

Mina Squalli-Houssaïni
i'm sorry for bugging you but
April 20 – June 3, 2023

Mina Squalli-Houssaïni's work often deals with mental projections of interior environments. These are sometimes spaces that refer to the domestic and to a form of *heterotopia*. They can also be dual spaces and reveal absence, cynicism, threat and dynamics of dominance. These concepts, as well as some associated with the *familiar*: intimacy and vulnerability, are central to the artist's practice, who, through her work proposes alternative narratives, other ways of perceiving history or telling stories.

For her first solo exhibition at Lodos, Mexico City, Mina Squalli-Houssaïni shares, this time, her gaze of the outside world. She weaves together the stereotypical dynamics of normative relationships and the dominance of sign architecture in urban spaces. When Mina Squalli-Houssaïni shows insects, they are often those that are organized in a matriarchal system and through them she is able to mobilize socio-political issues related to hybridity, diasporas and emotional labor. Here too the figure of the praying mantis is deployed both as a fictional and discursive tool. None of the names given to the praying mantis are reassuring (in French it is also called *tiger of the grass* or *horse of the devil*). The artist then seizes the venal characteristic and the dangerous reputation attributed to the insect. The repetition and the plasticity of the humanoid mantises made in patchwork of flamboyant fabrics, make of them ambiguous figures, where the border between the human and the animal is blurred; where the natural and the artificial is hardly discernible.

The illuminated sculptures evoke an architecture of persuasion and seduction that becomes the product it sells and that capitalizes on affect. Love and desire are gendered, commodified and framed in an enterprise of architectural flirtation of emotional capital. The mantises, wandering, are under a crushing corridor of luminous signs that gain a certain corporality. This series also integrates textile elements stitched in patchwork which are a common thread in Mina Squalli-Houssaïni's practice. This technique counters the content of the installation which evokes a certain superficiality and constitutes an important conceptual part of her work which engages a reflection around *arts and crafts*.

Mina Squalli-Houssaïni's works are a way of thinking *with*, thinking *between* and thinking *other*. Sometimes narratives become entangled, thus spider webs become, over time, a net; both catch and speak of absence, of places too long forgotten, of objects or bodies left behind. Whether through the various representations of humanoid insects or symbols such as the flower, it is a question, in the work of the artist, of vulnerability and power, whether the latter reveals relationships of dominance or the agency of the represented subject.

-Nastasia Meyrat

Mina Squalli-Houssaïni's (b. 1994, Lausanne) practice aims to address strategies of resistance and vulnerability in front of structures of domination related to colonial histories and patriarchy. The emblems and symbols she subverts from representations of femininity and the domestic, are intended to invoke both her background and collective memory. Her work, focused mainly on sculpture and installation, plays on the tension between the manufacturing processes of the industrial and commercialized object, and the tradition of craft.

Her work has been exhibited in Cherish, Geneva; 1.1, Basel; Alienze, Lausanne; Karma International, Zürich; Lodos, Mexico City; and Treize, Paris. She was also a nominee for the Kiefer Hablitzel Prize in 2022 and exhibited in the Swiss Art Awards.

Exhibited Works

stock character #1 seduced, 2023

Synthetic fabric, staples, fake eyelashes, acrylic eyes, metal, papier mâché
85 x 75 x 35 cm

stock character #2 subverted, 2023

Synthetic fabric, staples, fake eyelashes, acrylic eyes, metal, papier mâché
85 x 75 x 35 cm

stock character #3 witnessing, 2023

Synthetic fabric, staples, fake eyelashes, acrylic eyes, metal, papier mâché
85 x 75 x 35 cm

stock character #4 corrupted, 2023

Synthetic fabric, staples, fake eyelashes, acrylic eyes, metal, papier mâché
85 x 75 x 35 cm

stock character #5 threatening, 2023

Synthetic fabric, staples, fake eyelashes, acrylic eyes, metal, papier mâché
85 x 75 x 35 cm

thank you for (synthetic), 2023

Foil paper, zippers, thread, inox steel, leds
77 x 54 x 9.5 cm

longing for (bland), 2023

Textile, tulle, bra hooks, thread, inox steel, leds
100 x 79 x 13.5 cm

forgive me for (B&W), 2023

Fishnet, tulle, safety pins, thread, inox steel, leds
102.5 x 80.5 x 13.5 cm