

Imane Farès

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# Ali Cherri

## Return of the Beast

22 April – 23 July, 2021

41 rue Mazarine, Paris 6<sup>e</sup>



*Staring at a Thousand Splendid Suns*, 2021, Moulding in glazed sandstone, glass ocular prosthesis  
Courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris

Imane Farès is proud to present *Return of the Beast*, Ali Cherri's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery, almost ten years after their first collaboration together.

The exhibition coincides with the publication of the artist's first monograph titled *Earth, Fire, Water*, that was co-edited by the gallery and Éditions Dilecta. This bilingual book (English-French) looks back at the last ten years of Ali Cherri's practice and includes contributions by Tarek El-Ariss, Nicole Brenez, Hannah Feldman, Roxana Azimi, as well as an interview with the artist by Aaron Cezar. It will be sold at the gallery and we are hoping to celebrate its launch during the month of June.

We are also delighted that Ali Cherri has been chosen to be the second artist-in-residence at the National Gallery in London, where, starting April 2021 and during one year, he will have the opportunity to work with the museum's collection, archives and research facilities.

A journal with a text by Line Ajan (Cherri's artist liaison and a curator) accompanies the exhibition.

Standing at the center of Cherri's fourth solo exhibition at Imane Farès, a one-legged creature carved in marble greets you. Its limbs have not been fully amputated: a fragmented human foot lingers on the right, while the left leg, adorned with scale-like patterns, seems to have sunk into the short plinth. Attached to these mutilated remains is a pale humanoid face. Rimmed with green-blue lines, its eyes are wide-open, as if staggered by you, in a surprising inversion of roles.

Titled *Return of the Beast*, Ali Cherri's exhibition compels us to rethink what we've historically considered as the figure of the monster, by inviting us to reevaluate the gaze that defines this conception.

How do we look at monsters?

How do they look back?

What brings about the monstrous?

The exhibition engages with the trope of the monstrous in a continuation of Cherri's research on hybridity, which has been central to his practice for the better part of the last decade.

(...) Like the roadkills placed side by side, some of these small sculptures share a platform, as if they formed a community of devalued and displaced things together. They are not only monsters by their appearance, but also by their condition of uprooted objects. Or rather, they are outcasts who gather as survivors and witnesses of catastrophes. And while the de-hierarchization of objects has always pervaded Cherri's work in a renewed critique of "the museum as a mausoleum," it is here expanded further: figures and birds converse in *How To Make a Bird Sing*, inhabiting their own world, in a blissful ignorance of the human whose gaze has long defined them.

And so, we are tempted to lend the words of Donna Haraway, speaking of her "kin," to these fauns that are re-assembled by Cherri: "And like a decadent gardener who can't keep good distinctions between natures and cultures straight, the shape of my kin networks looks more like a trellis, an esplanade, than a tree. You can't tell up from down, and everything seems to go sideways."

—Line Ajan, excerpt from the exhibition's journal



Photo © Ali Cherri

Ali Cherri (born in 1976, Beirut) lives and works between Beirut and Paris.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Somniculus* (Uppsala Art Museum, 2021), *Tales from the Riverbed* (Clark House, 2018), *From Fragment to Whole* (Jönköping County Museum, 2018), Programme Satellite 10: *Somniculus* (CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux et Jeu de Paume, 2017), *A Taxonomy of Fallacies: The Life of Dead Objects* (Sursock Museum, 2016).

His work has been recently exhibited at the EYE Filmmuseum (Amsterdam), macLYON, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (Valencia), the Jameel Arts Center (Dubai), Para Site (Hong Kong), MAXXI (Rome), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), as well as included in Manifesta 13 (Marseille, 2020), the Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art (Yekaterinburg, 2019), the Biennale internationale d'art contemporain de Melle (2018), the Biennale de Lyon and the Sharjah Biennial (2017). His films have been screened in numerous international festivals such as: New Directors/New Films, MoMA; Cinéma du Réel, Centre Pompidou; CPH:DOX, Copenhagen (NewVision Award, 2015); Dubai International Film Festival, Dubai (Best filmmaker award, 2013); VideoBrasil, São Paulo (Southern Panorama award, 2015); Toronto International Film Festival and San Francisco International Film Festival.

He was the Robert E. Fulton III Fellow of the Film Study Center at Harvard University in 2016-17, and was nominated for the Abraaj Group Art Prize in 2018. To complete his first feature-film *The Dam*, shot in Sudan in early 2021, he received several prestigious grants, including from the Hubert Bals Fund of the International Film Festival in Rotterdam (« Bright Future » category) and the Aide aux cinémas du monde from the Centre National du Cinéma (CNC) and the Institut Français.

His work is part of numerous institutional collections: Cnap, Fonds d'art contemporain - Paris Collections, MAC VAL, Frac Nouvelle-Aquitaine MÉCA, Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Les Abattoirs - Frac Occitanie Toulouse, Musée national d'art moderne/ Centre Georges Pompidou, Art Jameel (Dubai), MACBA (Barcelona), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Sursock Museum (Beirut), Sharjah Art Foundation.

[For more information on the artist, please see his webpage on the gallery's website >](#)



# The artist's recent projects

## Until May 16, 2021, Uppsala Art Museum

*Somniculus*, solo-exhibition  
Uppsala Art Museum, Uppsala, Sweden

## Until July 18, 2021, macLYON

*Comme un parfum d'aventure*, group exhibition  
macLYON, Lyon, France  
Curated by Marilou Leneuville, Head of Exhibitions at macLYON and Matthieu Lelièvre, Artistic Advisor at macLYON  
[More information on the exhibition >](#)

## April 1 - May 9, 2021, 13<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Biennale

*Minds Rising Spirits Tuning*  
Gwangju, South Korea  
Curated by Defne Ayas and Natasha Ginwala, artistic directors of the biennale  
[More information on the Gwangju Biennale >](#)

## April - December 2021, National Gallery

Residency followed by a solo exhibition in the museum's collection  
National Gallery, London, United Kingdom  
[Press Release >](#)

## April 4 - 19, 2021, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

*In-Between Days: Video from the Guggenheim Collection*  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, United States of America  
Curated by Nat Trotman, Performance and Media curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum  
[Screening program >](#)

## April 29 - August 29, 2021, CaixaForum

*La Imagen Humana. Arte, identidades y simbolismo*, group exhibition in collaboration with the British Museum  
CaixaForum, Madrid, Spain  
[More information on the exhibition >](#)

## Spring or Summer 2021, Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval

*Le Palais à quatre heures*, duo show with Alberto Giacometti  
Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval, Hauterives, France  
Curated by Frédéric Legros, director of the Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval

## November 1, 2021 - February 28, 2022, Kochi-Muziris Biennale

*IN OUR VEINS FLOW INK AND FIRE*  
Kochi, India  
Curated by Shubigi Rao, curator of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition  
[More information on the Kochi-Muziris Biennale >](#)

## 2022, The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

Exhibition centered on Ali Cherri's artwork that will be acquired by The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum with the support of the Contemporary Art Society  
The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, United Kingdom  
[More information on The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum >](#)



*How To Make a Bird Sing, 2021*  
Figure with a shaved head from the Amarna Period, Ancient Egypt,  
patinated limestone, Horus Falcon God, glazed sandstone  
Courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris



*The Avian Spirit, 2021*  
Horus Falcon God in glass paste from the Late period of Ancient  
Egypt, glazed sandstone  
Courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris



*Dead Inside, 2021*  
Watercolor and graphite on paper  
Courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris