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Presse release

Self-Similar:
CIHAN CAKMAK & MOSHTARI HILAL

Opening: Wednesday, June 1, 2022, 7 pm
Exhibition: June 2 – August 7, 2022

In the exhibition “Self-Similar: Cihan Cakmak & Moshtari Hilal” basis e.V. presents photographs, drawings, video and sound works by the artists for the first time together in a show. Both artists let their own existences enter into their work by incorporating their bodies, their experiences, and their family backgrounds. In this way, they resist social norms, calling into question stereotypes of femininity and beauty, and addressing themes of power relations, inequalities, and belonging. The subjective experiences and approaches of their work also enable the examination of collective experiences or structures of society in their entirety. Despite the fact that the artist-subject in their self-portraits is clearly the focus of the work, the overall approach to the works in the exhibition places the personal in the background and gives greater priority to questions of extrinsic and self-determination.

In her serial photographs, Cihan Cakmak deals with the themes of oppression, freedom, the emotions that arise from it and the self-determined life. Through her sensitive visual language, she makes it clear that this kind of staging does not necessarily occur autonomously for her and the people she portrays. This form of representation is instead the inescapable consequence of engaging with the topic of exclusion brought on by racism, sexism, patriarchal structures, and classism. Cakmak always relates the female artist subject, with all its facets of alienation and changeability, to the collective of the group. She locates herself and her experiences in relation to other Kurdish women, for example, in order to examine stereotypes and representation and to question them as puzzle pieces of an apparently collective identity. She engages with the presence and absence of people in her life as well as within society.

Moshtari Hilal makes use of the self-portrait, her subjective experiences, and her memories as starting points for her artistic work. Moshtari Hilal’s self-portraits blend with family portraits and the history of these bodies in our social and political systems. Her drawings display an individual visual language, rather



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than stereotypical representations. They therefore also call into question conceptions and implications pertaining to beauty and ugliness. This is often symbolised by the motif of the hair, which are particularly prominent in the black and white contoured images. From a typical social standpoint, dark and strong body hair is viewed as uncivilised and unhygienic. The striking and hairy face thus becomes an object of hate influenced by prevalent and typical modern perceptions of femininity. She therefore creates representations that for her were missing in the portrayal of people in the media and in imagery generally—each hair and line that is drawn contains within it the censored and assimilated histories and lives.

- In spite of material differences, recurrent overlaps exist in the media utilised by the artists. As a result, boundaries dissolve between the artworks—from the self-portraits to the video works. Further, points of contact in the small gestures can be seen in the works of both artists, such as the play with semi-transparent fabrics. Ultimately, this blurring of the artistic positions makes it clear that between these themes of subjective insights and sensations, central social contexts surface as well, which not only have a profound influence on the two artists, but on many people in the society too.

- The exhibition will be accompanied by a programme consisting of a panel, lecture and public guided tours.

July 7, 7pm: Panel with Karosh Taha, Moshtari Hilal and Cihan Cakmak

July 21, 7pm: Lecture with Prof. Dr. Dr. Jan Ilhan Kizilhan

curated by Mariam Kamiab

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Opening hours:

Tuesday–Friday: 2 to 7 pm

Saturday/Sunday: noon to 6 pm



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Press Images (selection)



Cihan Cakmak, Frau in Gold mit Lilie, 2019, C-Print, 125x185 cm
copyright and courtesy the artist



Moshtari Hilal,
Eine Berührung in Kleidern, 2020
Pen on paper, 63,5 x 48 cm
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