

Khaled Kaddal
To the Nostrils of Time

06.04 – 26.05 2019



CV

Khaled Kaddal (b. 1987) is an interdisciplinary artist born in Alexandria, Egypt and based in Berlin. Using sound, video, sculpture, installation and performance, he interweaves references and symbols traversing contemporary political events, historical myths, and art history. Kaddal has exhibited and performed extensively at Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018 (MT); Sharjah Art Foundation, Sarjah (U.A.E); Palazzo Mora, Venice (IT); The Mosaic Rooms, London (UK); CGP, London (UK); Townhouse Gallery, Cairo (EG), Galleri Spektrum, Karlsruhe (GE); Nour Festival, London (UK); Generate Festival, Queensland (AU), and D-CAF Festival, Cairo (EG). He has received awards from both the Sharjah Art Foundation and the British Council.

EVENTS

Wednesday May 22 from 6-7pm

PERFORMANCE BY KHALED KADDAL AND NISRINE MANSOUR
Responding to the exhibition *To the Nostrils of Time* 'Rapturous Inspirations' is a collaborative performance by Khaled Kaddal and Nisrine Mansour. Drawn from a sound-text publication of the same name, the performance interrogates human fascination with raptors – the eagle and the falcon - as symbols of sovereignty across civilisations. Using light, sound, and spoken word it re-imagines sovereignty and its political hierarchies through the senses.

Photo: Khaled Kaddal. Semouha, Alexandria, 2018.

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The exhibition is supported by:



Overgaden is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation and the Obel Family Foundation

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Design: Anni's

To the Nostrils of Time

By Salomé Voegelin

*For ten years I have spent all my winters searching for that restless brilliance, for the sudden passion and violence that peregrines flush from the sky. For ten years I have been looking upward for that cloud-biting anchor shape, that crossbow flinging through the air. The eye becomes insatiable for hawks. It clicks towards them with ecstatic fury ...*¹

Words and images mean something. They refer to and find strength in symbolic and linguistic lexica that stabilize their meaning and provide the authority for their interpretation and use. They link ideas as principles to the experience of reality and shape the world through how we think it in their form.

Written down and framed within referential thinking these words impress an unavoidable causality that determines a current political reality: what it is possible as in thinkable for the world to be; and how it is possible as in achievable for us to be in that world. In this way they speak even unspoken the language of a historical voice, providing the only way things can be thought and thus the only way politics, as the governance of our living together, can be imagined and realised.

There is another voice however that speaks in raptures and exhilarations. That tears the texture of the known to make us feel rather than see and thus reveals how else the world is and could be thought. This other voice does not perform the sign, the object as bearer of semantic sense. Instead, it unperforms its meaning and causality, to soar as inarticulate but sensory possibility above the fray of words; to lift us up, beyond a visible horizon, into the inexhaustible expanse of a sonic sphere.

To the Nostrils of Time by Khaled Kaddal, performs this other voice. It celebrates the Raptor's cry as a call against inequalities and division, and transforms the bird of prey's historical iconography through rhythms and narrations. In this it meets previous works by the artist that too perform a rethinking of historical necessity and political realities through the emphatic material of sound and text.

The accompanying publication *Sovereignty: Rapturous Inspirations*, written with Nisrine Mansour, provides a second voice but not an explanation. Instead, together, they create a space of meditation and reflection that, as the artist suggests, encourages the inner self to gather its sovereignty and calls on us to 'Rise like Nefertem from the blue water lily, to the nostrils of Ra, and come forth upon the horizon of each day'.²

While a visible horizon denotes a land not yet seen and

reminds us of the limits of visibility, the sonic horizon performs an alternative exploration of what is visible. It opens another view that is not a parallel or an unreal vista but is the possibility of the real. This is not a future real but a concurrent actuality that includes the invisible to show a different world.

Kaddal's work performs this possibility and makes this different world accessible through sound. Thus the exhibition's reality is not captured in referential thinking but in the experience of its invisible sphere: the rapturous call of the Falcon that unperforms, through movements and sensations, the term and politics of capture itself. Instead of signalling domination and control its circling cry generates what we are together and from each other, without a certain outline and hardened skin but from the softness of ever molting feathers that inform the nervous system on how to fly.

Listening to the work we become feathered beings that fly in the air with a human breath and generate a rhythm by the span of the Falcon's wings on which we imagine how to live together. Soaring into a sphere of existence as re-incarnation: a new birth of body and material, where human and non-human forms exist in meetings and happenstance as the possibility of a 'winged human with a beast's body'.³

Flying off we stop confirming a singular, visual identity and start performing as transitive selves that move through trans-object, trans-technological, trans-political and trans-species bodies to realize their contingent shapes in collaboration with others and other things.

With the voice of this transforming body the Raptor cries her own name rather than the one given to her by her master. And as her call circles in 'ecstatic fury' with 'greater zest and buoyancy of flight', the possible becomes actuality.⁴

This renewal of body and material in the rapturous relationship between human and non-human form takes shape in the cry of a voice without words whose sound does not become speech but initiates the rhythm of new configurations: breathing air into beats and creating ripples from shimmering coins that shine as gold, whose reflective surface dismembers the certain form without capture by transposing its flight onto my listening body as I circle on its wings. Flying together in the sound of our transitory co-dependence; our being as being together and of each other in simultaneous rather than chronological time.

This time is thick. It is a viscid volume rather than a

line. It has honey's liquid form and its reciprocal grasp: 'it comes apart as soon as it has been given a particular shape, and what is more, it reverses the roles, by grasping the hands of whoever would take hold of it.'⁵

As such a honeyed space the voluminous time of Kaddal's work generates the possibility of the real not from the certainty of things apart or from the knowledge of their certain form, but from unformed coincidence. And as it produces a liquid embrace of concurrent movements, sounds and text, it invites sensation into the politics of co-existence and dissolves architecture into plural song, or what social-geographer Doreen Massey calls the 'simultaneity of stories-so-far'.⁶

The simultaneous stories of this exhibition expand invisibly as everywhere and at this moment to transgress the divide of chronology and the bounded conception of space and generate instead their invisible expanse in which the Falcon shares her nest with others.

For Massey these multiple 'narratives, stories, trajectories are all suppressed in the emergence of science as the writing of the world'.⁷ The science of geography, language, history and architecture denarrativizes space and time through graphs, maps, charts and facts, which are more factual but probably less true. They produce the truth of their own abstracted language and overlook experience and the reciprocity of the narrative bond. Thus while they tell one truth they lie about all others, making the actual real and the possible impossible. But here in the nest of the Falcon we re-experience the possibility of reality beyond 'the writing of the world', in all the stories that circle its space on feathers that enable my flight and protect my body temperature, which is essential for my survival.

These stories invite participation and shared recitation. They offer a caress and the possibility of our being together and of each other, 'to be us, between us', in the inarticulation of her call.⁸

In flight we belong to an indivisible world of sound and air, in unnamed co-existence and with the possibility of being as transforming things. By contrast the organisation of words in lexica and the scientific taxonomies of knowledge capture things and subjects as things within the limits of their name. Such captured animals are 'driven to solitude and killing' and are unable to find a mate.⁹ Their trauma separates them from the honeyed viscosity of a social existence, as they are locked out of the ecstasies of the embrace.

And so the captured Falcon that circles to drumrolls stoking expectations of conquest and power illuminates the paradox of control and the contradiction of sovereignties' devotion to a territorial claim. Sovereignty is not about isolation or domination, but about accountability to the nest we sit in together, the rhythm we move to and against, and the circles we draw not on a map but in the oxygen we share: the Raptor and myself transfiguring into rhythms and textures that have left the trail of communication in the indivisible volume of sound, where you are not an icon but my new skin, as a skinless surface through which I rise up into the possibility of my own flight.

1 J. A. Baker, *The Peregrine*, UK: Harper Collins, 2011, p. 30, [orig. 1967].

2 E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead Papyrus of Ani, Scribe and treasurer of the temples of Egypt, about B.c. 1450* Vol. 1, London: The medici society, LTD, 1913, p 187.

3 Khaled Kaddal and Nisrine Mansour, *Sovereignty*, p 00005.

4 Baker, *The Peregrine*, p. 29/30.

5 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, London and New York: Routledge, 2008, p 41.

6 Doreen Massey, *For Space*, London: Sage Publication, 2005, p 9

7 Ibid., p 25.

8 Ibid.

9 Kaddal and Mansour, *Sovereignty*, Roosting.