



Short news & tips

Ali Cherri: Bird's Eye View

November 2014

A bird's eye view implies the bigger picture. Ali Cherri describes it as "a technical term as used, for instance, for architectural perspectives, which imply an impossible viewpoint that no one can have." For years now, this Beirut-born (in 1976) artist has been creating a poetic and resolutely political visual language, as reflected in this exhibition.

Cherri revisits recent events, such as the war in Syria in the video installation *Pipe Dreams* (2011) based on the telephone conversation between the Syrian cosmonaut Mohammed Faris, who was part of the Russian expedition to the space station Mir, and the former President Hafez al-Assad, intermingling archival images and images of the 2011 uprising. Presented alongside this work is a sculpture of a headless cosmonaut (*Heroes: The Rise and Fall*, 2013), a sort of anti-hero on a pedestal expressing our ambivalent relation with power, as well as a series of photographic prints taken from YouTube. "At the beginning of the Syrian revolution, there was a real battle between the government and the rebels' images. I wanted to remove them from this duality, enlarge them and restore some sort of meaning. Far from being one liners, they are open to interpretation." Blurry and pixelated, the large format prints transform the bad quality of the initial photographs into Expressionist paintings.

Deeply affected by war, conflict and fault lines, Ali Cherri ceaselessly alternates between the contemporary world and history. As such, the *Paysage tremblants* (*Trembling Landscapes: Beirut, Erbil, Tehran, Algiers, Damascus*, 2014) are lithographs of aerial views of cities, split by fault lines, not dissimilar to the views of destroyed cities after the Second World War in Europe. Continuing this archaeology of chaos, the artist has trapped a geography book dating from the 19th century in a block of resin (*Atlas*, 2014) and reworked old maps from that time, drowning them in ominous ink and post-apocalyptic charcoal. The silent violence exuding from these artworks is counterbalanced by a certain lightness.

Produced between 2010 and 2014, this body of work is an excellent summary of Ali Cherri's multifaceted practice, equally versed in video, photography and installation. Here he unravels his interrogations about the real and the virtual; taking us towards new territories of fiction.

Text by Olivia Marsaud from the exhibition catalog.

More information and catalog to download:
capkuwait.com/birds-eye-view

(From press information)

Ali Cherri: Bird's Eye View

Opening reception:
 19 November 2014
 7 - 9 p.m.

20 November - 19 December 2014

The Art Room

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