiment” in unsettling histories, envisioning different futures and mobilizing affect for transformative political work.¹⁰ And these fragile experiments are of their time, becoming possible or claiming possibility in a specific moment. This introduction maps the terms, theories, and methodologies that structure the book and its attention to reparative experiments. Some frameworks emerge directly from Maghrebi art, while other concepts develop in conversation with a wide circle of thinkers engaged in understanding the relationship between built environments and life within containment and beyond capture.

What Mass Housing?

What worlds do we imagine when we think of mass housing? What shapes our understanding of this built environment? And if artwork proposes new accounts of mass housing, how does it shift established architectural histories, typologies, and their associated geographies and sociohistorical connotations?

In architectural history, the term *mass housing* typically refers to large-scale construction (usually repetitive/uniform, mass-produced, low-cost housing units) built to house large numbers of people (often as a way to address various housing crises, often focused on the urban poor and working class). While aesthetics and materials vary, the term *mass housing* is often shorthand for the concrete blocks of housing that started to emerge across the world in the 1940s and 1950s. When the term *modernist mass housing* is used, often the architect Le Corbusier and his large-scale modular constructions are evoked. In their edited volume, *Social Housing in the Middle East: Architecture, Urban Development and Transnational Modernity*, Kivanç Kılınç and Mohammad Gharipour explore what they term the “marginalized histories of social housing” from Tunisia to Turkey to Iran. In so doing, they argue for a wider and more inclusive typology of mass housing that can recount “the diverse practices of social housing in the region” by “looking beyond elite pursuits of architecture” and paying attention to “spatial agency” and the ways in which “homeowners, tenants, and building contractors play a part in the production of the so-called modern vernacular, along with architects, planners, and economic patronages of authorities.”¹¹ Their attention to how self-built vernacular housing typologies relate to large-scale government housing projects begins the work of deepening our understanding of a relational dynamic. If we look at Maghrebi cities today, we see cities that have and continue to build *in typological relation*.¹² In Algerian nomenclature, the word *cit  * was often used to describe both shantytowns and housing projects. And as architectural historian Sheila Crane shows in her work, there is an important history that leads to the consolidation of mass housing terminology such as *bidonville*, *karian*, and *cit  *. Crane charts how colonial-era rural ethnography and the industrial and extractive materials of colonial capitalism lead to these terms and definitions of built environment, and how they emerge almost simultaneously with elite architectural discourses on housing for the masses.¹³

These relational histories of type or material form are accompanied by a relational geography: the Maghreb. Traditional geopolitical definitions of the Maghreb have defined its borders as the land encompassed by Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya. In this book, I take up the call of literary

scholar Edwige Tamalet Talbayev to redefine “the Maghreb along new routes and roots” that are transcontinental in nature.¹⁴ As such, in this book, the Maghreb is located both in parts of northern Africa and in the neighborhoods of major European cities: two sides of the Mediterranean deeply entwined in each other’s histories and futures—mirrors of one another, fluid locations in sustained motion.

The sense of this Maghreb as a traveling crossroads of people, spaces, and forms is particularly resonant for the architectural history of colonial-era modernist mass housing. The pioneering work of scholars such as Crane, Zeynep Çelik, Tom Avermaete, Marion von Osten, Aziza Chaouni, Nancy Demerdash, and Samia Henni have shown how the emergence and then global boom in modernist mass housing from the 1920s through the 1960s occurred through Mediterranean crossings of architectural practices, materials, and workers, driven and facilitated by colonial capitalism and military operations.¹⁵ Maghrebi cities, both in North Africa and on the borders of expanding French cities, became the frontiers of urban planning and architectural experimentation in mass housing. They also became frontiers in discriminatory housing practices and racially motivated marginalization.

When in the well-known opening of *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*), Frantz Fanon described the compartmentalized racial order of colonial Algerian cities, he could just as well have been writing about migration and workers’ housing in 1950s France. As Hannah Feldman writes:

Living conditions in these [Parisian] bidonvilles were so stark that it would not surprise many if Frantz Fanon’s famous claims about the compartmentalization of the colonial world had been written while looking out at one of these slums. In writing that “the colonial world is a world cut in two,” Fanon could certainly have been thinking of Algiers, where he had lived for some time, but he could equally have been thinking of Paris, and this is precisely the point.¹⁶

Claiming Nanterre or Marseille as Maghrebi cities allows us to recognize the often-shared colonial grammars that managed both urban space and types of mass housing.¹⁷

The etymology of terms such as *bidonville* and *karian* give us insight into the colonial-era industrial materials that define these mass housing spaces—the barrel or jerrycan (*bidon*) and the quarry (*carrière, karia*). As Reda Benkirane describes, “These shacks borrow materials specific to the age of industrial production: planks of wood, zinc tiles, crenellated sheet metal, plastic drums.”¹⁸ Moreover, their sociolinguistic use shows us what value these neighborhoods

and their residents are afforded in society, and furthers an understanding not only of relational typologies but social relations that are made and carried by mass housing. As Lamia Zaki argues, in the Moroccan urban imagination, the word *karian* is deeply associated with urban deviance, which in turn is seen as social deviance, and as such today the word is a marker of shame and class stigmatization.¹⁹ Whether we link the idea of deviance to histories of rural migration that posit the unruly peasant from “lawless” rural areas known as *bled es-siba* against the erudite and sophisticated urban dwellers tied to structures of royal power called the *makzhen*, or more formally as architectural deviance in the shape and form of structures that bidonville residents create from a violent intersection between rural life and industrial materials, the important factor remains that since its appearance in the 1920s, the bidonville has been seen as simultaneously produced by and “outside” modern urban life. Both under the French Protectorate and in the contemporary political climate, residents of bidonvilles were and remain to this day routinely seen as marginal figures despite the fact that they come to the city as a labor force that helps run its economy, and often function as political voting blocs that support the state.²⁰ This perception of marginality and deviance is anchored in daily language used to describe its people. As Zaki and others explain, *kariani* is often used as an insult in Moroccan Arabic, and *walid* or *bent l-karian* (son or daughter of the shantytown) is used metaphorically to speak of people seen as outside societal norms of decency and honor.

Marginality, deviance, exclusion, and crime remain keywords in media representations of both shantytowns and large-scale social housing projects across the Maghreb (and one might argue, across the globe). The artwork that engages mass housing in this book rearticulates and reframes the question of societal norms and their implied morality. As we saw in the preface, poet Abdallah Zrika insists that joy and power exist in the very materials of abjection. And as artist and resident of the much-maligned mass housing project Climat de France Hamid Rahiche states most powerfully, his work photographing his neighbors is grounded in a commitment to “all the splendor of their dignity.”²¹

Beyond their architectural history and social use, the terms *bidonville*, *karian* and *cité* have been highlighted in political theory as examples of urban structures of political exclusion, existential compartmentalization, and containment, but also potential liberation, self-constitution and self-revision. Reda Benkirane describes the dominant perceptual enclosures that characterize how shantytown residents are seen in this way: “official urban planning has long considered this area a ‘ville en négatif’ [a city in negative] and the average Casablančan has long seen his co-citizen as ‘someone who lives behind the sun.’”²² Benkirane’s

description evokes the type of political and existential marginalization—that Fanon would describe in *Les damnés de la terre* as the condition of a “sous-être” (less-than-being) and what he calls in *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*) “zone du non-être” (zone of nonbeing)—that denies colonized people their humanity.²³ Africana political theorist Lewis R. Gordon discusses the image of living behind the sun, of being on the “dark side of thought,” in relation to Fanon’s zone of nonbeing.²⁴ Gordon, whose work focuses on “conditions of appearance” and “the lived reality of people hidden in plain sight,”²⁵ writes that the zone of nonbeing “could be a limbo . . . or could simply mean the point of total absence, the place farthest from light, that in a theistic system, radiates reality.”²⁶ The shantytown, as a zone of nonbeing, becomes the city’s suspended, dark, or unreal other, an invisible other that is made to disappear in plain sight.

In addition to darkness, mud is the primary negative material of discourse on the shantytown as a captive space.²⁷ *Lghis* is the word in Moroccan Arabic used to refer to mud. It can carry negative connotations depending on the context. Because mud often forms from stagnant water, it refers to stench, and it can also refer to being stuck: *mghyes* means stuck and trapped in a situation.²⁸ As I discuss in chapter 3, mud is not only a structure of captivity that emerges from living conditions of poverty. In the context of migration, it also becomes an othering political discourse that subjugates identity and worth, and limits the possibility of self-constitution. Building on Fanon’s articulations of zones of nonbeing, Ato Sekyi-Otu describes “closures and enclosures of the spaces of human being and human meaning” where “the challenge of our human temporality—our openness to the future and the possibility of self-constitution and self-revision that accompanies it . . . withers away.”²⁹ In this context, mud becomes a material that politically marks and encloses.

My theoretical reading on shantytowns and mass housing started with Fanon and frameworks of opposition and self-constitution. I have found, however, that Fanonian concepts of relation, further developed with care and at length by theorists such as Achille Mbembe and Giorgio Agamben, primarily take us to spaces of nonbeing, bare life, or social or political death. As such, the lives and environments of people in housing projects, termed zones of nonbeing and states of exception, become almost entirely subjugated to death-bound orders and logics. How might we simultaneously account for colonial mass housing as a space of subjugation and something else, something perhaps beyond capture?

In *Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions of the Future* (2010), editors Avermaete, Karakayali, and von Osten take up the liberatory potential

that Fanon also signaled when theorizing captive space and make the important point that architectures of colonial capitalism and containment in North Africa often become key structures in the decolonial process. In movements of liberation, these spaces of containment can transform into key architectures for rebellion.³⁰ Most recently, during the so-called Arab Spring of 2011, protesters from the Casablanca shantytown Sidi Moumen carried a small shack made of corrugated metal on a stretcher into the streets. On one side of the shack, the spray-painted words in Moroccan Arabic, “Is this a house for a human to live in?” critiqued Moroccan state practices of necropolitics and neglect. Concrete housing blocks are activated by their residents in movements of political self-constitution, brutalist office buildings turned into instruments of nation building, shacks instrumentalized as structures of critique.

The inhabitants rebel with the built environment and in relation to it, and as such the built environment itself becomes a companion in their claim making. AbdouMalik Simone writes of this relationship of accompaniment between people and built environments in his 2022 book *The Surrounds: Urban Life within and beyond Capture*. Simone asks us to consider how “rather than seeing the built environment as the stage through which to exercise our privileges or as the concretization of aspirations, needs, and accomplishments, the built environment acts as an accompaniment to whatever we do. It pays attention to our practices; it bears witness to our travails and attainments.”³¹ This distinction between mass housing as a stage for rebellion and mass housing as a companion in rebellion is important for this book. The built environment accompanies both people and artwork. As artwork redraws relations and histories of mass housing, the built environment continues to exist and transform. Accompaniment suggests a nonreductive relationality between buildings, residents, political claims, and artwork.

Simone develops the concept of “the surrounds” to account for such spaces which exist within, between, and beyond capture. He writes that “the surrounds comes to embody a more generalized process of unsettlement, a maximizing of exposures, which like the apertures of cameras, fundamentally disturb the image of something that may otherwise been taken as ‘for sure.’”³² Simone’s call to maximize exposures in order to unsettle logics of capture echoes Ariella Aïsha Azoulay’s reparative charge in her 2019 book *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*. Like Simone, Azoulay asks what might be seen differently if the camera’s shutter, a technology of archival violence, were to be held open. Azoulay insists that “to call for reparations is to hold the shutters open. To hold the shutters open is to see the full scale of reparations that need to be

claimed.”³³ By maximizing exposures, by holding the shutter open, what potential history might become visible?

In this book, I argue that artwork holds the ability to hold open the shutters and do the work of maximizing exposures beyond capture: unsettling fixed images, narratives, and time lines of colonial-era mass housing. Academic studies of mass housing projects in North Africa and France have been primarily written from a top-down history perspective that focuses on architects and their vision, state planning, and comparative colonial politics. Though fewer in number, studies by sociologists and anthropologists have been building a ground-up perspective that considers the lived experience of building residents and the lived reality of colonial policy and state planning.³⁴ Artwork has the potential to break, suspend, and reposition all of this fixed documentation, these different perceptual enclosures of mass housing. In that process, artwork sets up the possibility to name and practice repair.

Maghrebi Art and Its Reparative Potential

In order to maximize exposures of colonial-era mass housing, this book presents twenty-first-century Maghrebi artwork in its most capacious sense: photography, dance, video art, novels, music, graphic novels, poetry, and theater. I have chosen not to construct an argument about the limits and possibilities of different artistic genres to do this world building. Instead, I have taken an expansive approach to art, eagerly seeking out as many different professional and amateur aesthetic engagements with these buildings and neighborhoods. A song in Arabic builds differently than a photograph or French-language film, and that is precisely the point. Different genres in different verbal and visual languages create multiple entry points to the life and experience of these buildings and neighborhoods. Strikingly, I have found that many of the artworks that engage mass housing are deeply intermedial themselves: there are novels that stage filmmaking and acting, films about music, photography that functions as film, theater that uses photography, and poems that dance. Indeed, the artwork itself insists that we read it deeply, widely, and across genres, and as I will argue throughout this book, this intermedial or multigenre work is tied to its desire and potential for repair.

Furthermore, many of the artists whose work is featured in this book have deeply rooted and routed relationships to mass housing. A spectrum emerges where on one end some artists live in the local housing projects that they engage, while others live in a larger diaspora that extends to London and

New York. Again, heeding to multiple and expansive perspectives enables us to more fully name what the repair might mean. And attending to the poetics, the structures of the artwork, as a vocabulary for this repair allows us to see how specific forms of repair are articulated by those seeking reparation for and with specific built environments.

Maghrebi artists have long been practicing and articulating repair, whether in the context of colonial history, economies of extraction and environmental damage, race and slavery, gender identity, or urban space. A powerful example of visual artwork articulating the stakes of repair in terms of colonial history can be seen in Algerian artist Amina Menia's work *Enclosed* (2012–present) and Franco-Algerian artist Katia Kameli's *Trou de mémoire* (Memory gap, or hole) (2018). In both pieces, the artists take on a deep and sustained engagement with the colonial history and material structure of the Algiers *Memorial to the Liberation of Algeria*, formerly known as *Le Pavois*. Designed in 1922 by Paul Landowski and inaugurated in 1928 as a monument to the dead of World War I, the limestone monument was rehabilitated after Algerian independence by the artist M'hamed Issiakhem, who created what Menia calls a concrete "sarcophagus" around the original.³⁵ This encasing did not destroy Landowski's monument but rather embedded it into a new memorial dedicated to Algerians who died in the war for liberation. As Henry Grabar describes,

Issiakhem encased the original monument in cement, and crowned it with a pair of fists breaking through chains. Issiakhem's work does not only preserve an artistic masterpiece beneath the cement, its layers also recall, rather than rewrite, the painful memory of the colonial period. Issiakhem's piece speaks to the deeper political truth of post-colonial identity: the past, however painful, must be acknowledged as the foundation of certain aspects of contemporary society.³⁶

When the Issiakhem casing cracked in 2012, both Menia and Kameli saw the debate about its repair as an opening for artistic research and new propositions. Menia's *Enclosed* is a documentary installation, and when shown at the Sharjah Art Foundation Biennale 11 in 2013, it consisted of an eight-minute-and-fifty-three-second video, photographs, plans, postcards, coin, banknote, stamp, and documents.³⁷ Menia gathers an archive of the two monuments and also draws up an architectural plan that envisions the possibility of a new monument that opens communication and physically conjoins two interlinked histories of death and war (see figure I.2).

In describing Menia's artwork, Reeves-Everson and Rainey write that repair "has the ability to absorb, reflect and redirect history's lines of force, and . . .

even when chiseled from stone or cast from concrete, the results of repair are on-going, rather than one-off solutions to breakages or crises.”³⁸ Menia’s work is not only invested in history, however. It also proposes new lines of communication and relationality for the future. Menia writes: “As a representative of the third generation of artists to deal with this memorial, I have chosen to place the works of the two artists in dialogue. Issiakhem was obliged to cover the original monument, but he offered us the choice—or perhaps, the responsibility—to accept or reject it. Reflecting on this gesture, I highlight unseen details, creating links where only dots were left.”³⁹ The act of “creating links where dots were left” is central to Menia’s work, which as we will see in greater detail in chapter 2 builds nuanced relationality between fragments and remains of Algerian colonial housing, anticolonial liberation, and contemporary Algerian urban life. This relationality is not redemptive but rather processes the ambivalence of feeling when repair engages with damage and harm. Writing about anger, art, and repair, Susan Best argues, “The reparative position is not, then, simply about undoing or reversing damage; ambivalence precludes that wholly positive orientation. This way of thinking about repair should enable the incorporation of intense negative emotions and experiences such as the horror of annihilation, anger, and despair alongside positive feelings like tenderness, love and hope.”⁴⁰ In her work, Menia connects the dots in a variety of ways: through love, rejection, appreciation, reflection, and critique.

Katia Kameli took a different but related approach in her reparative engagement with the monument. Her 2018 piece *Trou de mémoire* (Memory gap), made after the Algerian state sealed the 2012 crack, asks what is forgotten by this state repair and how the newly repaired monument might function as a hole that both swallows and expels memories and images. The piece consists of a photograph taken by Kameli of the repaired monument to which she attaches a cascading accordion of postcard images of the Landowski monument across time (see figure I.3). As witnessed in her larger work, especially in the series *The Algerian Novel* and *My History Book*, Kameli is deeply invested in the accessibility and circulation of colonial and postindependence images in Algerian society. Her reparative vocabulary is derived from images, primarily postcards and press photographs, and asks how the nation and its history are imagined and imaged: What archives exist in the public realm, and what might seeing, holding, and touching those images do for imagining a future?

Both Kameli’s and Menia’s work with archives is particularly powerful when one considers the history of Algerian archive destruction and the continuing colonial archive retention by the French state. Susan Slyomovics describes this history incisively in her article “Repairing Colonial Symmetry: Algerian



FIGURE 1.2. Excerpted work from Amina Menia, *Enclosed*, 2012–ongoing. Installation. Courtesy of the artist.

Archive Restitution as Reparation for Crimes of Colonialism?” recounting how one of the first acts of archival violence by the French in Algeria was the simultaneous destruction of the local archives and production of new foundational documents:

A significant proportion of archives, records, Arabic manuscripts, Ottoman Turkish bureaucratic paperwork, and land maps went up in flames at the same time that the new colony’s first French newspaper made its inaugural appearance. In the heat of battle, colonial authorities both destroyed records and sought to erase their memories through acts of removal and replacement. In short order, new archives were organized to underwrite the paperwork needs of the new settler society.⁴¹



FIGURE 1.3. Katia Kameli, *Trou de mémoire (Memory Lapse)*, 2018. Photographic installation, inkjet print on Etching Rag 310g, mounted on aluminum, 120 × 80 cm © Katia Kameli, ADAGP. View of the work unfolded. Courtesy of the artist.

The production of new paperwork was accompanied by new imagery, as the remarkable rise of colonial photography can attest. In their work, Kameli and Menia are able to suspend and interrupt the representational logics of the colonial archive by dwelling in these images and widening how they are read and to what ends. Artwork here holds the shutter open and unsettles fixed documentation.

Artwork does more, however, than unsettle harmful histories through attention to widening representation. Through its ability to convey affect and create haptic and prelinguistic experiences, it also produces incipience—the fleeting emergence of an uncertain sense of possibility of other relations to the world. The work of Brian Massumi on affect and incipience has been a

central undercurrent in my approach to reparative poetics. Reflecting on the transformative potential of affect, Massumi writes that affect

is the force of thought, embodied. It comes before conscious rumination, alighting it with the direct perceptual judgments that hit like fate in the incipience of every event, but already with a felt sense of potential alternatives. . . . Affect's force of thought also comes at the end, pressing beyond the given into the future, in the form of abductive leaps into a hypothetical course of action whose importance has yet to play out.⁴²

Artwork has the ability to register, convey, trigger, and produce affects that carry in their force the possibility of different futures. Writing of art and affect, art historian Simon O'Sullivan states, "Art is something much more dangerous: a portal, an access point, to another world (our world experienced differently), a world of impermanence and interpretation, a molecular world of becoming."⁴³ These fleeting moments of possible becoming, presented in and through artwork, function as potential repair in the context of colonial built environments, again unsettling established representations—though this time through a deeply felt and embodied sense of something possibly becoming different.

Affect and incipience figure prominently in the work of Moroccan artist Hassan Darsi, and his artistic engagements with crumbling colonial architectures and neocolonial environments help us further understand the relationship between art, affect, and the built environment. With his art collective, La Source du Lion, Darsi has conducted long-term community-oriented projects since 1995, including a variety of interventions in and on the colonial-era Casablanca park L'Hermitage and a photo series entitled *Portraits de famille* in which he invited neighborhood residents to co-stage their family portraits by bringing an object of affection with them to his portable studio. His recent project, *Paradis perdu: Colonisation des paysages, destructions des écosystèmes* has taken his attention to the rural Benslimane area and the Beni Aïssi village where he accompanied residents organizing against impending ecological damage from a planned quarry through a variety of civic and agricultural actions.

Darsi's 2014 eighteen-minute film entitled *Zone d'incertitude 1* (Uncertainty zone 1) is part of a larger project titled *Le square d'en bas* (The square down below) (2012–18) in which Darsi spent six years documenting and engaging with a decaying 1920s industrial woodworking showroom on Avenue Mers Sultan across the street from his then Casablanca studio.⁴⁴ This building, known as the Legal Frères building, served as a European-owned factory and

showroom for the production of woodwork ranging from flooring to interior decoration from 1921 to 1932. When the company closed, the building was sold to a holding company owned by the Moroccan royal family and existed in a state of quasi abandon for many decades.

The film is one of the first artworks that Darsi produced linked to the building. In this piece, Darsi documents the labor of a worker hired to whitewash the facade of the building on the occasion of the street being included in a royal motorcade route through the city (see figure 1.4). Darsi manipulates the film speed to slow the motion of the painter's work and the sound of the city. The slow whitewashing of the building pulls the viewer's attention to both the surface of the building and the body of the painter. At first, the successive layering of whitewash and the slowness of the gestures is almost painful to watch, as the underlying precarity of the worker's body causes tension and suspense to build. The soundscape is low and ominous. What will happen? Will the worker fall down? However, as the film continues, we are drawn out of speculation and into the surface and its present. The gestures become more dancelike and the repetition of movement meditative. The sound builds and falls. Sounds that we might recognize as jackhammers or construction work lengthen into almost human utterances—wails—and repetitive noise signals the pulse of the city. In writing about affect and architecture, Peter Krafl and Peter Aday argue that a tension exists between “the concrete stability of architecture and its ephemerality, an ephemerality that easily exceeds the mutability of signification, and is a function of haptic, uncertain, performative, affective, perhaps noncognitive inhabitation and actualization.”⁴⁵ It is the haptic, affective, and noncognitive moment that Darsi captures on film.

The title of the film, *Zone d'incertitude 1*, signals uncertainty and refers to a concept in organizational sociology developed by Jean Crozier in 1964. Crozier writes that “individuals or groups who control a source of uncertainty in a system of action where nearly everything is predictable, have at their disposal a significant amount of power over those whose situations are affected by this uncertainty.”⁴⁶ Darsi slows the system of action to amplify its affects: the intensities, incipience, and uncertainties that emerge from it. A momentary possibility—of ontological shift, of the transformation of man and building and their mutual histories, of the creation of a city that might be—occurs through a slow attention to surface and to the moment of contact.

What do we see in two aging bodies touching and transforming each other upon a whitewash background? The (im)possibility of reshaping self and city? The joining of a lone man and abandoned building signaling a desire for reparation? And reparation from what? The temporary melding of a body and



FIGURE 1.4. Still from Hassan Darsi, *Zone d'incertitude 1*, 2014. Video. Courtesy of the artist.

its environment reveal how the two enfold upon each other: the building's aesthetic beauty and structure, inextricably linked to a history of colonial violence, exists in relation with and through the body of the man who paints precariously, a man hired to uphold current structures of political power that deny him any protection of his humanity, a man whose slow movement appears to dance.

In my earlier writing, I saw Darsi's engagement with urban spaces in disrepair as one of "tactical museology": a way to engage the memory and history of objects and people excluded from the structures of a noninclusive museum. By paying attention to affect, I now understand more fully how this repair practice functions against the backdrop of threat, disaster, and their political administration. In researching, building, writing, and performing architectural models, Darsi and the Source du Lion have explored the relationship of what Jalal Toufic would call simultaneous material presence and immaterial withdrawal in the context and aftermath of disaster. What happens when objects, buildings, artifacts, and books which have not been "destroyed materially have nonetheless been immaterially withdrawn"?⁴⁷ Or as Finbarr Barry Flood describes Toufic's concept: "Seen but at the same time experienced and engaged with as if unavailable to vision"?⁴⁸ When we look at the maquettes of the Hermitage Park or the Legal Frères building, for example, and all of the multifaceted performances and workshops that are part of those larger projects, we see how material buildings, spaces, and objects that are still physically present but



FIGURE 1.5. Kader Attia, *Traditional Repair, Immaterial Injury*, 2014. In situ sculpture, metallic staples, concrete. Exhibition view, *The Field of Emotion*, The Power Plant, Toronto, 2018. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid.

yet disappeared in plain sight are reactivated. Whether the threat or disaster is colonialism, neocolonial urbanism, neoliberal destructions of social fabrics, or ecological disaster, these art projects stage the reappearance of the immaterial: that feeling, emotion, essence, that memory, haunting, buried history, or sense of access and belonging that was evacuated or made to disappear.

The reappearance of the immaterial is a key practice of repair in the work of Franco-Algerian artist Kader Attia.⁴⁹ In his 2014/18 piece *Traditional Repair, Immaterial Injury*, Attia staples sutures across a cracked concrete gallery floor (see figure 1.5). In this work, as in many of his others, the goal of repair is not to erase or cover the immaterial or material wound (psychic, historical, social, or physical) but rather to make immaterial injury visible as a demand for reparation. Attia describes how exhibit visitors to the 2018 installation of this piece in his solo show *The Field of Emotion* in Toronto would enter the gallery and be “desperately looking for an artwork” and how the piece called them to transform from their initial perception of emptiness to the sighting of the material scar that held both the wound and possible repair.⁵⁰

Concrete is only one of many materials that Attia has engaged in this way. Over the course of his career he has sutured plates, patched fabrics, darned textiles, stapled wood, melded metal, and juxtaposed photographs of wounded and scarified bodies. This repair work is part of a large and iterative body of artwork and writing that explores the intertwined histories of colonialism, anthropology, science, and medicine and theorizes the potential of reappropriation, repair, and emotion. As Hannah Feldman writes, Attia's interest in bridging divides is tied to his commitment to "incorporating the unincorporated into a universalism that left them no room."⁵¹ For Attia, the immaterial wound, the phantom limb, or that which has been made to disappear must be addressed. The act of incorporation, literally bringing something or someone back into a body, is an act of repair, and Attia emphasizes the scars that such a process produces.

Central to Attia's conceptualization of scars is the idea that the scar is a new aesthetic object that has the potential to create new realities and futures. Attia critiques Western practices that attempt to hide the repair as acts of erasing history and experience, writing:

Whereas ancient societies from Africa to Japan repair while leaving the wound still visible (with kitsugi, for example, which consists in painting in gold the repaired crack in a ceramic object), the modern West applied to the letter the etymology of the word (from the Latin *reparare* which means "bringing back to the original state") by totally erasing the wound and claiming to return to the original state of the wounded thing. Keeping the wood's wounds visible, by repairing them with metal staples that allow the wound to look at you is to accept the real. What Western modernity denies by forever erasing the wound is history and therefore time.⁵²

Attia's multimedia installation at dOCUMENTA (13) 2012, *The Repair: From Occidental to Extra-Occidental Cultures*, performed this move away from Occidental practices of erasure through the display of a large collection of reassembled or repaired objects. Bowls, textiles, masks, writing tablets, and toys from formerly colonized African communities sat on archival storage shelves and in wooden cabinets; photographs of scarification practices and images of mutilated European and African soldiers from World War I were juxtaposed in slideshow wall projections; books on African anthropology, African art, and the history of surgery were bolted down on shelves; and interspersed in between were sculpted busts that Attia commissioned from artisans in Bamako and Brazzaville modeled from the reconstructed faces of soldiers from the World War I photographs.⁵³

The artwork that I have engaged up to this point has practiced various forms of repair that don't foreground mass housing. Attia's 2012 *Genealogy of the Modern* collage and installation series brings us back to housing. This paper collage series arranges photographs of French modernist mass housing projects with cut-out photographs of young minoritized men in the French suburbs and colonial-era postcards of West and North African architectural forms from world's fairs. The juxtaposition of such images presents a complex and deeply mediated genealogy that unsettles the images from their naturalized spaces of appearance (the architecture book, the colonial postcard, the ethnographic, and the journalistic). Likewise, it disrupts the naturalized history of modernist housing by revealing the multiple links between the dots (to return to Menia's articulation). For Attia there is no one original source or singular timeline: his genealogy of the modern emerges from a space of mediated flux, with people and forms in constant migration. Moreover, in this piece, by cutting different buildings out of their source texts, Attia actively reproduces (and hence also undoes) colonial planning actions of cutting through existing environments in order to build new buildings, neighborhoods, and even cities. Le Corbusier's 1942 proposal to cut through Algiers in order to create a new urban plan immediately comes to mind. Though that proposal failed, how many neighborhoods were razed under colonialism in North Africa? Attia takes severed cities, severed buildings, and severed people from across the Mediterranean and glues them back into relationships—genealogies that reveal their fragmented histories—that render visible memory loss and reveal structures of fragmentation that endure in the present. In this work, the glue, and the overlapping images, show the scar of repair.

In another iterative piece entitled *Kasbah* (2008–), Attia glues mass housing and the shantytown into relation. The project began with a set of corrugated tin bidonville roofs that filled up gallery spaces and, in some cases, required visitors to walk on them (see figure I.6). The bidonville was reduced here to its surface materials, denying the visitor access to the hidden space of life and possible economic mobility below. The impenetrability of what lies below and the literal walking on materials linked to the bidonville presents this form of mass housing as an aesthetic object seen from above, reproducing the gaze of European modernist architects and urban planners such as Roland Simounet, Michel Écochard, and Le Corbusier who studied such informal housing as they worked to develop formal mass housing projects.⁵⁴ In the Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos edition of the installation in Lisbon (*Kader Attia: Roots Also Grow in Concrete*, 2018), the bidonville rooftops and satellite antennas filled a gallery room while on one wall Attia projected his film *Normal City*



FIGURE 1.6. Kader Attia, *Kasbah*, 2008. In situ sculpture, wood, corrugated iron, TV antennas, satellite dishes, tires, found objects. Exhibition view, *Kader Attia. Roots Also Grow in Concrete*, Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Lisboa, Portugal, 2018. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Bruno Lopes.

(*Tour Robespierre*), a slow-moving camera pan of a French housing project that focuses on the aesthetic qualities of its facade and unexpected breaks in the pattern of its windows and balconies.

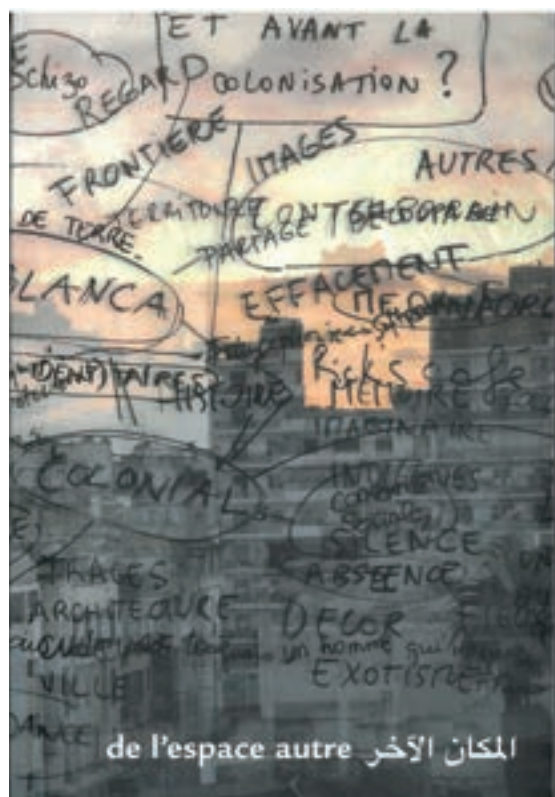
As I argue throughout this book, shantytowns and housing projects are indeed two monumental architectures deeply intertwined in history and aesthetics—each always in the shadow or the mud of the other, inseparable not only historically but to this day. Indeed, new shantytowns continue to rise up in urban areas adjacent to new apartment buildings and construction across the world, despite national and international programs to create, as in Morocco, “Cities without Slums.” By repairing the link between what has been (incorrectly) separated into informal and formal projects, we can see more clearly the visual and aesthetic objectification that both housing environments have endured and continue to endure, and speak more deeply to hegemonic perceptual enclosures and exclusions from self-representation of their inhabitants.⁵⁵ By paying attention to the uncertainty and precarity of these related environments, we can see more clearly shared formulations of self-constitution, practices of care, ethics of mutual recognition, and instances of solidarity and community building.

Reparative Epistemologies: Broken-World and Quakeful Thinking

Artwork that practices repair in turn invites, indeed demands, critical practices that create reparative epistemologies. When writing of technology and repair, Steven J. Jackson asks, “Can we identify anything like a standpoint epistemology of repair?”⁵⁶ His affirmative response lies in the concept of “broken-world thinking”: the proposition to take “erosion, breakdown and decay, rather than novelty, growth and progress” as starting points for knowledge and technological innovation.⁵⁷ This type of broken-world thinking strongly echoes the possible collective repair work that can emerge from attention to affect. As Gabriel Winant writes, “Affect theory does not discover an authentic self buried by oppression; it constructs one anew from the wreckage of defeat. In doing so, it assembles collective knowledge.”⁵⁸ Reparative epistemologies can emerge at sites of wreckage when we pay attention to affects: fleeting energies, shimmers, or atmospheres that are by definition prepersonal, that emerge from social spaces, structures, and institutions.⁵⁹ What epistemology of repair can emerge from starting points of erosion, breakdown, and decay in the Maghreb? What emerges from broken-world thinking? And how might broken-world thinking be linked to possibilities of collectively produced knowledge?

In a 2015 workshop, eleven women led by artist Katrin Ströbel and curator and cofounder of La Source du Lion Florence Renault-Darsi worked toward a reparative epistemology of Casablanca through attention to what was “broken” in the city. As documented in their 2016 edited book, *De l'espace autre* (Of another space), these women spoke and worked together and used the city as a screen upon which and through which they projected their thoughts, feelings, and bodies.⁶⁰ Unlike other collections of art, fiction, and poetry about Casablanca that seek to capture or represent the bustling city in time, this workshop created the time and space to begin identifying broken or otherwise unrecognized experiences of urban life.⁶¹ Together they created a polyvalent exchange about power, gender, embodiment, colonialism, memory, and creativity. Collectively and individually, the women produced photographs, sketches, architectural drawings, and postcards and projected palimpsests onto the city itself. As Ströbel and Renault-Darsi put it, “Pendant que les uns détruisent, les autres construisent” (While some destroy, others build).⁶² The most iconic images from the workshop are the black marker drawings on the window of the studio space that appear to redraw and repair the physical architecture outside (see figure I.7). From this reparative positionality and broken-world thinking, a different collectively produced knowledge of the city emerges. Elizabeth Freeman

FIGURE 1.7. Cover of Katrin Ströbel and La Source du Lion, *De l'espace autre* (Casablanca: Éditions La Source du Lion, 2016).



argues that affective critical practice disrupts linearity of space and time and “turns us backward to prior moments, forward to embarrassing utopias, sideways to forms of being and belonging that seem, on the face of it, completely banal.”⁶³ This description of disruption in time and movement resonates with Ströbel and Renault-Darsi’s project. In the workshop, the women literally created new space to engage with damaged histories, utopic futures, and banal presents, questioning not only from where but from when we produce knowledge and registers of experience.

In her 2017 novel *Climats de France*, Marie Richeux describes the destabilizing intensity of seeing the housing project Climat de France in Algiers for the first time. Touching the limestone, and feeling a tremor in her body, the narrator exclaims: “Entre les épaules et le ventre, à l’endroit que l’on dit être celui de l’attachement, se glissent la familiarité et l’étrangeté totale, l’excitation de la découverte et le coeur serré du retour.”⁶⁴ (Between the shoulders and stomach, at the place that is said to be the site of attachment, familiarity and the complete

unknown slip into each other, the excitement of discovery and the clenched heart of return.) She feels the incipience throughout her body, in her heart center, and while she senses that this reaction and feeling is coming from the stone of the building, at the moment it is happening, she resists analyzing or cognitively deciphering the experience:

Je ne sais pas encore que cette cité a été dessinée par le même homme que celui qui pensa l'immeuble dans lequel j'ai grandi. Je ne sais pas encore qu'une pierre de taille, fameuse, me relie à cet endroit. Je ne sais pas encore que, pour aller d'un endroit à un autre, il ne suffira pas de traverser la mer, il faudra traverser la guerre, entendre la lutte et voir se déployer dans des textes et des voix une démente escalade de violence. Je ne sais pas encore que la drogue qui se vend dans la cour aux deux cents colonnes sur ces hauteurs d'Alger et rend méfiants les quelques jeunes attroupés tout à l'heure autour de nous, je l'ai croisée dans la Cité heureuse.⁶⁵

(I don't yet know that this housing project was designed by the same man who thought up the building in which I grew up. I don't yet know that a piece of cut stone, famous stone, connects me to this place. I don't yet know that to go from one place to another, it isn't enough to cross the sea. One must cross the war, hear the struggle, and see an insane escalation of violence deployed in texts and voices. I don't yet know that the drugs that are sold in the courtyard of two hundred columns, on these heights of Algiers, drugs that render the young people who gathered around us earlier mistrustful, that I crossed those same drugs in the Cité Heureuse [a name for the housing project where she grew up].)

As I discuss more fully in chapter 2, in this novel the movement toward knowledge comes first through an intensity that emerges from the buildings and is felt in the body. This movement toward knowledge starts with a sensing of something shared.

By paying attention to the affects of this scene, we can identify yet another type of reparative epistemology. What Richeux describes in the novel as a tremor, Edouard Glissant terms a *pensée du tremblement*, or “quakeful thinking”: a trembling with the other, a trembling with difference, that has the potential to bring people and histories together into ongoing nonreductive relation.⁶⁶ Seismologically we tremble most at the crack or on the fault line that exists below a geological scar. In epistemological terms, quakeful thinking produces cracks in imbricated knowledge, and the ensuing trembling disrupts hegemonic narratives

through the recognition and full acceptance of paradox, uncertainty, ambiguity, and inexplicability. As Glissant writes,

Du tremblement lui-même à la pensée du tremblement, il y a toute la fragilité. . . . La pensée du tremblement nous éloigne des certitudes enracinées, nous supposons par exemple qu'elle inspire toute une partie de ces sciences actuelles, qu'on a donc appelées sciences du chaos, qui se méfient tant de la régie de l'universel et méconnaissent si fort la linéarité impérative.⁶⁷

(From trembling itself to quakeful thinking, there is all of fragility. . . . Quakeful thinking moves us away from rooted certainties, we can imagine for example that it inspires a whole area of current science, thus named the science of chaos, that mistrusts so much of the management of the universal and ignores imperative linearity.)

We see in this sentence many of the concepts found in the reparative impulse of affect theory: movement towards knowing that begins with affect and the body, a distancing of and from instilled cognitive knowledge, a rejection of linearity (Cartesian or otherwise) in time and space. Furthermore, according to Glissant, reparation occurs through the conjunction of this collective trembling with political and civic actions that do not tremble:

Les actions qui ne tremblent pas resteraient stériles si la pensée de la totalité monde, qui est tremblement, ne les supportait. C'est là où la philosophie exerce, et aussi la pensée du poème. Nos poèmes, d'avoir à se souvenir du temps d'avant les consciences et d'avant la parole, quand la terre n'était étendue ni en continents, ni en archipels (pas encore enfantés par les sursauts et les divisions de la haute et grande mer, celle de l'Un), vacillent du rappel de cette indistinction.⁶⁸

(Actions that don't tremble would remain sterile if the thought of the complete world [this refers to Glissant's concept of a fully inclusive and irreducible *Tout-monde*], which is trembling, didn't support them. It's there where philosophy develops, and also poetic thought. Our poems, from having to remember time before consciousness and before speech, when the world hadn't spread into continents or archipelagos [not yet birthed by the bursts and the divides of the high and wide sea, sea of the One], teeter from the reminder of this indistinction/undifferentiation.)

Quakeful thinking awakens a poetic practice that, as Glissant describes, registers primarily affective tremors in order to recall a prelinguistic undifferen-

tiated totality. But we don't have to start with an undifferentiated totality or move toward totality as a utopic goal in order to see the reparative utility of registering shared tremors as we deconstruct and then construct epistemologies. Quakeful thinking reinforces the idea in this book that repair is always a proposition of relation that is both hopeful and unstable.

The power of a Glissantian approach to repair is that it centers instability. Glissant was perhaps above all a poet committed to stirring up, disrupting, and dislocating processes of meaning making. Even when writing *Philosophie de la Relation* he was quick to undo the genre; the subtitle of the "philosophy" book is *poésie en étendue*: a poetry in/of scope, in/of expansiveness. Describing this dynamic of simultaneously making and undoing meaning that is at the center of Glissant's work, Michael Wiedorn writes: "At once present and absent, at once visible and invisible, saying something while not saying it, all the while saying it."⁶⁹ Glissant reminds us that poetry not only undoes, it also builds new structures and pathways to undo again; at once visible and invisible, it links the dots, the words, and the worlds that have been splintered and separated.

As the title of his more famous volume *Poétique de la Relation* (Poetics of relation) announces, Glissant was interested in not only the expansive and disruptive possibilities of thought through poetry, but also poetics. Most narrowly, poetics is both the art of writing and the study of literary technique and form and the effects they produce. In other words, poetics is a critical way of engaging texts "that is attentive to the specificity of their metaphors and their imaginative dimensions as well as a form of analysis that acknowledges the affective dimensions of knowledge."⁷⁰ In this book, poetics goes beyond the text to other objects, spaces, structures, and actions as a mode of analysis of the intersections of form, affect, imagination, and knowledge production. It is both analytical and creative, producing new pathways and paradigms for understanding; as Mayra Rivera writes, poetics can produce "modes of knowing, being, and acting in the world."⁷¹ For this book, reparative poetics is the opposite of a poetics of isolation and containment, of closed systems of understanding, and, in political terms, of narrowly defined and defended concepts of nationality. Poetics can produce reparative epistemologies.

This book focuses on artwork and the possibility of reparative poetics and epistemologies in the context of three Maghrebi mass housing sites: the Carrières Centrales / Hay Mohammadi neighborhood in Casablanca (chapter 1), the Climat de France housing complex in Algiers (chapter 2), and the former shantytown La Folie in Nanterre (chapter 3). The book's movement from mass housing in Casablanca to Algiers to Nanterre functions organizationally in two ways. First, it is loosely chronological in terms of architectural history:

Carrière Centrales / Hay Mohammadi and its various forms of mass housing appear from around 1920 to 1953; the large mass housing complex Climat de France was completed in 1959; the Bidonville de la Folie in Nanterre appears in the mid-1950s and is razed in 1972 but is central to the story of the October 17, 1961, Algerian march and French state-sanctioned murders in Paris.⁷² Secondly, all three housing projects have distinctly colonial-era origins, and this organization allows us to move through various aspects of decolonial movements and thought from different, but related, thematic and theoretical angles.

In chapter 1, I focus on sound and silence and approach Hay Mohammadi through artwork's sonic reparative disruptions of colonial modernist planning grids and ideologies. In chapter 2, Climat de France is read through artwork's creation of an affective anticolonial poetics of relation that attempts to rethink kinships and inheritances. Chapter 3 focuses on La Folie through artworks' attention to gender, transmission of memory, and the role of domestic space in anticolonial and antiracist movements. I attend to questions of gender and gendered spaces and representations throughout the book, but this chapter digs most deeply into the topic.

Finally, the book's conclusion, "Touching Feet and Moving Hands: Art's Repair from Affective Gesture to Capacious Home," takes a step back to reiterate how art's repair work bears the potential to unsettle histories of exclusion and redefine what is meant by *home*. Drawing again on examples from contemporary Maghrebi art on colonial-era mass housing, I theorize art's repair work as a gesture, an invitation that attempts (and sometimes fails) to bring people, histories, objects, buildings, feelings, and geographies into relation with one another.

What are the artistic afterlives of these mass housing projects? What can art build and imagine today on colonial structures from the past? How can art reveal what endures? What resists? What insists and asserts? What lives on? What is forgotten? And what unfinished business remains?⁷³ This book seeks to answer these questions by attending to the poetics of repair.

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NOTES

PREFACE

1. This latest census number reflects the arrondissement of Ben M'Sik, also referred to as Ben M'Sick or Ben Msik in transliterated Moroccan Arabic. The Prefecture d'Arrondissements Ben M'Sik, which includes Ben M'Sik and Sbata, counted 248,138 residents. Haut-Commissariat au Plan, *Recensement général*.
2. "Casablanca, Morocco Metro Area Population 1950–2023," Macrotrends, accessed June 2, 2021, <https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/21891/casablanca/population>.
3. These moving television reports chronicled the last evictions from the area: Reportage 2M, "Āḥir āyām kāryān bn msīk" (Last Days of Karian Ben M'Sik), September 10, 2015, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzAq34ycSfc>; and Hespress, "Kāryān bn msīk—al-ḥqīqa al-mt'akhira" (Karian Ben M'Sik—A delayed truth), March 11, 2016, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_oII2JvYHI.
4. See Arrif, "Le Passage précaire," and "Fragments d'une enquête."
5. Arrif, "Fragments d'une enquête," 29.
6. See Pieprzak, "Beautiful Grave," and "Participation as Patrimony."
7. For a complete history and visual documentation of the collective, see *La Source du Lion de 1 à Z*.
8. Joris and Tengour, *Poems for the Millenium*, 715.
9. Zrika, "Danse de Ben M'Sik," in *Rires de l'arbre à palabre*, 102–3 (my translation).
10. In particular, see Zrika, "Le Soleil de Ben M'Sik," also in *Rires de l'arbre à palabre*.
11. Zaki, "Transforming the City," 118.
12. Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 90.
13. Salti, "Shall We Dance?" 170.
14. Jocelyne Dakhliia and Irene Maffi claim that poetry and the written text are the primary carriers of memory and patrimony in North Africa and the Middle East. Pierre Joris and Habib Tengour's 2013 volume on North Africa in the Poems for the Millennium series showcases a long history of poetry that begins with the earliest pictograms and ends with twenty-first-century poets, spans the region from Mauritania to Libya, and includes

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translations from at least six languages. Dakhliya, *L'oubli de la cité*; Maffi, *Pratiques du patrimoine*; Joris and Tengour, *Poems for the Millennium*.

15. This statement appears in multiple essays and interviews. Cited in Alessandra, *Abdellatif Laâbi*, 21.

16. For full disclosure, I have lived in Casablanca and Paris on multiple occasions, but I have yet to travel to Algeria.

17. Simone, *Improvvised Lives*, 124.

INTRODUCTION

1. Jouder, *Enfilade*. HDB is the abbreviation for Singapore's Housing and Development Board buildings.

2. Jouder, *Tiles*.

3. Jouder, "Poetics of Mass Housing."

4. Jouder, "Poetics of Mass Housing."

5. In his essay on repair and technology, Steven J. Jackson asks: "Can the fixer know and see different things—indeed, different worlds—than the better-known figures of 'designer' or 'user'?" Jackson, "Rethinking Repair," 229.

6. Popescu, "Three Tenses," 319.

7. Popescu, "Three Tenses," 319.

8. Popescu, "Three Tenses," 310.

9. Popescu, "Three Tenses," 315, 319

10. I am grateful to one of the external readers for the press for their call for strategic qualification of reparative potential and for this phrasing.

11. Kılınç and Gharipour, *Social Housing*, 2.

12. Architectural historians such as Jean-Louis Cohen, Monique Eleb, Zeynep Çelik, and Sheila Crane have started to show how typologies of mass housing such as shantytowns and apartment buildings did not evolve in a purely causal relationship but existed simultaneously, responding relationally to each other.

13. See Sheila Crane's forthcoming book, *The City in the Shadow of the Shantytown: A Critical History of the Bidonville*.

14. It is not my intent to erase mass housing sites or exclude artist's work in Tunisia, Libya, or Mauritania from this geography. Rather, this book is an experiment in putting specific sites, artworks, and histories in relation to forge a different, resonant, temporary, and nondefinitive geography. Talbayev, *Transcontinental Maghreb*, 6.

15. Key texts include: Crane, *Mediterranean Crossroads*; Crane, "Housing as Battleground"; Çelik, *Urban Forms*; Avermaete, Karakayali, and von Osten, *Colonial Modern*; Cohen and Eleb, *Casablanca*; Chaouni "Depoliticizing Group Gamma"; Henni, *Architecture of Counterrevolution*; Kılınç and Gharipour, *Social Housing*; and Cupers, *Social Project*.

16. Feldman, *From a Nation Torn*, 69.

17. As Léopold Lambert shows in his book *Etats d'urgence*, charting colonial history through comparison does not erase the specific histories of these spaces but rather puts them into productive spatial and temporal relations with one another. In his forthcoming book *Shantytowns and the City*, Jim House also turns to comparison, arguing that

shantytowns “constitute an unparalleled vantage point from which to analyze colonial internal migrations, urban history, re-housing and repression, everyday lived experience, anti-colonial resistance, and social memory since independence.” Centering the Maghreb and producing comparative accounts when we consider the lives, afterlives, and futures of modernist mass housing moves us beyond narrow nationalist perspectives into deeper forms of relationality.

18. Benkirane, *Bidonville et recasement*.
19. Zaki, “Après le bidonville.”
20. Zaki, “Après le bidonville.”
21. Hamid Rahiche, interview by the author, February 2, 2021.
22. Benkirane, *Bidonville et recasement*.
23. Fanon, *Oeuvres*, 526, and *Wretched of the Earth*, 130.
24. Gordon, *What Fanon Said*, 20.
25. Gordon, “Through the Hellish Zone,” 7.
26. Gordon, *What Fanon Said*, 23.
27. Mud and its appearance in artwork that engages the bidonville is discussed most fully in chapter 3.
28. I thank Brahim El Guabli for his comments on this terminology.
29. Sekyi-Otu, “Fanon,” 53, 50.
30. For further reading on Moroccan and Algerian shantytowns as sites of political action, see the work of historian Jim House, specifically “Shantytowns in the City.”
31. Simone, *Surrounds*, 11.
32. Simone, *Surrounds*, 7.
33. Azoulay, *Potential History*, 580.
34. For scholarship that focuses on architectural history and urban planning from this structural perspective, see Jim House’s work. Scholarship that includes perspectives on mass housing from the ground-up includes: Silverstein, *Algeria in France*; Cohen, *Des familles invisibles*; Benkirane, *Bidonville et recasement*; Zaki, “Après le bidonville”; Arrif, *Le Passage précaire*, and “Fragments d’une enquête.”
35. For more details on the design and construction of the two monuments, see Caillet, “Le Monument d’Alger.”
36. Grabar, “Reclaiming the City,” 403–4.
37. For more reading on this project, see Amina Menia, “Enclosed @Mosaic Rooms,” accessed April 2, 2024, <https://aminamenia.com/works/enclosed-at-mosaic-rooms/>.
38. Reeves-Evison and Rainey, “Ethico-Aesthetic Repairs,” 2.
39. Menia, ““Enclosed @Mosaic Rooms.”
40. Best, “Anger and Repair,” 80.
41. Slyomovics, “Repairing Colonial Symmetry,” 208.
42. Massumi et al., “Affect and Immediation.”
43. O’Sullivan, “Aesthetics of Affect,” 128.
44. Avenue Mers Sultan, which cuts across a central district of formerly European colonial Casablanca, is known for its art deco and modernist architecture. It was also one of many sites of anticolonial resistance and demonstration, notably the July 14, 1955, anticolonial bombing of the Café Mers-Sultan that was followed by French

police suppression, anti-Moroccan violence by French residents, and a large Moroccan independence demonstration on the avenue where the Legal Frères building stood.

45. Krafl and Adey, "Architecture/Affect/Inhabitation," 226.

46. Reed, "Bureaucratic Theory," 568.

47. Toufic, *Withdrawal of Tradition*.

48. Toufic's concepts as described by Finbarr Barry Flood, "Part 2: 'Staging Traces of Histories Not Easily Disavowed,'" *Post: Notes on Modern and Contemporary Art around the Globe*, April 14, 2016, https://post.at.moma.org/content_items/783-part-2-staging-traces-of-histories-not-easily-disavowed.

49. While Attia's work on repair is in some respects central to the conceptualization of this book, it is not the subject of the book and my analysis of his work is limited to this section. For further reading, there has been an abundance of scholarship dedicated to Attia's art and writing, notably by scholars such as Hannah Feldman, Kobena Mercer, Françoise Vergès, Achille Mbembe, Jacinto Lageira, Manthia Diawara, Tarek El-Ariss, Emily Apter, and Ana Teixeira Pinto, to name but a few. In 2021, Attia also started a multipart project entitled *Fragments of Repair* with BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht and Attia's decolonial forum *La Colonie*, which brought together scholars, writers, and critics: Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Maria Hlavajova, La Colonie, Sven Lütticken, Wietske Maas, Catherine Malabou, Olivier Marboeuf, Jamila Mascot, Achille Mbembe, Wayne Modest, Omedi Ochieng, Stefania Pandolfo, Rachael Rakes, Rolando Vázquez, Françoise Vergès, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore. "Fragments of Repair," BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, accessed April 2, 2024, <https://www.bakonline.org/program-item/fragments-of-repair/>.

50. Attia, "Accident as Repair," 35:52–37:00.

51. Feldman, "As the World Constricts," 65.

52. Feldman, "As the World Constricts," 65.

53. This description relies on images of the exhibit and the detailed description provided in West, "Repair as Redemption."

54. This top-down aestheticizing gaze continues to this day when we think for example of Rem Koolhaas's engagement with shantytowns in Lagos.

55. In her forthcoming book on the bidonville, *In the Shadow of the City*, Sheila Crane challenges the idea that shantytowns in North Africa were informal settlements, showing how they were in fact formal spaces administered by colonial administrations. When we look at televised reports of bidonville razing in Morocco, many inhabitants show official documentation from the colonial period that allowed them to inhabit their space. In particular see Hespress, "Kāryān bn msīk—al-ḥqīqa al-mt'akhīra" (Karian Ben M'Sik—A delayed truth), March 11, 2016, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_oII2JvYHI.

56. Jackson, "Rethinking Repair," 229.

57. Jackson, "Rethinking Repair," 221.

58. Winant, "We Found Love."

59. I follow the definition of affect as it emerges in the work of Brian Massumi. Affect differs from emotion and feelings. Furthermore, as Eric Shouse elucidates: "Affect is not a personal feeling. Feelings are *personal* and *biographical*, emotions are *social* and

affects are *prepersonal*.” Unlike emotion and feeling, affect “cannot be fully realized in language” and is “always prior to and/or outside of consciousness.” Shouse, “Feeling, Emotion, Affect.”

60. The participants were Laure Augereau, Yasmina Bouzid, Zineb Benjelloun, Aicha El Beloui, Nisrine Chiba, Armelle Dakouo, Soraya El Kahlaoui, Hind Oudrhiri, Florence Renault-Darsi, Bouchra Salih, Katrin Ströbel, Corinne Troisi, and Syham Weigant.

61. For a discussion of these collections, see Pieprzak, “Nostalgia.”

62. Ströbel and La Source du Lion, *De l'espace autre*, 5.

63. Freeman, *Time Binds*, xiii.

64. Richeux, *Climats de France*, 15.

65. Richeux, *Climats de France*, 19.

66. Manthia Diawara translates *pensée du tremblement* as “quakeful thinking” in his essay “Kader Attia: A Poetics of Re-appropriation.” Michael Wieborn calls it “the thought of trembling” in “Glissant’s *Philosophie de la Relation*.” In chapter 2, I explore and develop Glissant’s concept of “poetics of relation.”

67. Glissant, *Philosophie de la Relation*, 54.

68. Glissant, *Philosophie de la Relation*, 56.

69. Wiedorn, “Glissant’s *Philosophie de la Relation*.”

70. Rivera, “Poetics Ashore,” 242.

71. Rivera, “Poetics Ashore,” 242.

72. In my reading of mass housing in Nanterre, I have constrained my analysis to art-work that engages the bidonville, and I do not engage the large body of literature, visual art, film, and music that has been produced since the 1980s on/from/of Parisian mass housing projects called HLM: *habitations de loyer modéré*. Contemporary French studies has addressed much attention to the HLM, and while more work certainly remains to be done from a Maghrebi perspective, this falls beyond the scope of this book and its chronology.

73. I borrow the verbs *endure*, *resist*, *insist*, and *assert* from Kristin Ross’s introduction to her book *May '68 and Its Afterlives*. Ross uses the term *afterlife* to articulate that “the events of May '68 cannot now be considered separately from the social memory and forgetting that surround them. That memory and that forgetting have taken material forms, forms whose history I trace in this book” (1). I borrow the verb *live on* from Susan Slyomovics in her work on French Algerian monuments and statues, who like Ross shows how the memory of an event, as well as the object of its memorialization, is deeply embedded in living social memory. See, for example, Slyomovics, “Patrimoine.”

CHAPTER 1. SONIC REPAIRS TO THE GRID

1. I will use the name *Carrières Centrales* when writing of the colonial-period bidonvilles and Hay Mohammadi to reference the neighborhood beyond its bidonvilles, and also its history from 1956 to the present.

2. Avermaete and Casciato, *Casablanca Chandigarh*, 8.

3. For further reading on Yto Barrada, see Chubb, “Differential Treatment”; Salti, “Sleepers, Magicians, Smugglers”; Karroum, “Yto Barrada”; Powers, “Yto Barrada”; Enwezor, “Radiant Conflagration”; Azimi, “Tangerine Dreams.”