

ALI TNANI

Dans l'intervalle entre monument et document

15 December 2017 | 27 January 2018



Ali Tnani, Crackling Data Machine, 2017, Mixed media installation, 85x100x66 cm-Photo credit: Thierry Fournier

Elmarsa Tunis is pleased to present ***Dans l'intervalle entre monument et document***, Ali Tnani's first solo exhibition of multimedia works at the gallery curated by Marie Cantos & Aziza Harmel from 15 December 2017 to 27 January 2018.

Through a multi-disciplinary practice that draws equally from installation as drawing, and photography, leading Tunisian conceptual artist Ali Tnani offers an examination of social issues in post-revolutionary Tunisia. Playing on notions of erasure in historical narrative, Tnani deploys the trace as a semiotic index, a sign for the remnant or memory left behind by the act of erasure. An extension of his notion of "counter-spaces" that are simultaneously plastic and political, the trace is understood as a phantom of history. History itself must be recognized as something that has been written, is being written, and will be rewritten again in the future. The trace therefore exposes the inherent contradictions in such narratives and opens a space for questioning the utopic vision of our hyper connected contemporary age.



Ali Tnani, Torbaa-Nécessité du Monument II, 2017 (Detail), Pigments and carbon pencil on paper, 120 x 80 cm

The material and immaterial form of the trace are visually reflected in three of the eleven works in Tnani's exhibition, including "Torbaa - Nécessité du Monument II" (2017), "Unknown program" (2017) and "Blancs Documentaires" (2016). In these drawings or graphemes, the pigment and lead-mine residue appear to vanish into the surface of the paper. Beyond serving as evidence of the act of erasure, these traces also point to the transmission of narrative.



Ali Tnani, Documents: Space of exception, 2015 (Detail: Drawing on paper), Mixed media installation, 71x110 cm

The installation “Documents: Space of Exception” (2015) brings together drawings and photographs in order to explore another central idea in Tnani’s work, that of the “negative” a form that only becomes visible after the removal of material. Pointing to the political realities of post-revolutionary Tunisia and their fraying effects on the fabric of society, the various parts of the multimedia installation reveal a state that has progressively weakened the bonds between individuals.



Ali Tnani, Echo II - Even The Sun Has Rumors, 2017, Multimedia installation, Variable dimensions (Video still)

A second multimedia installation, “Even The Sun Has Rumors” (2017) alternates between stills of an abandoned space that formerly housed the company store of the Gafsa Phosphate Company and the movement of shadows when the occasional patch of light reveals the abandoned furniture and objects lurking in those dark empty rooms. In the voice-over, the son of a former employee recounts intertwined narratives of personal anecdotes and commentary on the political situation unveiling a colonial memory of the social inequalities between European engineers and Tunisian workers.



Ali Tnani, Data Trails, 2017, Network installation (Exhibition view)

“Data Trails” (2017) represents the performative manner that contemporary digital media circulates information by the movement of words down the monitor screen and the patterns that they create. At the same time as this flow of data connects us through its seductive narrative, it also isolates us, echoing the paradox within the etymological origins of the word “utopia” in the Greek word for “nowhere.” While history is constantly being reconstructed, Tnani finds liberating potential to reclaim the narrative in the “counter spaces” of traces.

About the artist:

Born in 1982 in Tunis, Ali Tnani is a Tunisian contemporary artist based in Tunis and Paris. He received his Masters in 2007 from the Institut Supérieur des Beaux-arts of Tunis and has since exhibited widely and participated in international residency programs. Tnani is currently in the prestigious Cité Internationale des Arts residency in Paris.

A leading practitioner in the field of conceptual art, Tnani is known for his multimedia installation work examining social issues in post-revolutionary Tunisia. With a practice that draws on installation, drawing, and photography, he explores the question of erasure and the negative in narratives of traces, memory and history in an era of hyper-connectivity.

Tnani conceives the trace, as a semiotic index or remnant, an extension of his notion of “counter-spaces” that are simultaneously plastic and political. These sites shed light on the inherent contradictions and open a space for questioning hegemonic utopic narratives. These disruptive spaces expose the phantom signs of history in contemporary life: that which has been written, is being written and will be rewritten again in the future. Both material and immaterial form are visually reflected in his drawings where pigment and lead-mine residue seem to vanish into the surface of the paper.

He has participated in various solo and group exhibitions internationally, including the Musée du Bardo in Tunis, the Plateforme de création contemporaine in Paris, the 5th Marrakech Biennial, the Musée de Carthage in Tunis and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Mons (Belgium), the Musée du Montparnasse in Paris and the Biennial of young artists from Europe and the Mediterranean in Skopje, Macedonia. His work is part of private collections in France, USA, and the UK.

About Elmarsa:

Elmarsa was founded in 1994 in Tunis and expanded to Dubai in 2015. Specialized in both modern and contemporary North African art, it represents recognized 20th century artists as well as mid-career artists. Elmarsa regularly participates in several international art fairs in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Paris, London, Marrakech and Miami.

Exhibition Facts:

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday 10 am-7 pm

Location: 2 place du Saf Saf, 2070 La Marsa, Tunisia

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