



Art, Architecture and Urbanism in Morocco ARAMFO/MSU Denver, January 2017

In conjunction with ARAMFO, our short term study abroad spent two weeks in Morocco, traveling from Casablanca, to Marrakech, Fez, Meknes, and Rabat. ARAMFO arranged a two day conference at the University of Hassan II that revolved around the art, architecture, history, and religious identity of Morocco, both past and present. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for students to hear from local scholars and to meet students. On the second day, we went to the Academy of Traditional Arts at the Mosque of Hassan II, and were allowed to go through the workshops and interact with the students there learning both traditional and contemporary techniques of ceramics, weaving, metalworking, leather, and woodworking.





In Marrakech and Fez, we stayed in wonderful riads (one in a 900 year old building) and were treated to fabulous meals for breakfast and dinner, both traditional and more continental. The riad in Fez in particular was a delight. The owner, Muhammad, had the chef, Khadija, give us a couscous cooking demonstration, and Muhammad was a most helpful and gracious host, playing rummy for two hours with students (he won every match). The local guide ARAMFO arranged for in Fez, Hakim, was a great source of information, and he took us to visit a ceramics coop where one of the students was able to practice her kick-wheel throwing technique.



The guide and driver who picked us up from the airport, and were with us through the entirety of the trip were wonderful, and they took us for lunch at a Berber house on one day and dinner on another. They also arranged for Berber musicians to come to the riad in Marrakech to play for us during dinner, a definite highlight of the trip.



Through these interactions, the visits to the university and academy in Casablanca, and numerous visits to madrasas, mosques, funduqs, and the like, students were exposed to a broad range of artistic techniques and cultural experiences.

Dr. Leila Armstrong
Visiting Faculty
Department of Art and Art History
Metropolitan State University of Denver
armstrle@msudenver.edu