

Hassan Khan

Sentences for a New Order

July 26, 2013 was the worst day of my life. This is not an exaggeration. On this day something happened. Something public and collective, involving hundreds of thousands of people, and then the world felt contaminated. Waves of numbed out hysteria washed over everything. A savage and voluntary self-humiliation, a choice, to prostrate oneself in front of the fetish. A deep, physical, indulgence in fear. Fear the mind killer. Fear. Neighbors and strangers rolled through the streets whipping up a frenzy. Some ripped off their carefully cultivated propriety and succumbed to a perverse ugly twisted phallus-god. Others, worshippers of machismo, willingly castrated themselves as a sacrifice to the demon of fear. A hunger for victims and monsters fueled this dance.

This is only an exhibition. It feels a bit different to me than most of my previous exhibitions. Because it is, frankly, a risk. The works brought here together represent the meeting point of several latent things: first a private moment, a secret that was allowed to breathe and then the price that was paid; second the exciting, unbearably surprising, horrific, brutal, dangerous yet promising transformations shaping the world; and third, a risky, compulsive proposition that tries, strives, wants, to be able to manage that moment, to find a form that is suitable and generative without complacency and servitude.

This collection of recent works, installed in a space, are therefore both a proposition and something else.

Live Ammunition! (2015) is a multi-channel clapping composition where hand strikes human hand in a constantly evolving polyphonic pattern. Are we inside a victorious march? A call? A phantom apparition? Or is it just the clatter of machine gun bursts in the distance? The shores of this new ocean offer no resolutions, only undercurrents and potential. Are the constantly shifting colors of *LightShift* (2015) a place, a gesture or a cycle? Is it something to briefly belong to before it passes? Or is it just an effect, a sideshow, a way of suspending the inevitable? Time always passes, civilizations rise and crumble. It might take a moment to walk through a room but it is also always a transition.

In 2018 I took a plunge and maybe for the first time in decades allowed a vulnerability to appear. This choice, unexpectedly forced me to come to terms with a vision of a collapsing world as a daily occurrence. *tainted* (2018) is a monument to people I recognize, to glorious failures and starting points, to collective traumas and solitary dreams. Because people are always more than just people, because we embody, channel, sublimate. Because we are one and many. Because we are structure and loss. I had the ambition to produce this piece in glass, with flags, in words, with metal, and in clay.

Throughout July and August of the year 2013 I took photographs on my cell phone of dead animals I came across on the street. That summer a twisted media was blowing into the icy cold vacuum at the pit of every citizen's stomach, and the premonitions that had gripped the heart of the nation were translated into the worst mass killing in recent Egyptian history. Some of the animals I photographed had been tortured to death, others were poisoned while still others had their throats slit. In 2017 I discovered REPLIKA, a chatbot app that is based on learning from the information you give it to replicate your speech patterns and therefore in a way your choices. Are we something more than our choices? For many years I have drifted through museums in a fine balance between focused, sharp attention and exhausted, overwhelmed distraction. In this condition I've glided through the accumulation of different historical orders and encountered things that have held me captive for a second or an hour. *2013 (2019)* a suite of large prints layering 3D digital renders with 2D copies of screenshots and low-res photographs revisits and transforms all these moments.

The first thing I knew when I visited the gallery in 2017 to think about this exhibition was that there will be a piece situated in the work space that had something to do with the fuel encounters run on. *¡A shrine!* (2019) is a hole, a gate, a focal point or maybe even a question specially made for a special table in a meeting room. Another monument to the potential of breaking lines, little fails and tiny smiles. The shrine is the shine before the rise and the fall.

Sentences for a New Order (2018) is partially about what we were promised. The great fallacy of speaking of a 'we' (as if a Dalit sewage diver in Chennai, and a fashion editor in Manhattan share the same life) is obvious. However, conditions remain relevant and strike with great specificity at the heart of all our lives. That's why I've maybe for around a decade performed a hundred concerts titled Superstructure. In Florence a year and a half ago, I scribbled a series of sentences that began with the terror of SUDDEN CHOLERA and ended with the trepidation of T R E M B L I N G W O R L D S. My greatest hope then, a selfish personal one, was for a simple trust to grow. But now always changes which changes changes now over and over again.

In 1995 I was told by an old broken man on the edge of a sand strewn settlement in the Moroccan Rif Mountains that Tetuan, where I was slowly making my way, was a diseased town. Then, as now, I could not help falling under the sway of this striking image. My sentences here are maybe just propositions yet the order they refer to is a form, a statement, a murmur that penetrates everything.

EXHIBITION
FROM APRIL 18 TO MAY 18, 2019
TUESDAYS TO SATURDAYS
FROM 11 AM TO 7 PM

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