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jevuspropose#13

Monia Ben Hamouda: *The Eye, the Hands, the Lunacy of Lunar Sightings*

Exhibition: 11 May – 9 July, 2022

Opening: 10 May, 6 – 8 pm

For jevuspropose#13, Anissa Touati (French exhibition maker and independent curator) invites the artist Monia Ben Hamouda (*1991, lives and works in al-Qayrawan and Milan).

The Eye, the Hands, the Lunacy of Lunar Sightings is an exhibition about how the behavior of animals and humans changes in relation to the moon. Especially how the vision of the moon is conceived within Monia Ben Hamouda's family and her cultural context. Indeed, the moon and its phases are an important element in the Muslim religion. Ramadan takes place during the ninth lunar month, and the end of the daily fast is marked by seeing the moon. Monia Ben Hamouda remembers it today as a ritual, a ritual of waiting for the moon.

Knowing that in places on earth where the moon cannot be seen, for astronomical or climatic reasons, clouds, Ben Hamouda is approaching the vision of space at jevuspropose as if in search of a signal. She approaches the space by directing herself, taking a guided posture in front of the architecture. Ben Hamouda says: «I enter a space and look for the right direction. It's a cultural thing. directions, the sky, the moon, it's part of the atavistic way of inhabiting the spaces of my family. Also, in the show, the smell element is for me very related to the architecture, how it remains inside the walls, how the spices can hit you so violently. »

In the exhibition, the other level of reading refers to the elements that, according to Arab and Muslim tradition, give an esoteric vision of religion. The sculptures question how religion coexists with pagan or Berber traditions, and how the boundary between the religious sphere and magical practices is at times unclear.

The Hands relate to figurative parts that we find in Monia Ben Hamouda's sculptures: There are in fact hands, composed of the calligraphy. Many of these are in the position in which usually the couscous is shelled, a practice that in Arab countries is done by hand. One of the ways through which the evil eye can be made, is to use the hand of a dead person to shell the couscous.

All the works in the exhibition are interconnected and rely on one another. The sculptures can be threatening, be a vehicle of evil eye, but they can also protect us. Inside them, they have the possibility to hurt and to heal. The series also talks about co-dependence, about family, and how within the family there can be different figures, different possibilities and different relationships. Of how each element of the family can enact violence or cure. These sculptures are therefore a family. They resemble each other, they balance each other, they love each other and they hurt each other.

Anissa Touati on thoughts by Monia Ben Hamouda



Anissa Touati

Anissa Touati is a French exhibition maker and an independent curator trained as an archeologist. She also serves as the founding director of the cultural organization Octavia. She is the curator-at-large of Paris Internationale, the curator of the pavilion for a Mediterranean nation of the Biennial of Lagos 2023 (Nigeria) and the curator in chief of the launch of the Thalie Foundation in Arles (France). She is the former artistic director of Contemporary Istanbul and the former associate director of the Chalet Society in Paris. Since 2021, She is a committee member of the MAH Geneva, a member of the acquisition committee of the FRAC Corse.

Monia Ben Hamouda

Monia Ben Hamouda (b. 1991, Milan) lives and works between al-Qayrawan and Milan. Following the belief that each individual is inextricably connected to their family tree and the psychological universe of their ancestors, she attempts to master her influences in a contemporary and constantly changing landscape. Born into a Muslim community as the daughter of an Islamic calligrapher, the artist navigates and confronts her generational heritage through what she calls a shamanic process – creating works that act as gestural exorcisms of the expectations placed upon her by tradition and the politicized present, drawing their power from the urgency of expression. Her visual language, which translates into a broad range of formal approaches, is steeped in cultural-religious symbology and rituals.

Her work has been presented in various venues such ChertLüdde, Berlin; Et.AI, San Francisco; Ada, Rome; Galerie Valeria Cetraro, Paris; Universitätssammlungen Kunst, Dresden; Alios 16me Biennale d'Art Contemporain, La Teste de Buch; Marselleria Permanent Exhibition, Milan.

Awards include: Torino Social Impact Art Award x Artissima; Art Business Accelerator Grant Artwork Archive + Redline Contemporary Art Center; DUCATO Contemporary Art Prize Special Award.

jevouspropose

jevouspropose is a curatorial series by Sabina Kohler and accomplices.

Several times a year, jevouspropose invites a personality to propose an artist with a specific group of works. The works will be installed in the space of jevouspropose, celebrated with an opening and remain on view for a while. At the same time, the respective presentation is expanded and continued in virtual space: the proposer and the artist will have a chat, a visual ping-pong on the works and themes on display ([instagram.com/je_vous_propose](https://www.instagram.com/je_vous_propose)).