

«Paradise»: Hommage to “Ghassan Ghazal” (2016)

Video performance of Nahed Mansour (00:05:35)

“*Paradise*” is an homage to the beloved, the friend, the artist **Ghassan Ghazal** (1961-2016)

“*Paradise*” recalls **Ghassan Ghazal**’s last performance in Beirut “*Sacrifice ou victim*“, “sacrifice or victim”(2015) in which he wrote “*Al Fatiha*” sourat from Koran in braille with henna on the back of a sheep that he called *Faro* (symbolic metaphor of the old testament story of Abraham sacrifice of his son that was replaced by a sheep).Faro performance was presented at the Beirut Art Fair (2015).

The text in this video-performance is an extract of **Ghassan Ghazal** ‘s written notes about the nature of love:

« *L’amour est un miracle inconditionnel qui refuse les structures humaines. Il est informel et de langage spirituel. Mais que nous lui infligeons, l’imposons sera toujours présent. Il ne faut pas le chercher en espérant le trouver. Car il est en nous et c’est par la foie que nous l’épousons.*» Ghassan Ghazal

"Love is an unconditional miracle that refuses human structures. It is informal and of spiritual language. But if we inflict it or impose it, it will be always present. One shall not look for it in the hope of finding it. For it is in us and it is with faith that we marry it. " Ghassan Ghazal

The artistic and human carrier of **Ghassan Ghazal** was a special creative and authentic one based on dedication and commitment.

Finally are not Art and Love the ultimate ways for humans to overcome the predetermined reality of death through the continuity of life in the minds and hearts of the livings and the collective memory of the society?



The Ceremony of Sacrifice or Victim (2015), Ghassan Ghazal

The Ceremony of Sacrifice or Victim (2015)

Ritually, the sheep is a figure of religious celebration that symbolizes the covenant between man and God. The sheep that will make its appearance this year at BEIRUT ART FAIR will be called Faro. Faro is the descendant of the rites of sacrifices offered to God. Its biblical appearance dates back to the episode of “Abraham’s Sacrifice”. Through the immaterial belief of the latter, Faro is made a symbol of equality and peace among men. It becomes the subject and the symbol of obedience to the Creator.

Officially invited by BEIRUT ART FAIR 2015: Faro makes its public entry. It is not a sacrifice offered by Abraham to God, but rather it is a creature frightened by the social context and the public space in which it finds itself.

Also, the aesthetic intervention - shearing and tattooing - that Faro will suffer is no less than a metaphorical representation of a live filmed event, and imbued with irony and humor. Its ceremonial welcome announced by the press and its disorientation in a mundane venue make us sensitive to the panic and the danger experienced by Faro. This scene exposes Faro to a reversal of status, the latter being forced to evolve in a “fabricated” world which isolates it from its true nature. It is no longer the symbol of the sacrifice offered to God, but rather the victim of an economic power based on the socio-religious and political conflicts within the Arab world.

Biography:

Ghassan Ghazal is a visual artist, working across a variety of formats ranging from painting to sculpture to installation, performance and conceptual art. He was born in Beirut, in 1961, and was exiled from the country through the turbulent years of the Lebanese Civil War, leaving in 1979 for Canada and returning in 2006. Particularly preoccupied with the transformation of symbols of violence and coercion beyond representation, his multidisciplinary practice has taken the form of diverse research projects conflating image, space and perception. He has been showcased in different solo shows and group exhibitions, art fairs and auctions. His work was shown at the Museum of Quebec in Canada in 1995 and his most recent exhibition, “(IN)tolerance” was held at Galerie Janine Rubeiz in Beirut, 2012. Ghassan Ghazal holds a Master’s degree in Visual Arts from the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) and he lived in Beirut, where he worked and taught at the Lebanese American University.

<http://www.zhibit.org/ghassanghazal>