

Bliss



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Solo exhibition by artist Tarek Lakhriissi

- An exhibition is an art show.
- A solo exhibition is an art show made by only one artist.
- «Bliss» is the name of this exhibition. It means «luck» or «happiness».

«Bliss» shows artwork by the French poet and artist Tarek Lakhriissi.

The exhibition looks a bit like the stage of a theatre. Like a theatre play, the exhibition has several parts. These parts are called «acts». In these acts, you will see installations, films and sculptures. As a visitor to the exhibition, you become part of the art show.

What is the exhibition about?

Tarek Lakhriissi is interested in people who are different from others. He deals with persons who are excluded because of their skin colour, their origin or their gender.

- In our society, there is usually a majority with the same skin colour. How do people of different skin colour feel?
- Most people are heterosexuals, which means they have sex with a person of the other sex. How do gay people feel?
- Not all people are happy with the gender they have in their passport («male» for a man and «female» for a woman). There are also persons in a woman's body who feel like a man. Or persons who feel not like a man and not like a woman. How do these people feel?

Another topic is melancholy. Melancholy is what you feel when you reflect on your own life. It can also be a feeling of deep sadness. Tarek Lakhriissi makes us think about ourselves: Who am I? What is my desire? Where do I belong?

Tarek Lakhriissi tells us about some facts of his life. But he mixes these facts with fantasy. In other words: Some parts of the story are true. Other parts of the story are not true.

The Three Acts

First Act: «pending»

«Pending» means «swinging back and forth».

A huge pendulum of glass swings through the room. The wall behind the pendulum is purple. But this pendulum does not swing back and forth. This pendulum moves in circles. This looks strange.

Dragons, zombies and vampires

Tarek Lakhrissi has been interested in fantasy creatures for some time. Fantasy creatures are unusual characters from old stories or myths. For example: Tarek is interested in dragons, zombies and vampires. He wants to find out how we can show the problems of our society with these fantasy creatures.

Maybe you know a TV series called “Charmed”. The series is about three sisters who are all witches. The series was shown on TV between 1998 and 2006. One sister is called Phoebe. She uses a glass pendulum to locate bad spirits. Together with her sisters, Phoebe wins against those bad spirits. Tarek Lakhrissi also links his glass pendulum to bad spirits and fantasy creatures.

Gateway to a different world

For Tarek Lakhrissi, the mythical world is not just dark and dangerous. It is also a door to a different world. In this different world, new things are possible.

You may know the story of «Alice in Wonderland» written by Lewis Carroll in 1865. In that story, a white rabbit takes Alice to a wonderland. In this wonderland, there are different rules for space and time. In Tarek Lakhrissi’s exhibition, the pendulum takes us into a different world.

Time with no limits

The pendulum moves in circles. Tarek Lakhrissi uses the pendulum to show that time runs in circles. In our «normal» world, one thing follows another, for example: Two persons first meet, then they fall in love, then they get married and then they have children. There are no such rules in this different world. Time and space have no beginning and no end here.

Does the pendulum also have power over you? Do you move along with the pendulum? Which way do you follow the exhibition? Left or right?

Second Act: «dancing in a limbo»

If you are «in a limbo», your situation is uncertain or temporary, and you are not in control.

Tarek Lakhrissi mixes stories from his own life with magical images. You may have seen some of these images before. They remind us of the emojis we use on our smartphones. For example: The pillows are moons and stars. Tarek uses emojis to show: Today, we often show our many feelings with only a few emojis.

The room is round like the arena in a circus. The room says: We are going round in circles: We are moving all the time, but we do not get any further. There is a red curtain around the arena. This makes the place look like the stage in a theatre.

The film «Bright Heart»

In this room, you can see the film «Bright Heart». Tarek Lakhrissi made this film in 2023. The film is about a young man called Jahid, who is trying to find his own identity. The film is a bit like a fairy tale.

Jahid is in a situation with no hope. He decides to flee. He comes to a museum that is very quiet. This is unusual. Then, strange things happen: Jahid meets fantasy creatures. These creatures teach him about life. For example: How does it feel to be excluded from society? What is beauty? How do I become sure of myself? Where are dangers in our everyday life? What is love? At the end of the film, Jahid kisses his lover. The lover had been trapped in the body of a fantasy creature. This creature was half human, half dinosaur. Now the lover is free again. The creatures have helped Jahid win against the fears he had inside.

Monsters in stories

There are many books with monsters. Just think of the story of «Beauty and the Beast». In such stories, monsters have a special meaning, for example: The monster shows what people are afraid of. Another example is what our society expects from others: People often have a clear idea of how a person should be. If a person is different, society turns this person into a monster.

Monsters in books can be good or bad. Sometimes, they look friendly – but in fact, they are bad. Sometimes they look bad – but in fact, they care for us.

Third Act: «the monster's resolution»

«the monster's resolution» can mean many things, for example: the monster has a strong will to do something, the monster changes into something else or the monster breaks up completely.

In this room, there is a sound installation and an immersive landscape.

- A sound installation is a work of art with sounds and noises.
- In an immersive landscape, you have the feeling that you are part of the landscape.

The landscape here shows monstrous sculptures: the sculptures are large like monsters. Or they look like monsters. Maybe you feel very small next to them. There are also sculptures that look like emojis: stars, moons and hearts. The coloured lights, walls and carpet together form a world of magic.

Travelling to inner self

Maybe Tarek Lakhriissi himself felt like a monster in his society, because he is different from most people. Now, the «monster» is falling to pieces.

- You can see a big sculpture of Tarek's arm with fake nails.
- There is also a figure we use in a game. This figure is very large. From one side, it looks like the head of the devil. From the other side, it looks like a bottom.

Tarek Lakhriissi mixes stories from his own life with fantasy. You can see how he found out about himself and his body. Maybe you can also feel how he went through light and darkness, through happiness and sadness, through bliss and melancholy.