

PORTRAIT

Shadi Al Zaqzouq / the spring of art

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Writing

The revolutions in the Arab countries have transcended the creativity of this thirty-something born in Libya of Palestinian parents. One of his paintings was censored at the contemporary art fair Art Dubai.



She is a woman with a strong gaze, in a tracksuit. Hair in the open air and a red floral scarf that hides the lower part of the face. She shows panties on which is written "release" in Arabic. This painting called *After Washing* was censored during Art Dubai last March. "I provoke. If the canvas has been removed, it is because I have succeeded in my work. He pissed off! », Appreciates the Dionysian Shadi Al Zaqzouq.

Arrived in the world in Libya in Koufra, in 1981, Shadi is the son of a Palestinian born in Egypt and a Gazan. "As a child, I drew all the time, in my room, on my school books. Outside, I was sometimes asked to portray Arafat, Che or Mickey. At the age of 17, the family left the Libyan desert, without visual limits, for the very dense Gaza Strip, in Palestine. Shadi dreams of studying art, but there is no school.

"I had seen in a magazine the paintings of the great masters exhibited at the Louvre: Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Raphaël... I was passionate about it. I knew I wanted to come to Paris. »A visual arts competition allowed him to land a six-month residency at the Cité internationale des arts, « next to the Louvre, next to everything ». After fourteen days of transit, he found himself from Gaza to Châtelet. A shock: "It was like coming out of the earth, like dying and being reborn. "

In Paris 8, the visual arts are refused to him because he does not speak French well, but it is accepted in philosophy... "I did not understand anything", he laughs. He

improved his fluency in the language for two years and finally lived his dream. "Today I want to continue alone, to make my way, to break the wall between Da Vinci and me. My teacher is time."

The revolution in the workplace

During a rally for Palestine, he meets H el ene. A decisive love, which supported him in his choices. They married in 2010, then Joseph was born, in the midst of the Arab revolution. To this son is added a transcended creativity. Renewal. "The revolution has become the meaning of my work, it is the subject that I have been waiting for all my life. Ideas are flowing. Before I was talking about myself, now I am talking about you, about us, I am talking about everyone."

If he sometimes dreads the consequences, he focuses on the glimmer of hope seen. "Before we couldn't talk, it was a society of fear. I want to educate my son freely and without borders. I want him to be able to walk in the middle of the street, without shaving the walls."

Shadi has since given his all, he paints again and again in the living room of his apartment in the city center, transformed into a studio. He launches into Street Art with a portrait of Gaddafi made up as Joker and signed Shazz. "After Dubai, there was a huge change, a lot of newspapers and radios contacted me. The message got through."

Shadi is exhibiting in London today and is looking for a real workshop. He also passed on his art to the Gustave-Courbet school of visual arts. If he adores the city of Saint-Denis for its cosmopolitanism, he is more and more affected by the situation encountered in the prefecture, where it becomes ubuesque to obtain a simple receipt after hours of waiting ... is not every day.

Aur elien Soucheyre



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