

Monia Sander Haj-Mohamed: *Heavy Body, Heavenly Body*

11 June – 7 August 2022

In Monia Sander Haj-Mohamed's first large solo exhibition *Heavy Body, Heavenly Body* the artist presents two extensive bodies of work that include drawing, sculpture, text, performance, and sound. The exhibition, which occupies O—Overgaden's first floor, appears at first glance as a minimal and quiet universe. But by placing oneself closely in front of the drawings, or putting on the exhibition's headphones, one is sucked into a deep and intimate interior, where the sense of time, place, and space is abolished, and questions of existence, intimacy, and identity emerge.

The audience is invited up close when Haj-Mohamed presents for the first time her extensive production of abstract line drawings. A total of 25 unique drawings, placed in hand-carved elm frames, and installed chronologically. The technique, in which a neat maze motif slowly takes shape, has been developed by the artist over several years. Each drawing begins as an intuitive but deeply focused channeling of energy that continues, uninterrupted, until the drawing is finished. For up to 16 hours at a time, Haj-Mohamed lets a pencil stroke move across a piece of paper, letting it stray and branch off, only to eventually meet itself again, creating a complete form. All 25 exhibited drawings have been created over a period of three years in which grief, transformation, and trauma healing have weighed heavily in the artist's life. The drawings function as organic meditations on life – on the finished and the unfinished. Each drawing can be seen as an inner journey through life.

The meditative drawings are accompanied by the audience-generated performance work *Nothing that goes through me belongs to me*. The work is based on a script written by Haj-Mohamed and asks the poetic question: What happens when we let go of our selves through our encounters with others and experience the resonance we leave with one another? In the script, the indeterminate character *Spectactor* (a contraction of the words "spectator" and "actor") appears as the only voice, and the audience is invited to bring themselves into play through their interpretation of the work. Each week, the exhibition's guests can participate in a joint script reading. Framed as an intimate

meeting, the reading is organized as an improvised and non-choreographed collective reading, where the participants themselves take control. The layers of meaning, understandings, and interpretations of the manuscript will thus change from reading to reading, depending on who participates and how they contribute with their voice. All the script readings are recorded by a microphone standing in the center of a circle. The sound and the participating voices can subsequently be heard unedited in headphones placed within the same circle where the readings took place. Thus, new guests are enveloped by the voices of previous visitors in a procedural sound-work that accumulates more and more layers as the exhibition period progresses, and more people read and speak along.

By ascribing concrete value to the audience's actions, reactions, and dialogues, Haj-Mohamed experiments with new possibilities with which we can understand the work of art and its value – aesthetically, culturally, socially, and economically. At the same time, Haj-Mohamed explores the potential of the radical collective gesture; the one that dissolves the divide between "you" and "I," and thereby also our notions of the spaces and the society by which we allow ourselves to be defined.

Monia Sander Haj-Mohamed (b. 1988, DK) works at a crossroads between text, drawing, performance, and staging. With references to the theater, Haj-Mohamed explores the span of performative space, where reality and fiction intermingle, and where the distinction between real people and literary characters is blurred. Haj-Mohamed graduated in 2022 from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts with the performance work *Break*. She has published two books, *Dominique* and *The Alexander Trilogy*, a performance essay in three acts, both through the publishing house *Korridor*, and in 2019 she received the Schadeprisen for *The Alexander Trilogy*. In 2020, Haj-Mohamed was appointed Artistic Director of Teater Momentum vol. 15 for the season 2021–22.

EVENTS DURING THE EXHIBITION

→ Weekly script readings in Monia Sander Haj-Mohamed's exhibition will take place on Friday, June 10 and Friday June 17 at 17.30, and thereafter every Thursday at 17.30 throughout the exhibition period. Visitors are invited to participate. No registration needed - just show up.

→ Every Wednesday from 13–18h until July 20, the artist will be present in the exhibition, conducting 1:1 conversations with visitors. No registration needed - just show up.

The exhibition is supported by:



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