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PRESS RELEASE GALLERY ISABELLE VAN DEN EYNDE

ABDELKADER BENCHAMMA CORRUPTED THEORIES

Private View 7-9pm, 21 May 2012
22 May – 15 July 2012

Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde is proud to present the first solo show of artist Abdelkader Benchamma in the Middle East.

In this exhibition, a series of sculptures and works on paper showcase Benchamma's quintessential approach, in which he imposes restrictions and constraints to create delicately executed drawings of states of matter, events and explosions. The physical properties of forms succumb to processes of materialisation, or adversely dematerialisation, and alternate between sculptural and liquid states, between figurative and abstract matter. Submitting varying elements to tensions, levitations, contrary movements and mute dialogues about space and time, Benchamma translates into his work the obscure harmony born from the chaotic environment that envelops us.



The strong influences of science fiction literature and cosmology, as well as existentialist theatre and literary investigations, emerge lucidly in Benchamma's art. Along with the concepts and theories, aspects of the visual expressions of these ideas filter into his drawing processes – his technique is a fusion of graphic techniques from printing, engraving, landscape and scientific drawing. The purity and intensity of the lines in his scenes express powerful and ambiguous atmospheres, provoking the questioning of a stable reality: Benchamma notes that 'the more the line is precise, the more the nature of the mass remains elusive'.

A number of Benchamma's 'Sculpture' drawings, developed from his fascination with monolithic forms and primordial matter, will be on display. As they develop organically on the page, proliferating from their starting points into ambiguous masses, they offer a relief from other subject matter by containing potential but no defined outcome beyond themselves. Suggestions of organic and mineral forms emerge in the fluid patterns, recalling the strength of mountain landscapes or planes of greenery, though nothing is explicit in this scenarios, and the implications are often conflicting. Benchamma restricted himself to using only black marker pens for some of 'Sculpture' drawings, so that the varying shades of black reveal questions of reality and illusion within a wider spectrum. Purples, mauves, blues and greys emerge in a muted black rainbow, and the idea of a true black becomes indeterminate and abstruse.

While Benchamma's central focus is drawing that hovers between two and three-dimensionality, he occasionally develops ideas into wooden sculpture to further his conceptual questioning of reality. In two wooden parquet floors exhibited in the exhibition, Benchamma breaks with all the material properties of a sheet of glass, shattering in a way that the viewer only notices when standing up close to the work. The technical behaviour of the natural materials, wood and glass, are manipulated and decontextualised to create a surreal and spectacular illusion.

Abdelkader Benchamma (b. France 1975 to Algerian parents) lives and works in Montpellier. In 2011, his monograph 'Dark matter' was published by the Galerie du Jour, Paris, in conjunction with his solo exhibition there. In the same year, Benchamma participated in the 'Future of a Promise' exhibition at the Venice Biennale, and was commissioned for the 'Told Untold Retold' exhibition at the Mathaf Museum, Doha, Qatar. He has had solo exhibitions across Europe as well as in Asia, and has works in public collections, namely the FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, the Musee de Beaux Arts-Orleans and Artotheque de Pessac in France.

For more information, please contact Minnie McIntyre by email (minnie@ivde.net) or phone (+971 4 323 5052). The Gallery is open from Saturday to Thursday 10am to 6pm.