

MARIANE IBRAHIM

Maïmouna Guerresi

Aisha in Wonderland,

April 19 - June 2, 2018

Mariane Ibrahim Gallery is very pleased to announce *Aisha in Wonderland*, the second solo exhibition from the Italian-Senegalese artist Maïmouna Guerresi. The show will open on April 19 and will run until June 2, 2018 with the presence of the artist. *Aisha in Wonderland* is an allegorical journey that centers around themes dear to Guerresi and links to the charm and the value of the mystic and veiled body's diversity. It is the representation of the spiritually strong woman who, through her own identity, is able to dissolve the distinctions present between the masculine and feminine genres, leaving aside the stereotypes linked to Islam.

For over twenty years, Guerresi's poetic work has been about empowering women, bringing together individuals and cultures in an appreciation for the shared humanity that transcends psychological, cultural, and political borders. The exhibition developed around the concept of inner identity and communication, as the importance of freedom of expression, a narrative path, where video works, photographs and installations alternate.

The different dimensions of the photographic works and their position in the exhibition space recall the proportions of Alice in the famous novel in which she becomes big or small depending on her meetings and experiences. Here Aisha does not appear as the protagonist of this visual narration, but as the gaze through which the observer manages to access an inner and hidden universe.

Her new series deals with the theme of equilibrium through a metaphysical and surreal interpretative key, articulated by means of two different techniques: the sculptural installation and the photographic installation. The protagonists of the photographs walk or stop in unusual spaces, appropriating new physical and spiritual faculties.

In Kadija's *Minbar*, the protagonist points to a distant point in space with a long branch. The moment of elevation from a wooden structure recalls the *Minbar*, a pulpit where the sermons take place in mosques -- a space specifically dedicated to the male imam and denied to women. These characters are a metaphor for the idea of identity, which in this work has been re-envisioned on the basis of spatial, cultural, and linguistic coordinates that transcend geographical boundaries.

In addition to the photographic works, the installation of the black and white carpets will be exhibited, along the video entitled *Nar* (which translates to "fire" in Arabic).

This video features a fireworks display during a village party the artist recorded a few years ago. The display occurred near a bell tower that resembled a Minaret. The scene through her eyes became spectacular and dramatic as it was filmed roughly leaving the impression of war reportage.

Guerresi deliberately chose to mount the video in reverse mode as if the fireworks would withdraw.

Moreover, in the editing of the video at a certain point the noises become more and more attenuated until they reach a silence softly interrupted by the beautiful voice of the Muezzin which recalls the prayer, thus making the scene surreal and metaphysical.

Maïmouna Guerresi is a multimedia artist working with photography, sculpture, video, and installation. An Italian-Senegalese artist, born in Italy, her work presents an intimate perspective on spiritual ideas of human beings in relation to their inner mystical dimensions. Guerresi's images are delicate narratives with fluid sequencing, an appreciation of shared humanity beyond borders -- psychological, cultural, and political. Recurrent metaphors such as milk, light, the hijab, trees, and contrasting white and black create awareness of the vital unifying qualities of Islamic spirituality.

Maïmouna's work is a hybrid that embraces the spirituality and ancestry of African, Asian, and European culture. Her body of work is ultimately reflective of her embrace of the globalization of art and life. We often talk about a global international community, but few people truly reflect our interconnected world as flawlessly as Maïmouna. Viewed through this lens, her figures and scenes take on a new light, a universal truth about community and the soul. The person here becomes a sacred dwelling, a meeting-place for humanity to re-discover its shared mystical body.

Maïmouna has exhibited in solo and group shows all over Europe, Africa, the United States, Asia, and the Middle East.

She was invited to participate in the Italian pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1982 and 1986, and at Documenta K18 in 1987 in Kassel, Germany. She has exhibited in numerous museums and international exhibitions, including the National Museum of Bamako, the Biennale Les Recontres de Bamako in Mali (2009), the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, the Sharjah National Museum in UAE, the Bahrain National Museum, and the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, India. Guerresi most recently exhibited in *A Queen Within: Adorned Archetypes* at the New Orleans Museum of Art, among famed designers and artists such as Alexander McQueen, David LaChapelle, and Vivienne Westwood.

Her works are included in prestigious public collections worldwide, such as the Smithsonian Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, LACMA, Institute des Cultures d'Islam in Paris, and the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden in Marrakesh.

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Selected Images



Red Trampoline, 2016
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Blue Trampoline, 2016
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