

rhizome

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EXPOSITION

stasis

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07 نوفمبر NOV 2020 - 16 جانفي JAN 2021

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Algiers, November 02, 2020

rhizome presents «Stasis», an exhibition by Bardi.

For its inaugural exhibition, rhizome invites Algerian artist Bardi from November 07, 2020 to January 16, 2021 for the exhibition «Stasis».

PRESS RELEASE

With his foray into the world of painting Bardi paints a picture of our societies, reflecting without indulgence on what man does to himself and his socio-cultural environment.

From its inception, his pictorial world has been populated by strange and grotesque characters. His animals and entities that float and hover in space shamelessly displaying their deformities and their mocking gazes. Laughing at the world, ironic, they carry the vanity, arrogance, ambition, pride and other aspirations of men.

A certain sense of humor, however, mitigates the harshness of this irony and a tenderness shine through what is at times harsh criticism. There is a tenderness for human weakness which Bardi derides as if to defuse the drama of reality.

Stasis is the title chosen by the artist for this exhibition the strength of the works of which lies in their ability to lay bare the contradictions that run through and disturbs our lives. By Stasis the Greeks designated a political, moral and social crisis resulting from a conflict internal to a city-state (the Greek Polis). It is also the name of the god who embodies civil war and disagreement among a people. That is what Bardi's work is about: those historic moments that shook the daily lives of thousands of people. Algerians—whom Bardi represents with

suffering bodies—spread out, dismembered at the same time human and monsters. Sensitive to the socio-political conflicts that have invaded the world today, in his recent works, where the beauty and the ugliness of men are intertwined, Bardi charges these grotesque works of art with the critical role of provoking a reaction in the viewer at once comical, bitter and anxious. They constitute a dissent from the usual classical moral, the socio-cultural and aesthetic standards that, as a result, they call into question.

The artist readily acknowledges that he exists «... in derision and caricature» which is the only way for him to «sublimate the present» and express a position towards the political, social or cultural context. Admittedly, his works are inhabited by deformed human figures that can be interpreted as a provocation because they are deliberately ambiguous, but this vision of the real carries an expression of social disappointment. These disarticulated, deformed, mutilated bodies are those «of the people I meet every day. These are the tired bodies of Algerian workers in whose faces that I see expressed only weariness and dull eyes as if everyone is waiting for the messiah. «

Excerpt from the text by **Nadira Laggoune-Aklouche**, art critic and independent curator.

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About rhizome:

Founded in 2017, Rhizome has continued to evolve as a non-physical space for three years.

The “rhizome” model as a cultural institution was initially inspired by rhizomatic thought developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. A concept which apprehends multiplicities, in opposition to the hierarchical and arborescent conception of knowledge. It sees culture and the arts as a map or a wide range of influences and fosters a nomadic system of growth and dissemination. This conception has never had more meaning and relevance than in the context (local and global) in which we are currently living, that of the movement.

To evolve and adapt to a constantly changing world requires a great deal of agility, which requires adaptation but also, a reconsideration of rigid institutional models, those which involve subordination organized in several levels or strata. So we come to the ideological decolonization of the institution, as it is constituted today, and to rethink its functioning as we know it.

We therefore propose, through rhizome, an alternative operating model. An experimental place of creation, meeting and discussion, dedicated to artistic and creative distinction, for the benefit of individuals and communities. rhizome offers a place of residence, a creative atelier and a gallery. A cultural mediation program involving the neighborhood, as well as training programs for artists and professionals of the arts sector are proposed. Regular public programming is also offered to accompany the key exhibitions presented.

We see rhizome as a ground of proposition and negotiation, where discord is not a taboo, but an engine for reaching consensus, federating and reconciling our pluralities.

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About the artist:

Bardi, whose real name is Mehdi Djelil, is an Algerian artist born in 1985. He graduated from the Superior School of Fine Arts in Algiers. Bardi lives and works in Algiers, Algeria. He has exhibited since the 2000s in Algeria and abroad. Bardi's work is currently on display at the Middle East Institute, Washington D.C, USA.

Exhibitions (selection) :

2019 Waiting for Omar
Gatalato, Wallach Art Gallery,
New York, USA.

2019 VI Mediterranean Art
Meeting of Alicante, Spain.

2019 Waypoint Algeria,
AllArtNow Lab, Stockholm,
Sweden.

2018 HORS CASES, Seen Art
Gallery, Algiers, Algeria.

2017 Rasm, Museum of
Modern and Contemporary Art
in Algiers, Algeria.

2016 Picturie Générale III,
Marche Volta, Algiers, Algeria.

2014 OFF Dakart, 11th Biennial
of Contemporary African Art,
Dakar, Senegal.

2010 Algerian Cultural Week in
Moscow, Russia.

2009 2nd Pan-African Festival,
School of Fine Arts of Algiers,
Algeria.