

AU-DELÀ
Zahra Zeinali

Curated by Davood Madadpoor
[Sumac Space–Art Practices of the Middle East]

Opening: July 14, 6–9 pm
Meditation on Sound and Thoughts by Anton Kats: 7:30 pm

On view from July 15th to August 30th
A:D: Curatorial: Kurfürstenstraße 142, 10785 Berlin
Opening hours: Thursday - Saturday, 12-17



Zahra Zeinali, *Petite fenêtre dans un boîte noir*, 2022, 130X90 cm, acrylique sur toile

A:D: Curatorial is pleased to host **Zahra Zeinali**'s exhibition ***au-delà***. The exhibition brings together a series of Zahra Zeinali's paintings and Installations from the last three years for her first solo show in Berlin. The opening of the exhibition follows the ***Meditation on Sound and Thoughts*** by **Anton Kats**.

In *au-delà*, Zahra Zeinali uses the prism of her experiences as an Iranian immigrant to examine themes of exile, displacement, and trauma. She employs it to explore the sensations and memories of loneliness and vulnerability, expressing the agony and concussion of being uprooted and forced to navigate an unknown backdrop.

Her ten-year stay in Paris has enabled her to establish a distinct artistic style that is both introspective and surreal, allowing her to reflect on her past experiences and voice her feelings via the beauty of drawing and the nobleness of the material. Her autobiographical paintings frequently blend surrealist, fantastical, and whimsical aspects with darker and frightening subjects. She uses dolls that have been mistreated and shattered, acting as a striking metaphor for the often-lost innocence in hostile environments.

Zeinali discloses the effects of the cruelty she has endured and depicts the isolation, vulnerability, and harshness of her own experiences. She uses iconography, such as masks and clowns, to cover harsh realities and create a sense of mystery in life. Her fascination with photography is also apparent in her paintings, which showcase compositions with bold, distinctive, and very open layouts.

Meditation on Sound and Thoughts by **Anton Kats** marks the opening of the exhibition. While operating modular synthesizers, tuning in to the space and the audience, the meditation is motivated by the disillusionment of borders and maps an entirely different set of cosmological coordinates. Fearlessly entangled with spirit and mythos and raising critical questions of ownership, care and belonging, this cosmic landscape meets the visitor halfway and invites unlearning of predetermined relational models.

Zahra Zeinali (b. 1975) completed her bachelor's degree in painting from the Islamic Azad University of Tehran and worked as an art instructor for fifteen years. She developed an interest in photography and studied analog photography at the House of Iranian Photographers. In 2012, Zahra relocated to Paris to continue her artistic journey as a painter. Later, in 2022, she completed her studies at the EFET Photographie École. This milestone prompted her to explore merging the two techniques in her recent works. Additionally, she commenced her role as an art teacher for children and young students at Le Cercle des Arts in 2022, allowing her to tap into the realm of childhood inspiration.

Zeinali has participated in several groups and solo exhibitions, including the recent *Le Pays des Merveilles*, *Le Monde Invisible* at Galerie Claire Corcia, and *Alerte Rouge* at Galerie Linda Farrell, *Femme Vie Liberté* at Galerie Sahar K. Boluki, *Artcité à Fontenay*, *Comparaison au Grand Palais Éphémère*, and *Figuration Critique à Salon de Dessin Paris*, among others.

Anton Kats's practice draws from the everyday, inspired by the complex narratives of *Satellite Island*, a south-Ukrainian neighborhood in the port city of Kherson. Kats left Ukraine in 2000 to claim asylum in Germany. His work is complemented by the urgencies of displacement and the pragmatics of self-legalization in Europe by way of entering formal institutions of education. Kats's work is motivated by questions of agency and intentionality. Flexibly augmenting art practice through sound, music, performance, radio and research, Kats develops responsive and site-specific projects exploring the interdependencies of learning, migration, and the non-normative.

Kats's works have been introduced through the SAVVY Contemporary, Serpentine Galleries, Tate Modern, BBC 6 Music, The Lot Radio, the Showroom Gallery, Bergen Kunsthall, Sonic Acts, Roskilde and Fusion Festivals, CCA Berlin – Center for Contemporary Arts, Kochi Muziris Biennale, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 10th Berlin Biennale, and at the documenta14 in Athens and Kassel, among others.

Sumac Space–Art Practices of the Middle East initiated its activity as a digital platform in October 2020 to tackle issues within our challenging social and political context through the language of art. It prioritizes dialogue as a means to present diverse forms of research, encouraging critical thinking and safe conversations. Sumac promotes collaboration and collective study as essential practices rather than just theoretical concepts.

Sumac has explored and continues investigating these aims with different programs: discursive physical group exhibitions *The Tellers* in Florence (IT) and *Sixth Tone* in Vienna (AT), online and in-situ symposiums, panel discussions, artist talks, and publishing texts in various experimental formats. Now, in 2023, Sumac performs from Donaustraße 84, 12043 in Berlin as a space for encounters.

Sumac Space–Art Practices of the Middle East

www.sumac.space

contact@sumac.space

@sumacspace #sumacspace