



J. H. Laure: housing complex, El Hank (1953)
Photograph taken by Jean-Louis Cohen in 1991

CASABLANCA

TYOLOGICAL LABORATORY

In Casablanca, we expect to immerse ourselves in a city and a country of enormous architectural and cultural richness. With a particular focus on the city's pivotal position as a crossroad between local and global forces, the trip sets out in search of the cultural conventions visible in the Typologies of ordinary Casablanca. The specific climatic conditions that play a central role in the development of the Moroccan home lend immediate significance to our survey. We will have the opportunity to explore and critically reflect on these architectural features as we walk through different neighbourhoods looking at the vernacular ancient medina, French colonial types, the reinterpretation of the courtyard house in new 20th century medina, innovative modernist designs on climate and living habits, as well as recent high density neighbourhoods. The latter will allow us to understand contemporary strategies of urban development, at the border between formal and informal.

Casablanca's history is punctuated by various transformative epochs blending indigenous and colonial influences. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the city's narrative has been mainly shaped by interventions under the French protectorate which has left an indelible mark on Casablanca's morphological patterns. Typical French urbanism was followed by the subsequent emergence of modernist era and CIAM's involvement. The rapid growth of the population generated a vibrancy that was further heightened during World War II, and was famously depicted in the film „Casablanca,“ which showcased the city as a hub of intrigue and cosmopolitanism. While this shaped Western narratives, locals might be more familiar with the social and cultural challenges the city faced during this period, as well as the tremendous urban development that followed the declaration of Moroccan independence in 1956 and that lasts until today.

Confronted with unexpected urban patterns, typologies, architectural motifs, decorative styles, and landscapes, we will experiment with diverse methods of documentation, sketches and photographs that will foster discussions with students from the local architecture university, allowing us to delve into the nuances of each architectural encounter. This journey will be an immersive exploration of Casablanca's architecture, facilitated by local artists, personalities, and experts who will provide unique insights into this exotic yet surprisingly familiar context.

LINK

CHRIST-GANTENBEIN.ARCH.ETHZ.CH

TEAM

Julien Bellot
Victoria Easton
Giulio Galasso
Lorenzo landelli
Margherita Innocenti
Tina K ng
Meng Li
Mariapaola Michelotto
Thierry Vuattoux
L onie Zelger

SEMINAR WEEK

22.10. – 28.10.2023
Expense category
D (750 – 1000 CHF)
10 – 21 participants
contact:
vuattoux@arch.ethz.ch