

*Sound of Objects*

Mohammed Kazem

Preview 2 November, 2014

3 November, 2014 – 4 January, 2015



*Tongue*, 1994,

Part of a series of 36

Sliver gelatin print

10 x 11 cm

Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde is pleased to present *Sound of Objects*, Mohammed Kazem's first solo exhibition following his participation in the 55th Venice Biennale.

In the wake of *Walking On Water*, Kazem's expansive, immersive installation in Venice, *Sound of Objects* sets out to show a side of his practice that is playful and downright bodily, directed by an urge that Hassan Sharif, Kazem's friend and mentor, describes as an 'eternal fascination'.

This 'eternal fascination', Sharif writes in a 2013 essay of the same name, manifests itself in the way Kazem makes "subjectivity a subject in its own right: that is, he connects external phenomena to the imagination." *Sound of Objects* takes this idea as its point of departure and attempts to show how the artist has, over the course of 30 years, developed a highly subjective vocabulary to express his fascination with often overlooked nuances of experience.

At the core of this show is 24 works on paper created during Kazem's residency at the Watermill Center, New York, in 2014. Using a pair of scissors, Kazem renders Indonesian masks, hand-carved bowls and African figurines, held in the Watermill's vast collection, as a series of bumps, depressions and reliefs scratched into cottony paper. Like a visual phonograph shaped around a simple silhouette, these scratches describe what Kazem calls, in his own lexicon, the 'sound' of the object – a multiplicity of interwoven, transient phenomena; from the movement of light across the surface of the object, to the materiality of the paper as it peels.

Accompanied by a sound collage created during the residency, these works on paper ask the viewer to look to a phenomena that exists, essentially, in Kazem's subjective mind. Can we really locate this fleeting 'sound' in his scratches, are we able to reach out and touch it in the surface of the paper?

The exhibition also selects from several earlier series to show how Kazem affirms a subjectivity that is active in his own body. *'Tongue'* (1994), for instance is a selection of photographs showing Kazem sticking his tongue into different textured objects found around the studio. *'Showering'* re-constitutes a 1998 work previously staged at the Sharjah Art Museum, in which Kazem brought the aftermath of his morning shower – suds, water, matted hair and all – into the gallery space.

Elsewhere, a series of 2014 photographs show lumps of blackened chewing gum, dropped and crushed on a city street; Kazem has connected these human traces by chalk lines, and imagined them as anonymous, preserved *'Kisses'*. In the midst of all this bodily residue, the bestial din of Kazem scratching paper with scissors can be heard overhead: A short audio collage that sounds, fittingly, as if the artist himself is breathing.

**Mohammed Kazem** (b. 1969, Dubai) is acknowledged as one of the 'Five', an informal group of artists – including Hassan Sharif and Abdullah Al Saadi – at the forefront of conceptual and inter-disciplinary practice in the United Arab Emirates. In recent years, Kazem has participated in group shows at the Mori Art Museum, Japan (2012), Boghossian Foundation, Belgium (2013), the Gwangju Museum of Art (2014), and the 2014 edition of Fotofest in Houston. He has exhibited twice in the United Arab Emirates pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2009 and 2013) and was co-curator of the Sharjah Biennial in 2007.

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