

In some way war is pathos.

M. recently asked me if a baby has never ever experienced violence, would violence manifest itself in this human being? And then continued: if a society had no violence, would we still invent wars, killings, atrocities, anger?

That question has stayed with me since. And I pass it to others.

Over a fillet of a small version of Wiener schnitzel at Einstein Café in Berlin last week we started again with this question. H. said violence is inside us and yes, regardless of the environment we grow up in, it will always appear in one way or another.

I thought of George Gudjjeff, who celebrated the expression of anger, amongst other expressions, big time.

We spoke of violence in nature, the father albatross not helping its chick to return to its nest after the storm unless it succeeds by itself; a huge risk of failing.

Survival of the fittest is why capitalism really appeals to us.

I argued that since our meal (in this case the veal) is served hot in a sophisticated environment, the drive to kill to survive gets replaced by the drive to kill, period.

H. agreed.

But then of course, we are not animals, right? So why can we not come up with powers to eliminate and kill the killing drive?

How is passion measured in algorithms?

What happens to our bodies in a society that serves it all on the plate; food, pathos, and its realisation through matter, leisure, labour, culture.

Images of bodies, juxtaposed with text.

Dominating the old garage space on *Bourdon Street* is a bar that acts as the common denominator between the two spaces, the shows, and plays upon reals and fakes, existing elements and replicas; a second nature for Nashat. Around that structure, works of wrapped meat in transparent foil titled *Bone-In* are displayed. On them, seemingly desperate but existential and real love text messages.

Bone x-rays printed on plaster hang on the walls. The body, a body, the artist's or his family's, is portrayed through this on-going series (*Untitled*) where the plaster surface is used not for painting

or sculpting but to print the scans of broken or fractured bones while the printer's bleeds are exposed shaping digital rivers, interruptions and waves in time and surface. The transparency of the x-ray is eerily engraved through the printer on the smooth material until it dries and turns into a phantom effect.

The artist's constant concern with materials holding the body results in the sculptural series *Sex Positions with Broken Ribs*, the body in pain and prosthetic solutions towards guaranteed pathos.

*Bad House* is a maquette of the artist's mind and its extension: the studio: his processes transitioning from turpentine (the role of the painter) to the absent body via video, to the manufactured on the top floor of a doll's house piece that becomes the bridge between the two exhibitions.

Motherhood and the artist's roots (born in Geneva with Iranian heritage) as well as family bonds are at stake in this show, the *Mothers on Wheels* (Piraeus), the *Geneva's* (London), and a video with his personal *Origine du Monde: a male armpit* (also Piraeus). The human skin and the surface of the screen merge into one surface, a new organ: the skrin?

A series of self portraits, compressing time and space, like sculptural capsules, the *Geneva's* are also personal and historical reference kits: from Paul Thek through the artist's life span they shape a new minimalism of the flesh in the time of digital takeover.

The central piece in Piraeus is the free-standing screen.

To talk about televised wars and fragments of bodies in relation to Shahryar Nashat's work *Keep Begging* is probably obvious. And it is also straightforward to talk about the zooming of rescued human flesh ashore (war pornography in popular terms), juxtaposed with posing male imagery on mating apps, or those sexy posts of food on Instagram and elsewhere, all experienced through screens. Though it is necessary to do so. Also important and precise is to talk about matter and how the artist embraces his history of art, education and pathos. The word shooting travels from war to the beach, moves from death to leisure and back. Shot bodies facing shot images; our current constant struggle that has preoccupied the artist for the past decade.

Shahryar Nashat (b. 1975, Geneva) lives and works in Los Angeles. His solo exhibitions include: *Force Life*, MoMA, New York (2020, forthcoming); *Start Begging*, SMK, Copenhagen (2019); *Shahryar Nashat*, Swiss Institute, New York (2019); *The Cold Horizontals*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2017); *Bodies and Stages*, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover (2016); *Present Sore*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2016); *Model Malady*, Portikus, Frankfurt (2016); *Hard Up For Support*,

Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin(2016); *Skins and Stand-ins*, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (2015); *Prosthetic Everyday*, 356 Mission Road, Los Angeles (2015); *Lauréat du prix Lafayette*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014); Städtische Galerie Nordhorn (2013); *Stunt*, Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof , Hamburg (2012); *Work- bench*, Studio Voltaire, London (2011); *Line Up*, Kunstverein Nürnberg, Nuremberg (2010). Group exhibitions include: *Stories of Almost Everyone*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018); Mario Merz Prize, Mario Merz Foundation, Turin (2017); *Question the Wall Itself*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2016); *Made in LA 2016*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); 20th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney (2016); 8th Berlin Biennial, Berlin (2014); *Exhibiting*, Folkwang Museum, Essen (2013); *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes*, CCA Wattis, San Fransico (2013); *ILLUMInations*, 54th International Venice Biennale, Venice (2011); *Based in Berlin*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2011); *Art in the Auditorium*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2008). Na- shat's works are in the following public collections: Frac Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, Museum Folkwang, Essen, Städtische, Galerie Nordhorn, Nordhorn, Galeries Lafayette, Paris.

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