

Daniel Marzona

Flies bite, it's going to rain

The works of Vajiko Chachkhiani are shaped by a poetic humanism that exists between personal experience and political reality as well as between psychological explorations and material immediacy. Directly or indirectly the point of departure for many of his works is an exchange of objects or actions between people, sometimes appearing as a performance. The artist condenses his subjects by using reduced forms in a subtle interplay between revealing and concealing. The ordinary materials and the traditional craftsmanship of his works come out of a basic, everyday reality. Parallel to his sculptures and installations, Chachkhiani has developed a cinematic oeuvre ranging from the documentation of single occurrences to more narrative films that hover between dreams and reality.

The materials of his works often emphasize historical references, as well as a bond with his homeland, which occasionally leaves its mark on his oeuvre. Whereas, for example, at first glance, some of his films may appear to be documentary, they elude clear decipherability and, upon closer examination, reveal a subtle, multiple-historical, and suggestive power. For a brief moment, Chachkhiani stops the wheel of time and history and offers the viewer a metaphorical image, which often focuses on vanishing, changing and transforming, revealing multi-layered narrative strands upon immersion.

The work exhibited at Art Basel Unlimited is the second large scale work after his installation 'Living Dogs Among Dead Lions' which was on view at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017. Similar to the work in Venice the installation with the title 'Flies bite, it is going to rain' addresses the question of how history or broader political developments influence or sometimes even define the inner life and psychic disposition of the human being.

The work consists of a forest of dead trees which encircles fragments of sculptures borrowed from both antiquity and recent history. The sculptures were either made by a sculptor who creates contemporary monuments for the city of Tbilisi or fragments were taken from the sculpture cemetery in Tbilisi where demolished old public sculptures are being kept. A few objects were re-cast from models of antique sculptures. Nearly all sculptures have no head or are defaced.

The forest may be seen as a metaphor for an outer narration while the fragments of historical and mythological sculptures represent the complexity of an inner narration. Both, interior and exterior, inner and outer narrations co-exist and create a physically impenetrable space. This very space could be pointing to a reflection of the conditions for the development of a psychic life - mythological and recent narratives intertwine and past and present melt together within the framework of certain historical conditions.

Vajiko Chachkhiani (b. 1985 in Tbilisi, Georgia) lives and works in Tbilisi. He studied at the University of the Arts (UdK), Berlin, with Prof. Gregor Schneider until 2013. Previously, he studied mathematics and informatics at the Technical University Tbilisi. Numerous exhibitions have followed since, including the solo exhibition "Both" at the Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen and "Many Lives Passing Through While Imitating Death" in 2015, an outdoor installation at Kunsthaus Dahlem, Berlin. In 2017, his work was shown in two group exhibitions at the Hamburger Kunsthalle: "WAITING. Between Power and Possibility and 'Wieder und Wieder'. His latest solo exhibition "Heavy Metal Honey" took place at Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn in 2018. In the same year Chachkhiani received the Villa Aurora Fellowship in Los Angeles and a Residency Grant Tokas in Tokyo. In 2017, his work "Living Dog Among Dead Lions" was shown in the Georgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, curated by Julian Heynen. Vajiko Chachkhiani was awarded the Rubens Promotional Award in 2014.