

Simo Bacar

*Djerba*

Paul Gondry  
Ryan Huggins

16 December – 27 January 2024

Simo Bacar is delighted to announce the opening of "Djerba", a two-person exhibition of work by Paul Gondry and Ryan Huggins.

Inspired by European myths and fables that have been passed down from illuminated manuscripts, Dutch etchings, and RPG video games, Gondry's works describe the inner worlds of characters who know little more than suffering – save for the meager offering of escapism and dark magic. Still, these fantastic worlds are relatable and often depict personal moments in his life. The paintings reference the French post-impressionists, a group drawn to spiritualism and nature painting as a reaction against industrialization, as much as they recall Orientalism, a contentious genre that looks to semi-fictional lands, either for pornographic escape or for utopic fantasies.

Paul Gondry (b. 1991 Paris) lives and works in New York. The artist studied Film, Animation and Video at the Rhode Island School of Design. Most recently, Gondry presented works at The Armory Show, New York, with Newton, the Gramercy International Prize recipient in 2022. Recent exhibitions include: Castelet, Simo Bacar, Lisbon (2022); Le pays du soleil, Futura, Prague (2020); Various Others, KAYA (Debo Eilers and Kerstin Brätsch) and Paul Gondry, Deborah Schamoni, Munich hosting Malcolm X (MX) Gallery, New York (2019); Just So Stories, Nosbaum Reding, Luxembourg (2019); Kunsthalle Wichita, Kansas (2018); C. R. McBerny Vol. I, curated by Andrew Hunt and Veit Laurent Kurz, Zwinglialon, Berlin (2018); C. Vomitoria, Paul Gondry and Duncan Boise, MX Gallery, New York (2018); Golem, 15 Orient, New York (2017); Shpongle, Shelby Jackson and Paul Gondry, 15 Orient, New York (2016); Hüttendasein, 15 Orient, New York (2016). The artist was the co-founder of 15 Orient, New York, and recently joined MX Gallery team to transition into Newton.

Huggins currently lives and works between Trinidad and Düsseldorf, Germany. Huggins' practice explores ideas surrounding alternative youth subcultures within queer communities. Considering himself a figurative painter, Huggins' work examines his cultural exchanges and differences migrating from the Caribbean to Europe, as well as its ongoing influence on his artistic output, notions of self, sexuality, identity, and nurture. He examines the vocabulary of historically queer references as a growing language, running parallel to contemporary terminologies of body, social identity, and status. His latest body of works, 'C'est La Vie', explores the function of bath houses and its culture within the queer community. Huggins emphasizes the bath house as an anonymous meeting point where physical interaction is staged based on design and facade, intended to facilitate a sensual and safe experience yet highlighting power dynamics of gay intimacy.

Ryan Huggins (b. 1991 Trinidad) studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf under Professor Peter Doig and Tomma Abts, where he recently graduated.

:::