

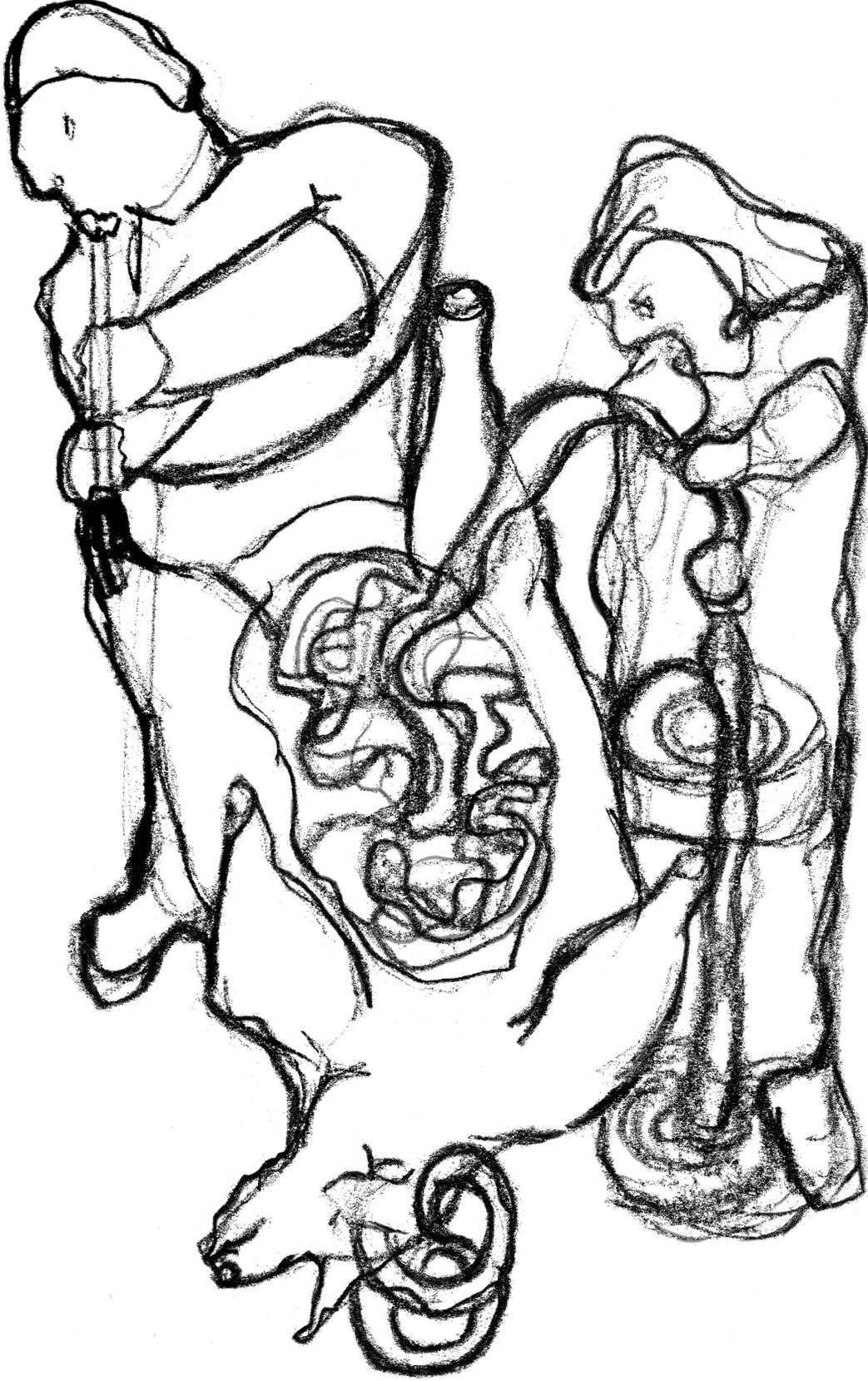
rhizome

ريزوم

معرض
EXPOSITION

82, rue Didouche
Mourad, Alger
(2ème étage - porte
de droite)

82, شارع ديدوش مراد،
الجزائر (الطابق الثاني -
الباب الأيمن)



أمليل Oumlil المايا Meya EL

أفريل 10 2021 - مارس 20 2021
AVR 10 2021 - MAR 20 2021

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أفاندا
AFAC ARAB FUND FOR
ARTS AND CULTURE
الصندوق العربي
للثقافة والفنون

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Algiers, le 18 march 2021

“Oumlil”, the next exhibition to be held at rhizome.

An exhibition of EL Meya (Maḡa Benchikh EL Fegoun) that includes works to be presented for the first time to the public, as they are part of a book we are releasing alongside this exhibition. Exhibition will be on view from March 20 to April 2021 ,10.

PRESS RELEASE

Oumlil is the first monograph of artist EL Meya comprising a series of works she developed between 2015 and 2017.

The book encompasses more than twenty paintings and sketches and was purposefully designed and produced in a style and format to mimic a "mobile exhibition".

The handcrafted on a limited edition book also includes essays by five female authors, including Anissa Bouayed: "On EL Meya and Oumlil: the Ogress is her", Guillemette Grobon "EL Meya, face to face painter", Hajar Bali : "EL Meya, painting, and the elusive energy", Karima Lazali : "An erotic of boredom" and Bernadette Dufrene-Nadia Saou: "Forging ahead! A woman in painting".

On El Meya and Oumlil : the Ogress, is her ! Extracts from the text by Anissa Bouayed

Oumlil, Oum Lil. This project has a name, a name that is composed as one weaves a web, polysemous by its interweaving of Arab references to the mother and to the night, of Berber reference to the Mediterranean Sea. It is like an invitation to think broadly, to embrace a long history, with reciprocal influences between civilizations.

(...)

The Oumlil project is at the junction of an anthropological approach on rites, myths, the sacred and aesthetic reflections on the representation of symbols, on the limits of the representation of sexuality, body, violence, death... that gives it this enormous transgressive charge. There is something performative in this risk-taking. The challenge is there, in the transgression. "There is no innocent eye," said the art historian Ernst Gombrich.

(...)

The first impression falls under the category of visual shock. Although the scope is narrow, EL Meya has avoided falling into provocation with its risks of being gratuitous, counterproductive and repulsive.

Her strategy is to astonish, even to disturb; which makes us stop to take the time to understand what painting means, for her and for us. She stretches her canvases between reality and us, to fight against "obviousness", appearances, against things "taken for granted", which "are obvious"... She asks us to walk from canvas to canvas, canvases in front of which we would "freeze-frame", as if in front of so many screens, to disturb us first, so that we then wonder, once past this first feeling of worrying strangeness.

(...)

Thereby Oumlil project connects portraits of women but also of men to the question of power; she seizes in the family –this smallest common denominator of the social structure- that she scrutinizes at different times; these earthy and disturbing couples to discuss the question of the distribution of authority in marriage; in the house with "gendered" spaces such as Le Salon or La Rue...

She reveals the impact of the domestic division of labor that applies to these notions of interior and exterior spaces as so many hunts held by one or the other sex.

(...)

These works are stimulating, because they require from us an active reading, by looking for what is below as much as what is seen above, or that we imagine next to them, in this immaterial off-screen yet necessary and present to our minds.

(...)

Oumlil offers us a rotating reading, allowing us to circulate in a real regime of the imaginary, which is much more than an accumulation of unambiguous and undisputed archetypes. And this is undoubtedly the lesson that can be drawn from this representation of a world strongly imbued with morality but which is not presented as a definitively closed system.

EL Meya also shows that personal identity coexists with statutory identities, that there can be spaces of non-conformity ... and that the power of imagination allows playing with borders, to make them shift.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST :

EL Meya

Born in 1988 in Constantine, Algeria
Graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Algiers in 2013. Lives and works in Algiers, Algeria.

The artist's painting, in its naive guise, is by no means innocent. It is about body, flesh and wounds. EL Meya's work questions the representations of her Algerian, North African, and Mediterranean society, the place of painting in view of the history of art.

She stretches her canvases between reality and us, to fight against "obviousness", appearances, against things "taken for granted", which "are obvious"... She asks us to walk from canvas to canvas, canvases in front of which we would "freeze-frame", as if in front of so many screens, to disturb us first, so that we then wonder, once past this first feeling of worrying strangeness.

Her images are uncluttered and go straight to the point: grasping the symbolic hold on our actions.

EL Meya's work has been featured in many exhibitions in Algeria and abroad,

EL Meya is represented by rhizome gallery, Algiers.

Selected solo exhibitions

2021 Solo exhibition, curated by Fayçal Baghriche, Galerie Carrée, Villa Arson, Nice, France

Selected group exhibitions

2019 Waiting for Omar Gatlato, Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, New York, USA

2018 Hors Cases, Le printemps de l'Art, Seen Art Gallery, palace of Culture Moufdi Zakaria, El Madania, Algeria

2017 Youmein Festival of Tangier, Tangiers Morocco

2014 The 11th edition of The Dakar Biennale, Senegal

2016 Picturie Générale III, Marché Volta, Algiers, Algeria

2015 Les Chantiers de l'Art, Ateliers Sauvages, Algiers, Algeria

2014 Picturie Générale II, La Baignoire Experience, Algiers, Algeria

Residencies

2021 La Villa Arson, Nice, France

2018 La Friche Belle de Mai, Marseille, France and Residence Mediterranee, The French Institute, Algeria

Publications

2021 Oumlil, a monograph by EL Meya

Collections

Claude and France Lemand Collection, L'Institut du monde arabe, Paris, France

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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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