

MICHAEL HAKIMI

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The exhibition consists of three groups of works that almost completely fill the gallery space. Despite their visually very different effects and dimensions, a number of relationships emerge between them.

The backdrop and background of the exhibition is a wallpaper printed with larger-than-life cartoon characters that spills out onto the gallery floor. These are advertising figures that embody various works, services and goods. One occasionally sees this type of figure on craftsman cars or company signs. The motifs of the wallpaper are based on digitally traced photos. The extreme enlargement and skewing, makes their cuteness mutate into something like areas.

Across the wallpaper and the entire room, spread horizontally at eye level, a series of pencil drawings. On them are detailed street scenes. In the center there is usually one, sometimes several figures. Not infrequently, these are street vendors, but beggars, passers-by, and people waiting are also represented. They have divided the sidewalk among themselves and are waiting for exchange.

On the parts of the wallpaper running out on the floor, a pile of garbage is distributed over a large area and arranged in groups. They are found objects that I have found over the years on the street and taken with me and which have gradually grown into collections. Attractive often appear eroded beyond recognition and dysfunctionality objects whose history of use is also one of violence. Just as common, however, is simple scuffing from broken parts. Leaking batteries are rarer than torn laundry labels and more common than broken bike racks.

The garbage is sometimes casually, sometimes carefully distributed on the professional images spilling on the ground. Individual objects, piles and rows colonize their limbs, heads and organs like parking lots. Sprawling displays emerge that have something of ruinous landscapes about them.

Because of their unprotected exposure in the street scene, street vendors illustrate for me in a special way the feeling of dependence and being at the mercy of others. Dependence on work, income, and on objects as ballast that binds one to a place and does not let one get away. Quite in contrast to the elegant mobility of the passers-by, who are only chained to a radiator in other parts of the city.

Layers and sediments of signs, images, texts and graphics proliferate over everything, rendering streets, buildings, clothes, bags and bodies. Everything is covered with the inscriptions of a frenetic expenditure of form and material, and to a large extent they are the result of unskilled design and equally poorly paid labor.

(Translated with DeepL.com)