

centre
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ramin haerizadeh
rokni haerizadeh
hesam rahmanian

“le diwan du démon”

nave

02.06.2023 — 18.02.2024

curator : Delphine Masson

in collaboration with : Julie Becton Gillum, Kiori Kawai,
Mandana Mohit, Sohrab Mahdavi, Pirouz Taji

with the participation of : Aslon Arfa, Nazli Ghassemi, Homa Farly,
Christopher Lord, Minnie McIntyre,
Mohammed Rahis Mollah, Jaleh Shaditalab

The three Iranian artists Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian (RRH) for present “Le Diwan du Démon”, their first solo exhibition in an art institution in France at the intersection of two recent exhibitions in Abu Dhabi and Venice⁰¹. In the nave, the trio imagine a new landscape, according to the term they have chosen to describe their work and to consider as a living organism in perpetual mutation. This landscape is inspired by new reflections on the progress of the world and the wars that affect it, on the wounds inflicted on beings and the earth, but also on the forces of life and regeneration drawing on encounters, imagination, poetry and dance. Produced for the exhibition, a large sculpture titled *Hayula* takes a comprehensive look at the turmoil of the world from the epicentre of a region of Iran whose multiple aspects of political, social and cultural history resonate across time and borders. This new work contributes to the overall interpretation of the exhibition as an alternative record of our times, navigating the myriad ramifications that link our chaotic present to a cosmogonic vision rooted in the Persian original myths.

01 Exhibitions “Parthenogenesis”
at NYUAD Art Gallery, Abu
Dhabi (01.03 — 12.06.2022) and
“Alluvium”, a project outside of
OGR-Torino in Venice, Complesso
dell’Ospedaletto, Italy (23.04 —
27.11.2023).

Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmani (RRH) belong to a generation of artists born with the advent of the Iranian Islamic regime in 1979 and who grew up during the Iran-Iraq War. They began their artistic journeys in a context of cultural withdrawal that was hardly conducive to distinctive expressions, and they found alternative spaces and conditions for creation underground in Tehran, as well as stimulating resources of solidarity and collective energy.

This collective energy is what they wanted to reinvent by living and working together since they moved to United Arab Emirates in 2009, where they went into exile after being forced to leave Tehran. They have thus developed a generative and rhizomatic collective work in three voices, marked by a great heterogeneity of practices associating painting, sculpture, collage or video, travelling between eras and cultures, drawing on numerous sources of reference and knowledge. The constant flow of media coverage provides artists with an ever-renewed resource that they use in "fluid paintings", animated films that combine news images and painting to open reality to strange phantasmagorical visions.

Through their collective practice, Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmani transform themselves into a "creature with six eyes", as they like to describe themselves. A creature with their combined energies and languages, enabling their various perspectives to coexist and even clash. These confrontations or «negotiations fields» are at the heart of a dynamic of questions and answers, of mutually enriching ideas that allow the three artists to go beyond their subjectivity and take unexpected paths.

“ In our practice, production is performance, and performance is collective action leading to dance, art and politics. (RRH) ”

The practice of the trio is regularly opened to other people, friends, artists, authors or artisans who regularly take part in the projects, allowing the collective to continuously reconfigure itself by welcoming new otherness and exploring new fields.

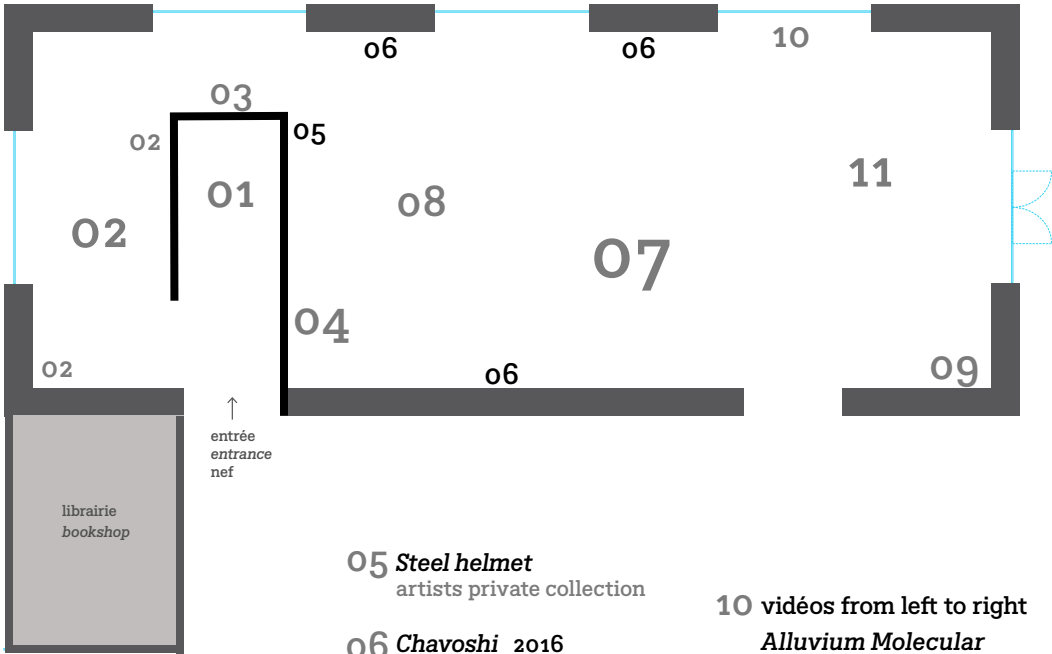
'Dastgah' is one of the strategies that allow the trio to distance themselves from any form of intentionality. Borrowing from a Persian word, a technical term in traditional Iranian music that designates a melodic matrix allowing for improvisation, 'dastgah' also means system, tool, or machine.

The three artists activate the dastgah in ritualistic creative moments, embodying somewhat grotesque characters with fantasy and humour. Using accessories such as flippers, sprays or bicycle wheels as prostheses that hinder their gestures, they transform themselves into real painting machines. Traces of paint emerge and spread uncontrollably through the space, drawing the primordial weft and motifs that the artists return to extend with their newfound subjectivity.

As a result of these strategies of decentering and shared creation, of multiple interactions and contexts, the works of Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmani (RRH) develop in various directions at the same time, act and react to each other as they grow autonomously, like an ever-expanding organism evolving by its logic.

the nave

All works : courtesy the artists & Galerie
In Situ-fabienne leclerc, Grand Paris.



01 *They're Not Made up of Anything but Space*, 2021

7 sculptures : glazed stoneware, clay and black granite stone. Funded by NYUAD.

02 *The Mehregan Asylum center*, 2018 – 2023

Plexiglass and plastic/resin model, 3D printed, acrylic paint, vinyl text on wall. In collaboration with Pirouz Taji and with the participation of Jaleh Shaditalab.

03 *From Sea to Dawn* 2016 – 2017

Vidéo, 6 mn 21 s.

04 *Boys and animals* 2018 – 2022

Vinyl text on wall. In collaboration with Mandana Mohit and with the participation of Nazli Ghassemi, Minnie McIntyre, Christopher Lord.

05 *Steel helmet*

artists private collection

06 *Chavoshi* 2016

Vinyl text on wall, painting. Rewritten in collaboration with Mandana Mohit and Sohrab Mahdavi, with the participation of Nazli Ghassemi, Minnie McIntyre, Christopher Lord.

07 *O'you people* 2019 – 2022

Gesso, acrylic, epoxy on MDF.

08 *Memories Well Up from the Heart and Draw a Curtain on the Eye* 2019

Porcelain, copper, iron, plastic and motor. With the participation of Homa Farley (ceramist) and Mohammed Rais Mullah (welder).

09 *Alluvium* 2021 – 2023

Acrylic, gesso, ink, water-color, gouache, collage on clay lates and iron, set of 27 plates. In collaboration with Kiori Kawai and Julie Becton Gillum. With the support of Black Mountain College Prize 2022.

10 vidéos from left to right *Alluvium Molecular Structure*, 2022, with the participation of Mohamed Rahis Mollah Lenth

6 min 39 sec.
3 films of Kiori Kawai et Julie Becton Gillum :

穗 -eared, 7 min 58 sec

Encounter, 16 min 30 sec

路 -the path-, 26 min 34 sec

These films are a kinetic response to the sculpture *Alluvium* (2022) commissioned by Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, Hesam Rahmanian with the support of Black Mountain College Museum Prize, 2022.

11 *Hayula* 2021 – 2023

Acrylic, gesso, ink, gouache, collage on clay plates and iron, set of 99 plates. In collaboration with Kiori Kawai and Julie Becton Gillum. Production cccod with the support of Black Mountain College Prize 2022.

01 *They're Not Made up of Anything but Space*

2021 | 7 sculptures : glazed stoneware, clay and black granite stone

The exhibition is accessed via a narrow underground room which houses a series of sculptures that the artists refer to as a 'hole'. The sculptures are the expression of a gesture that shapes the void in the clay, creating a negative space.

The artists are developing a metaphor for exile and the sense of loss that accompanies it. They draw on a concept developed by the philosopher Roberto Casati on the relationship between 'the hole and the host':

“ Holes are not abstractions but individuals, even though they are only made of space. They are not part of the material objects in which they are housed /.../; rather, they are immaterial bodies, situated on the surface of their hosts.⁰² ”

In this metaphor, the exile appears as a void, a cavity that shares only a surface with its external environment, like a skin with which it interacts without ever breaking through.

This reflection on the void, which runs through the exhibition, also echoes the approach of the artists, who are committed to opening up spaces, creating gaps to better welcome the Other and bring the unexpected into being.

02 Roberto Casati and Achille C. Varzi 'Holes and Other Superficialities', *The philosophical Review*, Vol. 105, n°1 (january 1996).

02 *The Mehregan Asylum center*

2018 – 2023 | plexiglass and plastic/resin model, 3D printed, acrylic paint, vinyl text on wall

The project, which develops from exhibition to exhibition, focuses on the renovation of a psychiatric hospital in Tehran. The hospital is gradually being redesigned to create a humanist environment geared towards the well-being of all the residents, human and non-human alike. This evolving project carried out in collaboration with the architect Pirouz Taji and the sociologist Jaleh Shaditalab, also addresses the various strata of Iran's recent history and its architecture.

“ The hospital has been remodeled by different official groups at different times, each adding their own mark to it without much consideration for providing a better environment for the patients. So, we imagined a new model working with an architect friend, that allows for a more interactive and open environment for the patients, the pedestrians, medical staff, animals and plants. ⁰³ ”

03 *From Sea to Dawn*

2016 – 2017 | Vidéo, 6 mn 21 s

As part of the practice of ‘fluid paintings’ developed by the artists, the film *From Sea to Dawn* deals more specifically with the experience of exile in a vision that is transcended by painting and drawing. Using images from media reports, the artists paint chimerical creatures on the faces and bodies of thousands of migrants making their way to better lives. Breaking with the usual view of migration, the overlay technique enables a more universal counter-narrative to emerge, replacing the reality perceived through the prism of the media with another story shaped by dreams.

03 RRH, exhibition catalog
Parthenogenesis, NYUAD Art
Gallery, Abu Dhabi, 2022 (p.27).

04 *Boys and animals*

2018 – 2022 | vinyl text on wall

06 *Chavoshi*

2016 | vinyl text on wall, painting

As the foundation of a shared memory that they continue to explore, the Iran-Iraq War is developed throughout numerous works of the exhibition. Its impacts are also at the heart of the mural poem *Boys and Animals*. The narrative describes the experience of the conflict on child soldiers and animals, innocent beings are thrown into chaos and tragedy. This text is part of the «Unfaithful Poems», a collective writing process developed by the artists by involving various authors. The text is shaped through a chain of successive rewritings and translations, gradually shifting its focus and nuances according to the cultural references of the different participants. This is a rewriting of the poem 'From Ismael' by the Iranian author Rez Baraheni, written during the Iran-Iraq War for another poet, his friend Ismael Shahroudi. Ismael Shahroudi was hospitalised until his death at Mehregan Hospital, which we discuss at the start of the exhibition.

Interwoven within mural paintings, the poem *Chavoshi* addresses the issue of exile, the inner torments and the sense of loss that accompany it. This «unfaithful poem» was written collectively by different authors, all of whom have experienced uprooting.

07 *O'you people*

2019 – 2022 | gesso, acrylic, epoxy on MDF

Real matrix for a body of work in the exhibition, the poem *Boys and animals* inspired many of the motifs and subjects of this large floor painting. At the heart of the exhibition, *O'you people* is a huge landscape of rivers, whirlpools and craters. It has been created by summoning the 'dastgah', that creative moment when artists transform themselves into painting machines. In this large fresco, the cartographic scale is combined with a macroscopic vision to penetrate the thousands of details of a thriving life, populated by land and sea animals, fantastic creatures or humans captured in their ultra-connected daily lives.

Bringing together all the strata of life, this alternative landscape conjures up another dimension of the earth's history: the industrial exploitation of its resources, and that of oil, which fuels the geopolitical tensions and recurring conflicts of the Middle East.

The question of war, a central theme in the artists' work, is addressed here from the standpoint of nature and its suffering. The Iran-Iraq War, which took place during their childhood, forms the basis of a collective memory that they continue to explore.

08 *Memories Well Up from the Heart and Draw a Curtain on the Eye*

2019 | porcelain, copper, iron, plastic and motor

Drawing its inspiration from debris, objects and war-related feelings, this sculpture/fountain was created in collaboration with the artisan welder Mohamed Rahis Mollah, whose language the artists do not speak. To ask him to create a form expressing the flow of water on the ground, the artists made a bowing gesture, like a prayer. This exchange is part of a creative strategy entitled 'Pond of Language'.

// 'Pond of Language' is a way of making objects that opens up the idea of transposing language to dance through gesticulation so that the unspoken can be understood through performance. (RRH) //

09 *Alluvium*⁰⁴

2021 – 2023 | acrylic, gesso, ink, watercolor, gouache, collage on clay plates and iron, set of 27 plates

10 *Videos* 2022

11 *Hayula*

2021 – 2023 | acrylic, gesso, ink, gouache, collage on clay plates and iron, set of 99 plates

Alluvium is a series of sculptures composed of small paintings on clay plates hanging from metal structures, like constellations in a precarious balance. The paintings and collages reinterpret articles from a wide range of media. Linked to each other, they establish connections between different events and cultural references, increasing the number of angles to provide a polysemous record of our times.

Alluvium is based on a triangle of collaborations developed between the three artists, the welder Mohamed Rahis Mollah and

⁰⁴ The alluvium series has benefited support from black mountain College Prize 2022.

the choreographer Kiori Kawai. At the origin of the process, the movements danced by the artists are interpreted into metal forms by Mohamed Rahis Mollah, creating a structure where the small paintings on plates are placed. The sculpture is then interpreted in turn by Kiori Kawai, whose choreographic creation becomes the starting point for new sculptures, integrating the chain of interpretations that allows the *Alluvium* series to develop in an organic way. Like the biological principle of DNA replication, the plates are multiplied like molecules and the sculptures are replicated, gradually being transformed according to the sensitive interpretation filters of the various protagonists.

The two sculptures from the *Alluvium* project presented in the exhibition constitute two successive moments in the process of replication. The first sculpture, with its hieratic forms addresses the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. Reinterpreted through the choreography of Kiori Kawai and Julie Becton Gillum, which can be seen in the videos, the initial sculpture transforms and expands on an amplified scale to generate *Hayula (2021 – 2023)*, the largest work in this series made especially for the exhibition.

Consisting of one hundred painted plates, it unfolds in the space like a large, fantastic creature. It also forms a vortex that propels us into an alternative narrative of Iran's history, from its original myths to the ongoing women's uprising in the country. The region of the marshes on the border between Iran and Iraq is the epicentre of this multi-faceted interpretation. The cradle of pre-Zoroastrian beliefs, to which the Dives or Demons of the exhibition's title belong, this region is envisaged here in its multiple political, social and cultural aspects, as an interconnected network whose shockwaves resonate beyond borders and eras to create a portrait of our time.

the artists

Ramin Haerizadeh was born in 1975 in Téhéran (Iran),
Rokni Haerizadeh was born in 1978 in Téhéran (Iran),
et Hesam Rahmanian was born in 1980 in Knoxville (United-States).
They live and work in the United Arab Emirates since 2009.

bibliographic tracks

these books are available in the CCCOD bookshop

Ramin Haerizadeh Rokni Haerizadeh Hesam Rahmanian, *Forgive me distant wars for bringing flower home*, Corraini Edizioni, 2018.

Malhouji Vali, *Ramin Haerizadeh*, éditions Dilecta, 2012.

Post-Revolutionnary Iranian Art, Nazar Art Publishing, 2014.

Ghafarian Leila, Reza Nikbakt Mohammad, *Couleurs et motifs dans les miniatures Persanes*, éditions Pyramyd, 2019.

Satrapi Marjane, *Persépolis, Tome 1 et 2*, éditions L'Association, 2002.

Bernasconi Carine, *Salam Cinéma ! Le cinéma iranien en France des années 1950 à aujourd'hui*, éditions Mimésis, 2022.

around the exhibition

tours

› guided (all year)

saturdays and sundays, 4:30 p.m. (duration 1h)

› flash (during the holidays)

Wednesday to Friday, 3 p.m. (duration 20 min.)

in la galerie In-Situ – fabienne leclerc*

exhibition of artists Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh,
Hesam Rahmany, *The Beautiful Decay of Flowers in The Vase*

14.05 – 15.07.2023

www.insituparis.fr

43 rue de la Commune de Paris – 93230 Romainville

This exhibition is organized in co-production
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