



FONDATION
D'ENTREPRISE
HERMÈS

EXHIBITION

ISMAÏL BAHRI

LIGHT GESTURES
IN AN AGITATED
LANDSCAPE

BRUSSELS
FROM SEPTEMBER 21 TO DECEMBER 1, 2018

CURATOR:
GUILLAUME DÉSANGES

BALLISTIC POETRY SEASON

LA
VER
RI,
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PRESS RELEASE

ISMAÏL BAHRI “DES GESTES À PEINE DÉPOSÉS DANS UN PAYSAGE AGITÉ” (“LIGHT GESTURES IN AN AGITATED LANDSCAPE”)

LA VERRIÈRE, BRUSSELS

SEPTEMBER 21 TO DECEMBER 1, 2018

PREVIEW THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018, 6 P.M. TO 9 P.M.

Franco-Tunisian artist Ismaïl Bahri presents a solo exhibition as part of the “Poésie balistique” (“Ballistic Poetry”) season, launched by curator Guillaume Désanges in 2016 at La Verrière, the Brussels art space of the Fondation d’entreprise Hermès.

Extract from the text by Guillaume Désanges (full text in the following pages):

“Since the late 2000s, Ismaïl Bahri has developed a body of work based on minimal situations and gestures whose inexorable logic ultimately generates a kind of magic, a state of grace captured in the essence of his materials. [...] At La Verrière, for his first solo exhibition in Belgium, Ismaïl Bahri has devised an ambitious project that transforms the architectural space into a kind of optical instrument, interacting with the play of light and shade, discovery and concealment, as revealed in the building’s interior, or entering from outside. The aim is to exploit La Verrière’s essential energy – chiefly, its light – while at the same time concealing its source. The installation combines two kinds of projected imagery: digital, and natural. Projections of forms, objects and drawings, but also shafts of natural light, accompany videos screened on an overhead projector. The environment brings together recent works, including some created for the installation, drawing on observations and experiments centred around storms, wind and chaos – disruptive natural states that ultimately form fleeting, variously ordered visions. Ismaïl Bahri’s work is presented as part of the current ‘Poésie balistique’ season at La Verrière, examining the disconnect between the defining programme of specific works of art, and their impact or effect – in other words, between intention and intuition or perception in certain programmatic, conceptual artistic practices. Bahri’s work seems to me to go to the heart of these issues, and to apply them in his own, unique way.”

LA VERRIÈRE, BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)

50, BOULEVARD DE WATERLOO

TUESDAY TO SATURDAY, NOON TO 6 P.M.

ADMISSION FREE

GUIDED VISITS EVERY SATURDAY AT 3 P.M.

PRESS CONTACTS

HERMÈS INTERNATIONAL

SOPHIE SEIBEL-TRAONOÛÏL

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA DIRECTOR

PRESS CONTACT

ANNELISE CATINEAU

+33 (0)1 40 17 48 07 / ACATINEAU@HERMES.COM

WWW.FONDATIONDENTREPRISEHERMES.ORG



Cover image:

Ismaïl Bahri, *Scotch* (research material), 2018

Courtesy of the artist

PRECISE AND IMPALPABLE IN EQUAL MEASURE

by Guillaume Désanges

“Since the late 2000s, Franco-Tunisian artist Ismaïl Bahri has developed a body of work based on minimal situations and gestures whose inexorable logic ultimately generates a kind of magic, a state of grace captured in the essence of his materials. Balling and smoothing out the pages of magazines, until the ink has transferred completely from the paper to the hands, gradually obliterating the printed image¹. Stretching an invisible thread, materialised only by the droplets running along its length, which gradually form a puddle of water in the exhibition space². Filming a clear droplet of water on a wrist, its barely perceptible tremors revealing the pulse of the arteries beneath the skin³. A white screen divided by a trembling, vertical black line that gradually reveals itself as a ball of thread being unrolled against a backdrop of snow⁴. A journey through an urban landscape, represented by its reflection filmed in a glass of ink⁵, or the white of a piece of paper placed in front the camera lens⁶. Gestures that pay heightened attention to fine detail, and to the accidents and minute variations generated by unplanned events in the real world. In his work as a whole, and in the detail of individual pieces, Ismaïl Bahri’s practice enacts a gradual process of insistent investigation and revelation of his motifs, based on elementary experimental conditions; formal resolutions over time, based on the principle of photographic development. Emulsion, capillarisation, unravelling, denuding: often, very little stands between the work’s subtle materiality, and its complete disappearance. But the radical simplicity of Bahri’s protocols emanates quiet, underlying emotion, too: a mixture of surprise and anxiety – a clue, perhaps, to the hidden agenda of his work.

- 1 Ismaïl Bahri, *Revers*, 2017, video series, HD 16/9, stereo sound, various lengths. Produced by the Jeu de Paume, Paris.
- 2 Ismaïl Bahri, *Coulée douce*, installation in situ, 2006-2014.
- 3 Ismaïl Bahri, *Ligne*, 2011, video, HD 16/9, 1 min loop.
- 4 Ismaïl Bahri, *Dénouement*, 2011, video, HD 16/9, 8 min.
- 5 Ismaïl Bahri, *Orientations*, video, 2010.
- 6 Ismaïl Bahri, *Film à blanc*, six videos, SD, 4/3, colour, silent, varying lengths, 2013.



Ismaïl Bahri, *Scotch* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Tracés* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist

Invited by La Verrière to present his first solo exhibition in Belgium, Ismaïl Bahri has devised an ambitious project that transforms the architectural space into a kind of optical instrument, interacting with the play of light and shade, discovery and concealment, as revealed in the building's interior, or entering from outside. The aim is to exploit La Verrière's essential energy – chiefly, its light – while at the same time concealing its source. The installation combines two kinds of projected imagery: digital, and natural. Projections of forms, objects and drawings, but also shafts of natural light, accompany videos screened on an overhead projector. The environment brings together recent works, including some created for the installation, drawing on observations and experiments centred around storms, wind and chaos – disruptive natural states that ultimately form fleeting, variously ordered visions.

Ismaïl Bahri's work is presented as part of the current 'Poésie balistique' season at La Verrière, examining the disconnect between the defining programme of specific works of art, and their impact or effect – in other words, between intention and intuition or perception in certain programmatic, conceptual artistic practices. Bahri's work seems to me to go to the heart of these issues, and to apply them in his own, unique way. As such, based on arbitrary but rigorously applied protocols, Bahri's work springs from an initial, intuitive experiment conducted by the artist over an extended time-frame and in a circumscribed space, with no fixed horizon, which is another way of saying that the experiment is conducted with no specific intent or projected outcome as to the form(s) that may result. Through this subtle interplay of unpredictability and control, the artist delegates his creative authority to chance, or the wind, to fortuitous encounters or the prevailing light, in other words to contingent situations that are created more or less 'blind'. In the context of this implacable logic of chance, control resides solely in a fierce refusal to fix or freeze the work's inherent possibilities. At the same time, the forces at play are focussed on preserving the viewer's passivity. Paradoxical? Ismaïl Bahri's art is a rare homage to the invisible energy of the static intercessor. The tensions at work within each piece are the source of its fragility and power alike: two manifestations of the same sustained attentiveness to the world of materials and things, through clearly defined, evident forms which, in this context, we might call 'poetry'. Direct, raw poetry, of almost transparent clarity, but notable for its refusal to signify. In effect, the work remains open to endless appropriation and interpretation: a kind of non-negotiable polysemy. But in its determination to eliminate facile external references, and to assert its distance from any readily identifiable geographical, cultural or political context, it nonetheless resonates with much of the trouble and tumult in this world. The forms which are gradually made manifest to our senses and intellect are precise and impalpable in equal measure."

Guillaume Désanges

THE “POÉSIE BALISTIQUE” SEASON AT LA VERRIÈRE

Launched by Guillaume Désanges at La Verrière in spring 2016, “Poésie balistique” examines the disconnect between an artistic programme and its outcome or, more precisely, the disconnect between intention and intuition in certain forms of radical abstraction.

The seven prior exhibitions in the “Poésie balistique” season are:

APRIL – JULY, 2016

Inaugural exhibition “Ballistic Poetry”

With Marcel Broodthaers – Henri Chopin – Liz Deschenes – Hessie – Thomas Hirschhorn – Channa Horwitz – Guillaume Leblon – Scott Lyall – Dora Maurer – Isidoro Valcarcel Medina – Helen Mirra – Jean-Luc Moulène – Dominique Petitgand – R. H. Quaytman – Tris Vonna-Michell – Christopher Williams

And Bernard Heidsieck – Mark Insingel – Christophe Tarkos

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2016

Hessie

“Soft Resistance”

JANUARY – MARCH 2017

Douglas Eynon & Erwan Mahéo

“NOVELTY Ltd.”

APRIL – JULY 2017

Tris Vonna-Michell

“Punctuations & Perforations”

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2017

Dora García

“SOMEWHERE, TWO PLANETS HAVE BEEN COLLIDING FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. (The Thinker as Poet)”

JANUARY – MARCH 2018

Jean-Luc Moulène

“En Angle mort”

APRIL – JULY 2018

Marie Cool Fabio Balducci



Ismail Bahri, *Revers-papier* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist

BIOGRAPHY

Ismail Bahri was born in Tunis in 1978. He lives and works in Paris and Tunis.

Placing a sheet of paper that flaps in the wind, in front of his camera lens; slowing the fall of water droplets by having them slide down a thread; observing the reflected image of a city in a glass of ink held in your hand as you walk – Ismail Bahri performs elementary, empirical gestures, paying attention to “what happens”, and to what these operations cause him to do. Bahri positions himself as an observer: he feels his way, talks about “myopia” in the context of his work. Then, he installs what he calls a “capture device” for these gestures, often using video, but also photography and sound. He prefers not to specialise. Often, meaning emerges in our peripheral vision, in the indicative presence of the surrounding world as it breaks the surface and reveals itself. *

Ismail Bahri’s work has been shown in diverse venues, including La Criée – Centre d’art contemporain (Rennes), Les Églises (Chelles), the Staatliche Kunsthalle (Karlsruhe), Kunst Im Tunnel (Düsseldorf), the British Film Institute (London) or the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon). His films have been selected for festivals such as TIFF (Toronto), NYFF (New York), IFFR (Rotterdam), FID (Marseille) and the *Kunstenfestivaldesarts* (Brussels). His video work was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Jeu de Paume, Paris, throughout summer 2017.

* François Piron



Ismail Bahri, *Empreinte* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist

PRESS IMAGES

HI-DEFINITION VISUALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT
WWW.FONDATIONDENTREPRISEHERMES.ORG/FR/ESPACE-PRESSE
(PASSWORD ON REQUEST)
VIEWS OF THE EXHIBITION WILL BE AVAILABLE AFTER THE PREVIEW.



Ismail Bahri, *Scotch* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Scotch* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Scotch* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Scotch* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Lâchers* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Empreinte* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist

PRESS IMAGES

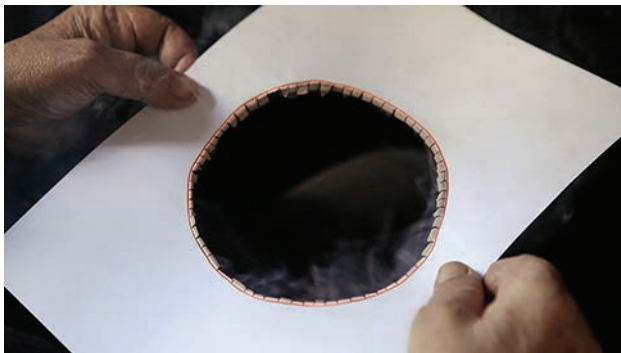
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Ismail Bahri, *Tracés* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Tracés* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Source*, 2016
Public commission from France's *Centre national des arts plastiques – ministère de la Culture et de la Communication*.
Produced by G.R.E.C with the support of the CNC. Collection *La Première Image*
Courtesy of the artist



View of Ismail Bahri's exhibition at Les Églises, Chelles, 2014
Photo Aurélien Mole
Courtesy of the artist

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Ismail Bahri, *Ligne*, 2011
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Dénouement*, 2011
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Revers*, 2017
Produced by the Jeu de Paume, Paris
Courtesy of the artist



Ismail Bahri, *Revers-papier* (research material), 2018
Courtesy of the artist

GUILLAUME DÉSANGES



© Isabelle Arthuis

Guillaume Désanges is a freelance curator and art critic, founder and director of Work Method, a Paris-based agency for artistic projects. He organizes international exhibitions projects and lectures.

Recent projects: "Amazing! Clever! Linguistic! An Adventure in Conceptual Art" (2013, Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria), "A Universal Exhibition, documentary section" (2013, Louvain-la-Neuve biennale, Belgium), "Curated Session #1: The Dora García files" (2014, Perez Art Museum, Miami, USA), "Ma'aminim, The Believers" (2015, Museum of Art and History, Saint-Denis & Tranzitdisplay, Prague, Czech Rep.), "The Méthode Room" (2015, Chicago, USA), "Ballistic Poetry" (2016-..., La Verrière, Brussels), "L'Esprit français. Contre-cultures 1969-1989" (2017, la maison rouge, Paris), "L'Ennemi de mon ennemi" (2018, Palais de Tokyo, Paris).

NEXT AT LA VERRIÈRE

JACQUELINE MESMAEKER

EXHIBITION FROM FEBRUARY 1st TO MARCH 30, 2019
PRIVATE VIEW JANUARY 31, 2019

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOUNDATION

PROGRAMME ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES

3RD SEASON, 3 ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE
AT HERMÈS WORKSHOPS ACROSS FRANCE

SÉBASTIEN GOUJU, MENTORED BY FRANÇOISE PÉTROVITCH

EMMANUEL RÉGENT, MENTORED BY MICHEL BLAZY

VASSILIS SALPISTIS, MENTORED BY ISABELLE CORNARO

EXHIBITION JEREMY SHARMA

"FIDELITY"

ALOFT AT HERMÈS, SINGAPORE

MAY 17 – AUGUST 19, 2018

EXHIBITION LILI REYNAUD-DEWAR

"BEYOND THE LAND OF MINIMAL POSSESSIONS"

ATELIER HERMÈS, SEOUL, KOREA

JUNE 1 – JULY 29, 2018

EXHIBITION THU-VAN TRAN

"UNE PLACE AU SOLEIL" ("A PLACE IN THE SUN")

LA GRANDE PLACE MUSÉE DU CRISTAL SAINT-LOUIS,

SAINT-LOUIS-LÈS-BITCHE, FRANCE

JULY 12, 2018 – JANUARY 7, 2019

PROGRAMME NEW SETTINGS #8

ANAGOOR

JEANNE CANDEL

NORA CHIPAUMIRE

OLA MACIEJEWSKA

VERA MANTERO

ALI MOINI

CHRISTOS PAPADOPOULOS

PHILIPPE QUESNE

LIA RODRIGUES

ÉMILIE ROUSSET

ÉMILIE ROUSSET & LOUISE HÉMON

HIROSHI SUGIMOTO

VIRGINIE YASSEF

AT THE FOUNDATION'S PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

BORIS CHARMATZ

NORA CHIPAUMIRE

NEW YORK, WITH FIAF/FRENCH

INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2018

EXHIBITION MIN OH

ATELIER HERMÈS, SEOUL, KOREA

SEPTEMBER 6 – NOVEMBER 4, 2018

EXHIBITION "LES MAINS SANS SOMMEIL I"

ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES 2014, 2015, 2016

CLARISSA BAUMANN, LUCIA BRU,

CELIA GONDOL, DH MCNABB

LE FORUM, TOKYO, JAPAN

SEPTEMBER 13 – NOVEMBER 4, 2018

PROGRAMME MANUFACTO, THE SKILLS FACTORY

SECOND YEAR IN 34 SCHOOLS IN THE ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

AND PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR

OCTOBER 2018 – JUNE 2019

EXHIBITION "LES MAINS SANS SOMMEIL II"

ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES 2014, 2015, 2016

BIANCA ARGIMON, JENNIFER VINEGAR AVERY,

ANASTASIA DOUKA, LUCIE PICANDET, IO BURGARD

LE FORUM, TOKYO, JAPAN

NOVEMBER 15, 2018 – JANUARY 13, 2019

EXHIBITION XAVIER ANTIN

"VANISHING WORKFLOWS"

ALOFT AT HERMÈS, SINGAPORE

DECEMBER 14, 2018 – MARCH 10, 2019



FONDATION
D'ENTREPRISE
HERMÈS

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès supports men and women seeking to learn, perfect, transmit and celebrate the creative skills that shape our lives today and into the future.

The Foundation operates nine major programmes with a combined focus on skills, creativity and transmission: **New Settings** and **Artists dans la Cité** for the performing arts, **Exhibitions** and **Artists' Residencies** for the visual arts, **Immersion, a French-American Photography Commission** for photography, **Manufacto, the Skills Factory** and our **Skills Academy** for the discovery and perfection of artisan trades. **H³ – Heart, Head, Hand** is the Foundation's worldwide

programme of support for organisations whose work reflects these central aims. Our **Biodiversity & Ecosystems** programme enacts a core commitment to protect fragile ecosystems for future generations. Created in 2008, the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès is directed by Catherine Tsekenis under the presidency of Olivier Fournier, who succeeded Pierre-Alexis Dumas in February 2016.

The Foundation's diverse activities are governed by a single, overarching belief: *our gestures define us.*

www.fondationentreprisehermes.org

