

younes **baba-ali**
visual & sound artist

Younes Baba-Ali

(born in 1986 in Oujda, Morocco)

lives and works in Brussels (Be) and Casablanca (Ma)

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Captions written by Aude Tournaye

Cover : Zinneke (detail), 2014

Exhibition view "Brussels Background" - MAAC, Brussels (Be) - © Léa Catache Beloussovitch

eng.

Younes Baba-Ali makes art that is unconventional, intelligent and critical, mostly in public space or places uncommon to art practice. He is a sharp observer and raises pertinent questions aimed at society, the institution and above all, his audience. As a free thinker he holds a mirror up to society and confronts it with its ingrained habits and dysfunctions. Baba-Ali's work often assumes the form of the readymade, but underneath its facade of simplicity there is a complex exercise in balance at work. As an artist-chemist he measures and mixes technology, objects, sound, video and photography with political, social and ecological issues. The resulting installations discreetly coerce the unsuspecting viewer into taking a stand. Baba-Ali shuns no controversy and often finds himself negotiating his art and its rationale with his environment. His works are context-specific and take their final form in dialogue with its spectators. This at times disruptive intervention art confronts the viewer in an ironical way with himself and his environment. Baba- Ali presents people dilemmas and taboos and challenges them to (re)act. In this way he makes them his accomplices in acts of artistic guerrilla that unite the establishment and the common man.

Born in 1986 in Oujda (Ma), Younes Baba-Ali lives and works in Brussels (Be) & Casablanca (Ma).

Graduating from l'Ecole Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg in 2008 and from l'Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence in 2011, he was rewarded by the "Léopold Sédar Senghor" prize, during the African Contemporary Art Biennial of Dakar (Sn) in 2012 and the "Boghossian" prize during the Belgian "Art'Contest" in Brussels (Be) in 2014. He has participated in several international exhibitions and biennials, including Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels (Be), Biennale de Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi (RDC), Brussels Background, Brussels (Be), Brussels in Song Eun : Imagining Cities Beyond Technology 2.0, Seoul (Kr), For a Brave New Brussels, Lisbon (Pt), Digital Imaginaries - Africas in Production, ZKM, Karlsruhe (De), One Place After Another, Moscow (Ru), The Marrakech Biennale, Marrakech (Ma), Documenta 14, Berlin (De), Biennale of Contemporary African Art, Dakar (Sn), Commissions, KANAL - Centre Pompidou, Brussels (Be), AfriKIKK, KIKK Festival, Namur (Be), and Gemischte Gefühle, Tempelhof, Berlin (De). His work is part of different collections, both private and public, such as Kanal – Centre Pompidou, Brussels (Be) and Mu.ZEE, Ostend (Be).

fr.

Younes Baba-Ali pratique un art non-conventionnel, intelligent et critique. Il travaille de préférence dans l'espace public ou dans des lieux peu communs. Fin observateur, il pose des questions pertinentes à la société, à l'institution, mais aussi surtout à son public. C'est un libre penseur, qui tend à la société un miroir et lui renvoie ses réflexes conditionnés et ses dysfonctionnements. L'œuvre de Baba-Ali se présente souvent sous la forme de ready-made, mais cette apparente simplicité dissimule un délicat exercice d'équilibre. À la manière d'un alchimiste, l'artiste dose et combine les techniques, les objets du quotidien, les sons, la vidéo et la photographie et adresse des questions politiques, sociales et écologiques. Les installations qu'il en distille poussent le spectateur à prendre position malgré lui. Baba-Ali ne recule pas devant la controverse et est même souvent contraint à de subtiles négociations avec son environnement pour revendiquer sa pratique artistique et son droit à l'existence. Son art est toujours spécifique à un contexte et ne prend vraiment sa forme que dans le dialogue du public. C'est de l'art d'intervention dérangeant et qui adopte parfois un ton ironique pour confronter le public à lui-même et à son environnement. Baba-Ali soumet au spectateur des dilemmes et des tabous et le défie d'agir et de réagir. Il en fait ainsi son complice dans une guérilla artistique clandestine qui réunit l'establishment et l'homme commun.

Né en 1986 à Oujda (Ma), Younes Baba-Ali vit et travaille à Bruxelles (Be) et Casablanca (Ma).

Diplômé de l'Ecole Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg en 2008 et de l'Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence en 2011, il a été récompensé par le prix «Léopold Sédar Senghor», lors de la Biennale d'Art Contemporain Africain de Dakar (Sn) en 2012 et le prix «Boghossian» lors du «Art'Contest» belge à Bruxelles (Be) en 2014. Il a participé à plusieurs expositions et biennales internationales, entre autres le Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Bruxelles (Be), la Biennale de Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi (RDC), Brussels Background, Bruxelles (Be), Brussels in Song Eun : Imagining Cities Beyond Technology 2.0, Seoul (Kr), For a Brave New Brussels, Lisbon (Pt), Digital Imaginaries - Africas in Production, ZKM, Karlsruhe (De), One Place After Another, Moscow (Ru), The Marrakech Biennale, Marrakech (Ma), Documenta 14, Berlin (De), Biennale of Contemporary African Art, Dakar (Sn), Commissions, KANAL - Centre Pompidou, Brussels (Be), AfriKIKK, KIKK Festival, Namur (Be), et Gemischte Gefühle, Tempelhof, Berlin (De). Son travail fait partie de différentes collections, privées et publiques, telles que Kanal - Centre Pompidou, Bruxelles (Be) et Mu.ZEE, Ostende (Be).

Younes Baba-Ali maakt kunst die onconventioneel, intelligent en kritisch is, meestal in de openbare ruimte of op niet voor de hand liggende plaatsen. Hij is een scherp observator en stelt pertinente vragen aan de maatschappij, het instituut, maar ook en vooral aan zijn publiek. Als een vrijdenker houdt hij de samenleving een spiegel voor en legt zo haar vastgeroeste gewoontes en dysfuncties bloot. Baba-Ali's werk presenteert zich vaak als readymade, maar onder deze ogenschijnlijke eenvoud schuilt een complexe evenwichtsoefening. Als een kunstenaar-alchemist doseert en combineert hij techniek, gebruiksvoorwerpen, geluid, video en fotografie met politieke, sociale en ecologische vraagstukken. De resulterende installaties bewegen de nietsvermoedende toeschouwer tot stellingname. Baba-Ali schuwt de controversen niet en wordt daardoor vaak gedwongen om zijn kunst en haar bestaansrecht subtiel te onderhandelen met zijn omgeving. Ze is steeds context-specifiek en krijgt pas haar echte vorm in dialoog met het publiek. Het is ontregelende interventiekunst, die op een soms ironische wijze de toeschouwer met zichzelf en zijn omgeving confronteert. Baba-Ali schotelt mensen dilemma's en taboes voor en daagt hen uit tot (re)actie. Zo maakt hij hen tot zijn medeplichtigen in een verdoken artistieke guerrilla die zowel het establishment als de gewone man in de straat verenigt.

Younes Baba-Ali, geboren in 1986 in Oujda (Ma), leeft en werkt in Brussel (Be) & Casablanca (Ma).

Afgestudeerd aan de Ecole Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg in 2008 en aan de Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence in 2011, werd hij onderscheiden met de Léopold Sédar Senghor prijs, tijdens de Biënnale van Dakar (Sn) in 2012 en de Boghossian prijs tijdens de Belgische Art'Contest in Brussel (Be) in 2014. Hij nam deel aan verschillende internationale tentoonstellingen en biënnales, waaronder Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussel (Be), Biennale de Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi (RDC), Brussels Background, Brussels (Be), Brussels in Song Eun : Imagining Cities Beyond Technology 2.0, Seoul (Kr), For a Brave New Brussels, Lisbon (Pt), Digital Imaginaries - Africas in Production, ZKM, Karlsruhe (De), One Place After Another, Moscow (Ru), The Marrakech Biennale, Marrakech (Ma), Documenta 14, Berlin (De), Biennale of Contemporary African Art, Dakar (Sn), Commissions, KANAL - Centre Pompidou, Brussels (Be), AfriKIKK, KIKK Festival, Namur (Be) en Gemischte Gefühle, Tempelhof, Berlin (De). Zijn werk maakt deel uit van verschillende collecties, zowel privé als publiek, zoals Kanal - Centre Pompidou, Brussel (Be) en Mu.ZEE, Oostende (Be).

the great negotiation

by kathleen weyts for H ART Magazine (Be), 2019

translation by aude tournaye

Younes Baba-Ali is one of the artists I have been following for several years. The conversation we had once started in 2013 continues with interludes, to the rhythm of his projects. I meet him in Ostend, the morning before his exhibition Short Cut opens in Mu.ZEE. He has just returned from New York, where he was in residency at ISCP for two months, and leaves in a few days for Lubumbashi for the biennial, where he is one of the participating artists. We meet again a few weeks later, in Namur, where he exhibits at the KIKK festival.

It is typical for the practice of Baba-Ali. His work is not created in the studio, but in situ, in the numerous cities where he resides for several weeks, months, in preparation for a contribution to an exhibition or biennial, or for setting up his own project with befriended artists. Whether it is a stay in Brussels, Dakar, Casablanca or Naples that underlies his work, be it video, photography, installations or objects, everything emanates the voice of a keen observer who appropriates the context in which he finds himself like no other and - with a wink - creates an image out of it. In the world of Younes Baba-Ali all can be negotiated and nothing is as it seems at first sight.

Kathleen Weyts : You usually make work in situ, but here in Ostend that is not the case for the first time. Is that a conscious choice?

Younes Baba-Ali : «In the process I have learned that my work is difficult to develop in a studio. I need interaction. With my surroundings, but also with others, with artists and passers-by. By working on a project within a certain framework and with a given deadline, I impose a work rhythm on myself. I can't produce meaningfully without it. In addition to the invitations I receive at home and abroad, I proactively look for residencies, projects and fairs myself. Next year, for instance, I will be working in Ghent for three months, at the request of the Kunsthof. For the Dakar and Marrakech biennials I have applied for additional grants and organised myself locally. In this way research, production and presentation flow together in a concise timeframe. Both time and budget were lacking in Ostend to create new work. But it seemed like a good time to bring a number of works together and see how they interact mutually».

KW : It is interesting to see how layered your work is and how it works in a range of distinct contexts. Like Paraboles, an installation I saw in different constellations.

YBA : «Yes, often the context in which I present something adds an extra dimension, or invites me to recreate the original set-up. The parabola as presented here is an early work, which originated in 2011 when I just started working in Brussels. It is as it were a self-portrait and dates from a period in which I was struggling with my identity and my place in the world. The satellite dish symbolizes both the presence and absence of a community that seeks contact with the

outside world, here in Europe with its original homeland, and is hindered by its own and imposed boundaries. By allowing the parabola to move between two fixed locations that always steer it back from left to right, I narrate something about the migrant's position between the country of origin and the country where he is, about the disorientation, the doubt and the duality that that entails. In 2016 during the KunstenFestivaldesArts I attached several satellite dishes to the facade of the Ravenstein Gallery. In Brussels, they have started to shape the streetscape over the past decades. They are markers in the city. The self-portrait thus became a portrait of a community of individuals and families living in certain parts of the city. In Namur, during AfriKIKK, I attached forty of these parabolas to the cathedral. As a result, the religious dimension implicitly present in the work - due to the strong connotation of these objects with Muslims, but also due to the fact that the satellite dishes try to focus on Mecca in their rotation - suddenly became a central feature. The satellite dish on the facade of a Catholic monument focuses on the qibla, just as more than 1.6 billion believers do every day ».

KW : You like to present people with choices, disrupt them in their often unconscious and routine actions. You prefer to do this using everyday objects or by rewriting an existing protocol. Both with Shalom Aleikoum (2013), the doormat that you place at the entrance of the exhibition, and Without Negotiation (2018) that was realised in Dakar, you undermine conventions.

YBA : «It's part of the interaction. My practice focuses on action/reaction, on negotiation as well. I react to a certain reality, to what I am given. I invite my environment to do the same. By replacing the word 'welcome' on a doormat with Shalom Aleikoum I confront the visitor with something that at first sight looks familiar but is anything but: a welcome that is a contraction of Hebrew and Arabic meaning 'peace be with you'. The doormat marks a boundary, that between public and private space, but at the same time refers to one of today's most complex conflicts. The unwritten (religious) convention demands that one does not step on these words, let alone wipe one's feet on them. So you are confronted with the choice: pay attention to it or not, carefully walk past it, or just walk over it. It is mainly Europeans who are aware of the sensitivities who react cautiously to this. In Morocco, almost everyone happily walked over it. » «Without Negotiation was made in Dakar on the occasion of the biennial. The entire (informal) economy operates on the basis of negotiation. Street vendors sell their wares to passing motorists. They propose a price and the unwritten rule is that one negotiates it. By simply paying them the requested price, I undermine this law. The objects that came into my possession in this way (some of which are displayed in showcases, kw) reveal something about society. From religion to changing economic power structures, such as the presence of China, from dreams of foreign countries to virility».

KW : Negotiation. It is a key word in the creation of your oeuvre. Sometimes it transcends the work, like the installation you made in KANAL.

YBA : «I find it amazing that KANAL followed me in my proposal. As always, this is a reaction to the specific context. In this case, the former Citroën garage, where so many Brussels citizens of various origins worked for years, is now being transformed into a museum of contemporary art. I wanted to work on this reallocation. The workers' cloakroom was a rewarding place to realise this. It is essentially a place of transition. Where you take off your civilian clothes and put on your work clothes. The workers are still there today, in the form of stickers, an occasional

payslip, photos or names on the lockers. This also makes the place an 'in memoriam'. By resuscitating the lockers (Baba-Ali applied mechanisms to a number of doors and transformed the lockers into a large active installation, kw), I focus attention on both the past and the future. The workplace becomes a work of art. But it's more than that. The protocol that I drew up for KANAL states that the work can only exist in this place, in the space that must also be preserved in its original state, with the tiles, sinks and all the other ornaments present. They are an integral part of the work. If you withdraw the work from the space, you strip it of its narrative. This collaboration with KANAL is a fantastic experience for me. The installation was shown for a year and is now part of the collection of the Centre Pompidou. But the negotiations continue, because the architects have other plans for this space. If they are implemented, the work will cease to exist. The museum is now faced with a choice: either to carry out the architects' plans or to honour the artist's protocol».

KW : Through your way of working you build lasting ties with other artists, institutions and curators. You have been working with Moussem Nomadic Arts Centre for several years now. They brought you to Mu.ZEE, with whom they made an agreement not only to present your work, but also to include a work in the collection.

YBA : «The many years of support from Moussem were and still are important for the development of my practice. When I just arrived in Brussels, I had no idea how I could function here as an artist. I didn't have any status - apart from my Franco-Moroccan citizenship - I didn't know anything about the Belgian art organisations, the subsidy possibilities, etc., ... Moussem not only helped me on my way, but also gave me the opportunity to realise projects. Through their many years of collaboration with the art institutions in Belgium, they opened doors for many artists that would otherwise remain closed. Now, thanks to them, one of my works finds its way to the collection of a Belgian museum. A great form of recognition.»

KW : Être et ne pas avoir (2014), one of the most provocative works in your oeuvre is almost carelessly sidelined here in Mu.ZEE. It is easy to pass by. Nevertheless, it is a work that certainly raises many questions today and almost confirms a political discourse that alludes to the migrant's profit-making status.

YBA : «Être et ne pas avoir came about at a time when I myself was trying to figure out how I could live from my work, what status I could adopt and what support I could claim. During this 'research' I came into contact with a number of people who turned out to be 'experts' in the maze of Belgian social legislation and the possibilities it offers to newcomers. I allowed them to anonymously explain possible strategies. For me, this is certainly not a political work, but rather a social, almost anthropological portrait that exposes certain mechanisms in society. People are always looking for the best possible way to live, in this case often survive. This too is a major negotiation: that of the newcomer with an administration, with the legislation, with the society in which he/she is trying to build a life. I wanted to install the work in the waiting room of the OCMW in Ostend, but that turned out to be pushing it too far».

KW : You often seek out the limits of what is possible. Some of your works are never realised because you don't get the necessary permission. For example, the performance Arrival/Departure that you wanted to stage at Zaventem airport on the occasion of the Lubumbashi Biennale.

YBA : «My application was supported by both the Africa Museum and BOZAR. Nevertheless, an agreement of the airport has not been reached for the time being. The idea was to have three Congolese performers arriving between the luggage of the baggage belts in the arrivals hall. The performer as an object. The work raises many questions. About the contradiction between the free transport of goods and the restrictions some of us face in moving between continents and countries. About illegality. About the inventiveness people use to overcome obstacles. About travel as a leisure activity and travel out of necessity...»

KW : You have a connection with Congo, but you were never there before. How did you experience the Lubumbashi Biennale?

YBA : «As a student in Strasbourg, I got to know a number of Congolese artists who came to study there through an exchange project with the Kinshasa academy. We became friends for life. The three performers I had invited for the project in Zaventem also came from this group. Up until now, I never had the opportunity to travel to Congo. The Lubumbashi Biennale is an initiative of artists, including Sammy Baloji. I think that is important. It stands in stark contrast to the biennials that are now popping up everywhere and that involve a lot of money, where curators try to make a name for themselves with big stories, ticking all the right boxes. The authenticity of this biennial appeals to me enormously».

«When I arrived at the airport, I noticed all these young men holding up signs with texts in Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, ... to welcome the expatriates, who mainly come to Lubumbashi to pursue their business interests. In the first week I tried to take in the city. Lubumbashi is a difficult and fierce city. There is a latent feeling of violence, a kind of harshness I never experienced in Dakar. The locals have no outlet and resort to the numerous churches and alcohol. I decided to create a Cabinet des confidences populaires, a kiosk where people could vent their hearts instead of exchanging money or charging their phones. With a group of local artists we collected their 'confessions'. I had them translated from Lingala and Swahili into the languages of the expats and we used them as welcome messages at the airport. That was sometimes very confronting, but sometimes very philosophical. One of my favourites was: 'Quand on arrive dans un village où les gens dansent sur un seul pied, tu dois danser avec eux sur un seul pied' ('When entering a village where people dance on one foot, you must dance with them on one foot.').

Kathleen Weyts holds Master degrees in Communications and Intercultural Management. She specialized in Contemporary Art and was for more than twenty years the Head of Marketing, Communications and Mediation of several Art Institutions, such as Performing Arts Center Vooruit Ghent and M HKA, the Museum for Contemporary Art Antwerp, Belgium. In 2013, she founded Panache Towers, a non-for-profit art space and a consultancy and project management agency for visual arts. She co-curated the exhibition Trenches in Africa 1914-1918 and coordinated the exhibition European Ghosts - the Representation of Art from Africa in the twentieth century for Mu.Zee, Ostend, 2015. In 2016, she curated and coordinated the project Imagine Europe. In Search of New Narratives: 12 Labs for Europe a co-production of the European Commission and BOZAR, Center of Fine Arts, Brussels. For the same institution she coordinated and co-curated the exhibition Somewhere in Between. Contemporary Art Scenes in Europe. Between 2017 and 2019 she coordinated Contemporary Art Heritage Flanders (CAHF), a collaborative knowledge platform initiated by and built around the collections of five contemporary art museums in Belgium: S.M.A.K. (Ghent), M HKA (Antwerp), Mu. ZEE (Ostend), Middelheimmuseum (Antwerp) & Museum M (Leuven). Since January 2019 she is the director of HART, the Belgian monthly magazine on contemporary art.

pan-sonic soundscapes

by aude tournaye for 'digital imaginaries - african in production'
ZKM (de), 2019

Surveillance, and its rapid digitalisation is understood almost entirely in visual terms. Reducing surveillance to visibility makes us deaf to the religious and civic sonic deployment and the sonic modulations of psychological, physiological, and architectural states. Younes Baba-Ali's contributions to the Digital Imaginaries project deployed sonic and digital frequencies to demarcate territory in the urban soundscape of downtown Johannesburg and the ZKM gallery. The interweaving of sound and digital surveillance strategies resonates with the weaponisation of sound, sonic warfare, and control in an age of global amplification.

In *Call for Prayer – Morse*, Younes Baba-Ali employs mechanisms used towards the internalization of power, in the realm of religion. In the installation, a megaphone broadcasts the Islam call to prayer, digitalised into a binary Morse code. Installed in downtown Johannesburg, outside the Wits Art Museum, the megaphone affixed crackled to life five times a day, at precise times as the Adhan bathes its streets. The verbal verses are overwritten by a universal language of emergency, signalling against the dangers of proselytizing and demagoguery. The chants have been reduced to standardized binary sequences, to a series of mere dots and dashes and are thus transformed into the encoded, digital language of global information streams.

The sound piece *Call for Prayer* condenses complex questions surrounding religious education, loss of spirituality, dominance of public urban space, and intensified collectivization into a minimal sonic pulse, subtly unfolding religious practices as adamant strongholds of control and surveillance. Under the guise of pious discourses, they risk lurching into authoritarian populism subjecting its followers to control and observation by and among themselves. As Michel Foucault explains, their conditioned state replaces any need for physical markers of control:

« There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost. »

Here, God becomes the guard in the panoptic, or rather pan-sonic tower; intangible but demanding moral discipline from those who choose to believe he is there, watching and tracking their every move. Sound becomes watchdog, reverberating universal, binary codes through the quintessential tool for mass-control and information: the megaphone.

Everything is a Border connects the intensely securitised urban landscape of downtown Johannesburg, where Younes Baba-Ali spent a residency to work on the Digital Imaginaries project, to the seemingly open exhibition space of the ZKM where his second contribution was

shown. The installation consists of a simple, yet meticulous setup. A video-monitored space - almost cage-like - reinforced with barbed, electrified wires, occupies the space attributed to the artist in ZKM's white gallery space. The whirring and clicking sounds emanating from the megaphone and fence pulsating with electricity convey a sonorous aesthetic of security and surveillance.

The fenced-off territory is hypervisible forcing visitors to walk around it while remaining inaccessible at all times - both to visitors and museum staff. It acts as a satirical pastiche of the wires and tapelines separating visitors from sacralized art objects. The installation is not contained by the museum however. It is monitored, triggering an intervention when visitors behave at odds with a set of rules and conditions. A foreign voice intersects and reprimands the wayward public. The voice is that of a South-African security guard, located about 13 000 kilometres away, monitoring the public's every move. The remotely operated surveillance cameras and speaker digitally display and extend the panoptic technology of power. Museum visitors under surveillance are to be seen but to never know when or by whom; under control but without physical intervention. Watching might be 'sporadic', but 'the threat of being watched never ceases'. Here, the perceptible gaze is complimented and made present by the only constant in the empty space - the buzzing sound of electricity fences. By inviting a South-African security company to supervise the institutionalised, fenced-off exhibition space, Everything is a Border adds an unforgiving digital voiceover to the old barbed wire, walls, and fences - a sonic deterrent that eludes visual representation.

The sonic interventions evoke colonial practices of surveillance. In *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Simone Browne accounts for methods of evading or repositioning surveillance, clustered under the idiom "dark sousveillance." Dark sousveillance denotes "the tactics employed to render one's self out of sight, and strategies used in the flight to freedom from slavery as necessarily ones of undersight.... Dark sousveillance is a site of critique, as it speaks to black epistemologies of contending with antiblack surveillance." The installation and its implied reversal creates a tension: Can it contribute to strategies of black sousveillance, does it demonstrate the persistence of power structures or does it precisely blur this binary? Operating within the carefully curated space of an art institution, the installation magnifies and inverts the methods used to monitor and control populations, while hinting at the fact that control is never pure or unidirectional. It objectifies the observer. It literally turns the gaze, albeit without disrupting the institutional power of the museum that ultimately commissioned the South African security company. Can this inversion offer tools for navigating structures of monitoring and control? Can the the visual-sonic apparatuses, the cameras and megaphones, which scrutinize the oppressed, shift towards the oppressor? What does this look like when most people carry easily deployed and hackable recording devices with them at all times? How is this further complicated by the fact that the vast majority of South African security guards are poorly enumerated black workers? Can the tables actually turn, the gaze be inverted, in an era of unidirectional digital traffic, where one can interfere effortlessly and immediately from the other side of the world?

Beyond surveillance, the fenced space constitutes a metaphor for the imposing architectural structures that constitute borders. Its physicality stands in contrast to the audio-visual potential of

the digital to create borders without having to impose them physically. Borders that are revealed as effects of the psyche, entities that inhabit our thinking and shape cultures. The separation lives in the space between our ears, as conveyed by the German phrase *Mauer im Kopf* ("wall in the head"). Surveillance becomes more subtle and more intense, spreading from physical to cyberspace. The mechanisms of control withdraw themselves from the physical plane and evaporate into an arena that is fundamentally fluid, social, volatile, and hard to map. At the same time, digital technologies heavily support and enforce border regimes, far from being immaterial or inherently supporting free movement. Making present digital border making practices dislocates imaginaries of the digital as a borderless, free, planetary space. It invites a definition of borders, as asserted by Marie Ouvrard-Servanton, Lucile Salesses and Hammadi Squalli, « as something that situates itself solely between two actions or something that materializes or again symbolizes a relation, and thus a border, whether this be real or imaginary.» *Call for Prayer and Everything is a Border* invite us to be attentive to the digital and sonic making of borders as an instant categorization and thus draw our attention to the pan-sonic soundscapes of power.

Aude Tournaye is an interdisciplinary practitioner based in Brussels. She obtained a master's degree in art history, archaeology, and philosophy at the VUB, Brussels, after which she continued in art criticism and curatorship at Columbia University, New York. Based between Europe and Africa, she co-produced new work and exhibitions such as *Saout l'Mellah* (El Jadida, Morocco) and the 6th Biennale de Lubumbashi (DR Congo). Her texts have appeared in exhibition catalogues and magazines such as *De Witte Raaf*, *Rekto:Verso*, *African Arts*, *H Art Magazine*, *Daily Wrestling / Without Negotiation* (La cloche des Fourmis, Dakar, 2018) and *Material Insanity* (MACAAL, Marrakech, 2019).

younes baba-ali : south is the new north

by sara raza for arts 10+5 monographie d'artiste (be), 2015

Younes Baba-Ali's artistic concerns are defined by a process of experimentation, in which he traces routes and patterns of migration and teases out covert systems of knowledge and meaning.

Through the employment of diverse visual tools such as installation, photography, new media, technologies, interventions and sound, he straddles a hybrid studio practice between Europe and his native Morocco. Working across diverse spaces that intersect culturally, historically and economically, Baba-Ali's art readily explores the antagonist relationship that exists between former colonised spaces and their transcultural diasporas. His practice exposes the gaps and ruptures that exist within spaces of geopolitical transition, realities which postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha describes as «living on the borderlines of the 'present.'»¹

A central focus for Baba-Ali is the convoluted and urgent topic of migration, a subject that is also currently at the forefront of European parliamentary debates following the civilian crisis in Syria and Iraq, which is at breaking point. The artist has explored this topic through a reassessment of both real and imaginary borders where his artworks convene these liminal spaces by asking questions about the ways in which human geography and its diverse attitudes are surveyed and controlled, and their subsequent local and global impacts. He touches upon themes of place, smuggling and reverse migrations in order to locate the movements of people and ideas.

In *Parabole* (2011) Baba-Ali explores the physical and metaphorical relationship between migrants and their host communities. Within the white space of the gallery, he installs the popular cultural trope of the satellite dish, an object that adorns the exterior facades of migrant housing complexes in Europe as a means of connecting with 'home', through televised images and sound. By reversing the location of the dish from outside to inside Baba-Ali troubles its ability to obtain a signal and it is forced to move from side to side in a futile attempt to properly preform its function. Through this subversive act of manipulation, Baba-Ali attempts to raise awareness of the impossibility of locating 'home', a situation that many migrants find themselves in, where they exist within a state of limbo between two zones, with a weakened connection to 'home' akin to the defunct operation of the satellite dish. By re-imagining this scenario, Baba-Ali highlights how migrant culture has mutated and been assimilated, sometimes involuntarily, and is no longer able to connect properly through typical channels of communication.

Correspondingly, another work, *Untitled Landscape* (2010), further probes the subject of spatial negotiations where the artist has created an installation using branches of a tree that are decorated with opaque black plastic bags, hanging off the branches like fruit. Several wind machines fixed in the wall are triggered by sensory devices and cause the bags to flap in the

air, yet their contents remain concealed from outside view. The piece explores the juxtaposition between nature and nurture and offers a commentary on environmental issues pertaining to waste and the growing problem of unemployment in Morocco, which is widening the economic and class gap. Conversely, the work also alludes to the concept of smuggling of possibly secretive counterfeit goods that have somehow border crossed to the other side or are in the current process of doing so. Here the theme of smuggling becomes an important metaphor for ideas and changes that are brewing under the surface or operating as part of an already existing underground movement that is not yet visible to the naked eye. By introducing this concept, Baba-Ali bypasses the purely negative association of smuggling as an illegal practice by introducing what art historian and theorist Simon Harvey argues to be an important component of visual culture asserting that 'terms like 'hidden,' 'shadow' and 'unrecorded,' have currency.'¹² Here the currency that Baba-Ali raises claim to exist between the reversed exchange of 'cultural' contraband and the trade routes that exist between the local and the global that facilitate both licit and illicit transaction of knowledge and power between first and secondhand and first, second and third worlds.

Further subverting common cultural relations, Baba-Ali continues with his critical program of commercial and neocolonial exploitation by focussing on the rise of the global south debate. The global south is a term that has been bouncing around academic circles to describe the economic rise and autonomy of Africa, Asia and Latin America that has recently being explored within the realm of visual culture as a paradigm shift that acknowledges the detachment and independence of the South from the centre of the North.

Through the installation *Ending your life under the sun* (2012), Baba-Ali has created a ready-made sculpture of a wooden coffin in which he has installed a popular sun bed device found in solarium tanning salons across Europe and North America. The work is a humorous take on the shift in migration from North to South undertaken by wealthy Europeans who relocate to the warm tropical climates of North Africa and Latin America after retirement. By exploring reversed migratory patterns, the artist investigates ironic and binary footprints in global migration that are determined by wealth and power laying bare the stark contrast with the plight of stateless refugees who migrate from South to North due to financial instability and conflicts.

Baba-Ali's critical yet satirical practice draws out some of the imperial tendencies that inherently reside in global culture and economics. By unpacking current realities of migrations he unveils a cross-circulating programme of transitory ideas that are currently under negotiation.

1 Bhabha Homi, 'The Location of Culture,' Routledge, London (1994) p. 1.

2 Harvey Simon 'Smuggling the State into Transgression' in The London Consortium Static, Issue 2, Trafficking March 2006, p. 6

Sara Raza is an award winning curator and writer based in New York City where she maintains the curatorial studio practice Punk Orientalism and is a member of the faculty at the School of Visual Arts for the MA Curatorial Practice Program. She is a specialist on global curatorial knowledge, with an academic and professional interest in performance based practice and architectural art history pertaining to the fluid territories of Central Asia, Caucuses and the Middle East and North Africa. Most recently she was the Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Middle East and North Africa based at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, where she led the third and final phase of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative and curated the exhibition *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa*, which debuted in New York (April-October 2016) and traveled to the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan (April-June 2018).

younes baba-ali - art on the edge

by kathleen weyts for moussem magazine (be), 2014

"My art finds its rationale in the society it emerges from. That's its ground and its subject. I function as a mediator, as a philosopher who shares a form of awareness with others. I measure the temperature of society and contribute to its interpretation and development."

Visual artist Younes Baba-Ali summarizes his artistic démarche in a nice way. He makes art that is unconventional, intelligent and critical, often in public space or places uncommon to art practice. He is a sharp observer and raises pertinent questions aimed at society, the institution and above all, his audience. As a free thinker he holds a mirror up to society and confronts it with its ingrained habits and dysfunctions. His art originates rarely in the atelier. It is context-specific and takes its final shape in dialogue with its spectators.

Context

Some of Baba-Ali's works function almost exclusively in a specific environment. *Moroccan Anthem* for example, a video in which a donkey driver clucks out the Moroccan national anthem using the sound he normally makes to command his animal. Other installations get their meaning in relation to the place where they are shown. Like *Ending your life under the sun*, a coffin with a tanning bed inside it. The idea for this work emerged during his stay on the Erasmus exchange program in Poland, where people frequently visit tanning salons. Presenting the work at the 4th Marrakesh Biennial – where visitors were primarily Western – the installation was perceived as dealing with North-South migration; when it was exhibited in Europe however, the interpretation shifted more toward the idea of eternal beauty."

Art as intervention

Ambiguity and humor are recurring elements in the work of this young artist. *"I don't want people to stay indifferent. I want to confront them and at the same time I want them to participate. I want to dispose art of its elitist and sacral status and to accomplish that I use certain strategies."* As an artist-chemist he measures and mixes technology, objects, sound, video and photography with political, social and cultural issues. The resulting installations discreetly coerce the unsuspecting viewer into taking a stand. His work is constantly on the verge: it's provocative, but never insulting or cheap, always inviting. It is the starting point for a conversation, a polemic, a thinking process, a (re)action. In a subtle way the artist plays the conventional social codes and at the same time the codes of art itself. Baba-Ali's work often assumes the form of the readymade. He uses common objects

and phenomena and introduces them in an artistic environment. But he prefers the public space to spaces intended for art. Making art accessible is almost a given in his oeuvre. In reaction to the extreme theorizing of art – where the audience is as it were assessed on its insider knowledge – and to the art institute that in the way it presents the artwork raises obstacles rather than remove them, he ingeniously intervenes in everyday life with his work. *Carroussa Sonore* is a beautiful example of this. A caroussa is a stroller with a sound system built on top, used for selling CD's with Quranic recitals. A very common view in urban Maghreb streets, this object is a simple but extremely intelligent piece of technology. Baba-Ali uses it for his own purposes: *"With Carroussa Sonore I bring sound pieces to people in a democratic way. It is both a creation and a medium I use as an art curator, since I invited other international artists to distribute their pieces via this module. It circles in the city, we built several interventions around it. In this way it becomes part of public life."* This intervention also denounces pertinent fallacies that circulate in the art world, such as the conviction that the Moroccan – and in extension Maghrebi – art scene limits itself to marketable objects. Baba-Ali proves the opposite by creating a platform for artists that are definitely active, but have difficulty in accessing the established European art scene - not in the least due to strict visa regulations. But as Baba-Ali puts it: *"sound doesn't need a visa, only a medium"*. And rather than presenting his work to the establishment, he brings it to the people. This attitude is an implicit critique of both the art world and its critics. Baba-Ali addresses not just the art loving elite, but the people in the street. With this attitude he shows great affinity with artists such as Hassan Darsi and Francis Alÿs. Like them he makes disruptive intervention art that confronts the viewer – whether or not ironically – with himself and his environment. Baba-Ali presents people dilemmas and taboos and challenges them to (re)act. In this way he makes them his accomplices in a disguised artistic guerrilla that unites the establishment and the common man.

Brussels

Younes Baba-Ali was born in Oudja, Morocco but grew up and studied in France. Since 2011 he lives and works in Brussels. This double cultural background marks his life, his points of view and obviously his art. His affinity with both European and Maghrebi culture grants him the freedom to critically assess both worlds and to process this in his art practice. *"As an artist I can afford to be critical. It's my nature above all. Critique is a language that I learned to use. I raise questions and I want to involve the public. When observing Belgian society I notice that Moroccan immigration in France presents itself differently from that in Belgium. France is Morocco's 'big brother', the ideal that Moroccan society and its elite try to attain. I observe the consequences of these phenomena and translate my findings into critical interventions."* An example of this is the installation *Untitled (Speedbump)* that he made for a group exhibition organised in a luxurious villa in the diplomatic district of Rabat. In that area – as in comparable wealthy areas in Morocco – huge speed bumps are installed. *"To me this manipulation of urban space is very bourgeois and on top of that it's immediately related to power. People in these quarters permit themselves to plump down speed bumps that are totally out of proportion. And so I decided to introduce these objects in their own*

living space, the bourgeois villa." Baba-Ali does this fully aware that the audience that will visit the exhibition are the same people responsible for this phenomenon. By confronting them with it in the form of a work of art he also lends it a social dimension: *"My interventions are to me also social, even political interventions that are coloured by their local context."* In the exhibition he developed for MAAC, Baba-Ali takes his personal relation to Brussels as a starting point. He confesses he has a love-hate relationship with this city, which he perceives as very complex. Brussels proves to be an ideal laboratory for the artist to develop his oeuvre. He presents works that are on the one hand representative of how he experiences the city as a French-Moroccan immigrant, and on the other provide an insight in how the artist experiences living with the many residing nationalities there. *"Brussels is a city that is distinctly multicultural – ranging from the European community to all the other immigrated nationalities – and at the same time marked by community issues."* Baba-Ali is constantly surprised by the resulting linguistic melting pot en the ongoing intercultural 'negotiation' that so clearly marks the Brussels public space. Since he came to Brussels he has been living in Molenbeek, a district he calls a 'border zone'. The invisible but very distinct borders in Brussels and the way they divide the communities, are shocking to the artist. This observation leads to an artistic mental process: *"my work originates in my head, not in my studio."* That process eventually comes into shape in the interaction with the audience. *"I hope that people feel concerned with what I do. Positively or negatively – as long as it gets to them. I need the audience. Without it my work doesn't function."*

Kathleen Weyts holds Master degrees in Communications and Intercultural Management. She specialized in Contemporary Art and was for more than twenty years the Head of Marketing, Communications and Mediation of several Art Institutions, such as Performing Arts Center Vooruit Ghent and M HKA, the Museum for Contemporary Art Antwerp, Belgium. In 2013, she founded Panache Towers, a non-for-profit art space and a consultancy and project management agency for visual arts. She co-curated the exhibition Trenches in Africa 1914-1918 and coordinated the exhibition European Ghosts - the Representation of Art from Africa in the twentieth century for Mu.Zee, Ostend, 2015. In 2016, she curated and coordinated the project Imagine Europe. In Search of New Narratives: 12 Labs for Europe a co-production of the European Commission and BOZAR, Center of Fine Arts, Brussels. For the same institution she coordinated and co-curated the exhibition Somewhere in Between. Contemporary Art Scenes in Europe. Between 2017 and 2019 she coordinated Contemporary Art Heritage Flanders (CAHF), a collaborative knowledge platform initiated by and built around the collections of five contemporary art museums in Belgium: S.M.A.K. (Ghent), M HKA (Antwerp), Mu. ZEE (Ostend), Middelheimmuseum (Antwerp) & Museum M (Leuven). Since January 2019 she is the director of HART, the Belgian monthly magazine on contemporary art.

younes baba-ali, everyday activist

by alya sebti for arte east (usa), 2012

Defined as what is “happening or used daily”¹, the everyday shapes of Younes Baba Ali’s work imply he uses and diverts everyday objects but he also stands up against an elitist art, hence his artworks target the everyday man (der Jedermann). He undertakes to democratize the access to art through his unwavering smirk : definitely, irony is his favorite weapon to reinvent the practice of everyday life in order “to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use”². Younes Baba Ali uses this language as a tactic to divert imposed space and to disrupt our relation to the everyday. Irony, which aim is to address a wider audience, was born in the XVI century literature in the northern countries, tallying with modern democratic aspiration. Through this everyday language, YBA manages to reintegrate art into the everyday use.

Swaying hairdryer, uninterrupted horns orchestra or parabola abutting against two walls: YBA tinkers and invents a new rhythmic of gestures and sounds that inhabit the object. Newly freed from his everyday use they become a quasi-human subject, almost neurotic. Decontextualized, these everyday objects become autonomous therefore unusable by the incredulous spectator who is then aware of the entities with which he coexists. By creating a disturbance, the spectator transforms him/herself as an active witness involved in the underlying discourse of YBA’s artwork, a denunciation of the fragility of our system.

When irony is able to generate a new equilibrium, it can “trigger a new positive relationship in the world”³. This artist, everyday activist creates twice : first by diverting the object from its original function, he manages to get rid of the submission subject/spectator. Second by desecrating the artwork, which is now “reduced” as an autonomous object, he frees the spectator from the submitted relationship to the artwork.

To divert the everyday, his favorite procedure is the game that he often recalls as “attentat artistique”. He interferes with the flaws in our system to expose the fragilities of the world to the spectator who becomes a willing hostage and witness. As Michel de Certeau asserts, the game as a “disjunctive operation (producing events that differentiate)”⁴ is a popular tactic to overcome the imposed everyday codes.

Besides a reflection on the object nature and status, his work questions the relationship between art, audience and institution. YBA is indeed driven by the desire to democratize access to art. He uses the means in hand to make art accessible at two levels : Through

irony, he involves the spectator as witness of these diverted objects to expose flaws of our everyday. In desecrating the artwork, he manages to abolish the submission relationship between the spectator and the artwork and reminds us that one does not exist without the other. YBA instills his artwork and subverts the system from within the base through the art, a serious game that diverts objects and codes, reclaims space and use their own way. As an everyday activist, he proposes a form of moral and political resistance through the mechanisms by which individuals become autonomous subjects. An everyday, which according to the words of Certau, “invents itself with thousand ways to poach”.

1 - Oxford Dictionary

2 - Wittgenstein “On Metaphysical/Everyday use”

3 - Nietzsche

4 - Michel de Certeau “The practice of Everyday”

Alya Sebti has been directing the IFA Gallery Berlin (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations) since 2016. She is part of the Manifesta 13 artistic team set to occur in Marseille in 2020. In 2018, she was the guest curator of the 13th Dak’Art, Biennial of Contemporary African Art and in 2014, she was the Artistic Director of the 5th Marrakech Biennial. She has curated several exhibitions including Invisible at Musée de l’IFAN in Dakar, Carrefour/Treffpunkt at the ifa Galleries, Casablanca, *Énergie Noire* as part of Mons 2015 – European Capital of Culture, and *Now Eat My Script* at KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin (2014). She was a board member of the International Biennial Association (IBA). She has written and lectured extensively on art and the public sphere, about biennials and transcultural art practices at venues including: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Thessaloniki Biennale (GR); University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; International Academy of Salzburg (Austria); New York University, Berlin; Le Cube Art Centre, Rabat.

younes baba-ali artworks



Paraboles, 2011 - ongoing

In situ installation

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

© Aude Tournaye

[> see more](#)

In *Paraboles* (2011- ongoing) Younes Baba-Ali explores the physical and metaphorical relationship between migrants and their host communities. Clusters of satellite dishes infectiously flock together on the facades of the buildings, oscillating between here and elsewhere. Dislodged from the roofs and balconies of migrant housing complexes, they transmute into mechanical portraits of their communities – performing as visual markers of assumed otherness. Hesitantly quivering, trying to locate a signal to no avail, they reveal the satellite dish as a trope of condensed possibilities : a tool to connect to new horizons and ideas as well as a potent symbol of disconnection from host societies, of cultural and religious isolationism. Here, they aim further east, towards Mecca. In a state of limbo, their antennas no longer statically point at satellites but are in a constant search of a spiritual pole: the qibla. Their choreographed schizophrenia draws the portrait of a community in the midst of a spiritual and identity crisis.





Arrival/Departure, 2019

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation including video, passport covers and vending booth

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

In a suggestive act, recalling its colonial ties to administrative policing, Baba-Ali counterfeits Belgian passport covers latterly dispersed among a group of Congolese artists. In a video exhibited next to the fictitious passports, these Congolese artists testify to their experiences travelling and living with their Congolese passports disguised under a Belgian facade. Semantically overinvested and linked, as a concrete historical anchor, to higher-order questions of state security, individual freedom, mobility, and personal and national identity, the passport covers present an ideal vehicle for interrogation revealing not only national borders, but also borders between social and interpersonal systems of all kinds. As a third and final part of the projet, the remaining passport covers are put into circulation in the informal economy of Lubumbashi, sold in a small stand adorned with a Belgian coat of arms. Sold at a symbolic price - equal to the price of a Congolese passport but escalating after each sale, they question their artistic and monetary value in a context of limited mobility and access.

EUROPESE UNIE
UNION EUROPÉENNE
EUROPAISCHE UNION
EUROPEAN UNION

KONINKRIJK BELGIË
ROYAUMES DE BELGIQUE
KÖNIGREICH BELGIEN
KINGDOM OF BELGIUM



PASPOORT
PASSEPORT
REISEPASS
PASSPORT





Cabinet des confidences populaires, 2019

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation including video, drawings and vending booth

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Transforming a Congolese street vending booth into a meeting ground for popular critique, Baba-Ali uses the quintessential object as a tool to make local's voices heard. Installed throughout Lubumbashi's city center, the Cabinet de confidences populaires - or the Booth of Popular Confessions - collects critique from locals by means of a young man seated in the booth - as if he were an official administrator. The amassed messages are then displayed in the form of proverbs, translated into Hindi, Arabic and Chinese, to the expats arriving at Lubumbashi's airport - a gateway to the Wild West that has become the Katanga region, where locals have become victim to and disconnected from the international investors pouring in each day. As such, the action amplifies the voice of the 'Lushois' while playing on notions of disconnection and globalization by means of language and popular resistance.

Come And Go

我们是
矿山的



Coffret de survie, 2019

© Hugard & Vanoverschelde

Slingshot and raw minerals from Katanga
30 x 40 x 6 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Coffret de survie consists of a makeshift catapult next to which a collection of precious gemstones and minerals are laid out. Collected from the Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, they simultaneously represent the region's riches and curse: its abundance in precious minerals, mined by international investors to supply the world in primary resources for its insatiable need for electric batteries of all kinds. Rather than driving development for its people, these riches have attracted all kinds of predators – from armed groups to cowboy firms. The coffret on view here, bringing to mind precious gemstone boxes, no longer serves as a collector's item filled with treasured minerals. Presented in their rough shape, alongside an ubiquitous catapult purchased from local street vendors, they become gadgets in a toolbox for survival, primary ammunition in the people's defense.





Reçu de Moyennant, 2019

© Hugard & Vanoverschelde

Digital print on paper,
21x12 cm
Courtesy of the artist

In diptych with the 'Coffret de survie' series, 'Reçu de moyennant' (or Bribes Receipt) explores the same theme. «Le moyennant» - or bribes - are a way for the Congolese to share the residual scraps of money remaining after international investments - now presented in the form of a receipt. By returning the «invisible» money to the white paper, the artist reveals one of the main sources of transaction and survival in the country. At the same time, the financial receipt takes its general critique of value even further by questioning not only the distinction between art and non-art, but also the congruence between the art world and the economy. The financial receipt renders the work of art equivalent to monetary tokens, grouping the categories of culture and finance into a single object. Thus, Baba-Ali's interest in the speculative nature of money and art expresses the recognition that value, whether artistic or financial, is part of a circuit of symbolic exchanges and customs.

CDF

Reçu de Moyennant de M

la somme

de

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20

N°



Untitled (Material Insanity), 2019

© Aude Tournaye

Site specific intervention
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled (Material Insanity) consists of a collection of balloons that fill up the elevator of the museum: a space of passage, of intimacy in a public museum, of circulation. By entering into the elevator, the public becomes an actor in the evolution of the piece, as the balloons get displaced, deflate and migrate to other spaces in the exhibition. The contemporary and highly accessible material of the balloons become a sort of 3D painting in space, created through the passage of time and visitors. In contrast to action painting, where the artist becomes the object of genius and creation, this role is now displaced to the public and the elements. Whereas Harold Rosenberg (1) described abstract expressionism in the 1950's as an act and the painting itself as a moment - for him the painting was inseparable from the life of the artist - the balloons now testify to the moment or life cycle of the exhibition.

(1) Meyer, James, *Minimalism, art and polemics of the sixties*, Yale U P, 2001, p. 142.





Untitled (Kanal), 2018

© Aude Tournaye

In situ installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Untitled (Kanal) is a site specific work that was first conceived in Kanal – Centre Pompidou's factory building. Utilizing its former locker room, the artist reanimates its infrastructure by bringing its lockers to live. The lockers, collectively reminding us of the building's history as a factory, appear to remain inert. However, their passivity appears to be nothing but a facade when some doors start to open ever so slowly until suddenly the subtle shifting of the doors is disturbed by the gunmetal thump of slamming lockers. The visitor, used to their inertia, is then forced to re-evaluate their purpose, now situated in between the building's history as a collective working space and it's future as a museum, a mausoleum where objects are condemned to neutralisation. By revolting, the lockers redeem their intrinsic value as hosts to intimate memories, guardians of workers' identity and sites of metamorphosis, from the anonymity of the worker to the exclusivity of the individual.





Daily Wrestling, 2018

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation including video and photographs
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Stitched into Senegal's social fabric, wrestling bares witness to a distinct form of modernity. The magic and beliefs surrounding wrestling still remain intact from the origins of the sport, with marabouts preparing different charms, potions and spells to bless the fighter. As the nation's economy has plunged, laamb's appeal has skyrocketed. As the sport entered the realm of corporate sponsorship, the traditional and spiritual nature of the sport has become imbued by the phenomena of materialisation, mondialisation and wild capitalism. Distilling wrestling's underlying ties to global capitalism, social struggle and political symbolism, Baba-Ali eliminates the opponent and replaces him with objects taken from wrestler's daily lives. Invigorated by the sound of the drums and rowdy crowd, the wrestlers thus battle it out against the struggles of their daily existence. Humanising issues too often spoken of in terms of economy and politics.



SELETOU
BAYE-SOGUI
DNOYE



Everything is a border, 2018

© Tobias Wootton

Site specific installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Everything Is a Border establishes a fenced-off space in the exhibition that is hyper-present, yet inaccessible. The installation was initially created at the ZKM in consultation with a South African security contractor who is monitoring the installation remotely and intervenes via audio announcements. Characteristic of Johannesburg's high-security cityscape, it is at odds with the semi-public space of the museum. The fence acts as a caricature of the tapelines that commonly separate museum visitors from artworks, making visitors even more aware of their behavior within the institutionalized space with its prescribed codes of behavior and sacredness. At the same time, the buzzing and clicking sounds coming from the electrical wiring and megaphone convey a sonorous aesthetic of security and surveillance, containing a certain tension much in the spirit of the panopticon. Deflecting the Western gaze, the installation confronts us with the embodied affects of digitally enhanced border regimes. Interrogating the role of digital technologies in the making of property, institutional and state borders is to disrupt imaginaries that equate the digital with unbounded virtual data flows.





Without Negotiation, 2018

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation including video and photographs
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

The bustling, kaleidoscopic streets of the Senegalese capital are the daily arena of thousands of ambulant vendors; a group made up of a myriad of nationalities and social backgrounds, where students, bachelors and unemployed graduates intermingle with illiterates and refugees. Circulating through the city by taxi while accepting any offer made to him when stopped at red lights, Baba-Ali aims to disrupt, map and document a system where negotiation is the lingua franca and only the most hardened bargainers thrive. Confined to grubby roadsides, to the periphery of the official market, these vendors' usual habitat seems a far cry from the carefully curated art venues in the same city. By redistributing cultural funds in Dakar's shadow economy, however, Baba-Ali blurs the two seemingly contrasting worlds and hints at the tension and parallels between them. By displacing and exposing the accumulated objects on a pedestal, carefully placed in exhibit cases as if displaced from a natural history museum, Baba-Ali, as an artist-turned-anthropologist, reveals how value is created through exchange, display, circulation and consumption of both objects and artworks, in a game where worth has no meaning in and of itself.





Vu'Cumprà, 2016

© Ewa Wicka & Jasper Flikschuh

Urban intervention
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

In this performative work, the artist explores how circulation, exchange and exhibition create artistic value while juxtaposing two seemingly opposing markets: the art market and the street market. The performance humorously blends their respective social customs and settings by having an inflatable toy salesman wander through artistic contexts or public space. Caught in an endless survival game between continents, the state and its economy, street vendors have become an integral part of our metropolitan landscapes. «Vu'cumprà,» «you buy? », in a Neapolitan dialect spoken by migrants from Africa and South Asia, is the pejorative term used to refer to the peddlers of Naples. In an attempt to bring these ephemeral figures back into focus, this performance - at once hyper-realistic and absurd - creates a poignant parallel between the street seller and art market.





Italianisation, 2016

© Younes Baba-Ali

Serie of 4 photographs
Digital print on Baryta paper
150x150 cm
Courtesy of the artist

[> see more](#)

Italianisation, a series of photographic portraits, brings into view migrants in the city of Naples. On the background of nationalist and proud Italy, their portraits reveal a stirring and compelling tension. While many of them cater 'Italian' memorabilia to unfettered tourists, their clothing betrays their wish to be included in a society that might never allow them to be. In each portrait, the Italian insignia, its name or flag, are worn with pride and hope. As such, the series plays on the balance and imbalance of appropriation and assimilation as it problematizes and opens a reflection on south-to-north migration by questioning its traces and signs.





Pulizia, 2016

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation, video documentation, photographs

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

In *Pulizia*, a performance work documented in both video and installation, a group of immigrants is seen cleaning both public and private space. From afar, their stark white cleaning uniforms seem embroidered with Italy's police's logo. However, after closer scrutiny the word 'Pulizia' emerges. Drawing its title from a pun with the Italian words *polizia* and *pulizia* (from *pulire*, to clean), the work's linguistic manipulation metaphorically problematizes Italian migration politics, questioning who has to clean and what is to be cleaned. As the *Pulizia* cleaning company, as assembled by the artist, dusts off and polishes Italy's statues and stations they lift the veil on the country's hypocrisy and insincere immigration policy.





Social Paintings, 2016

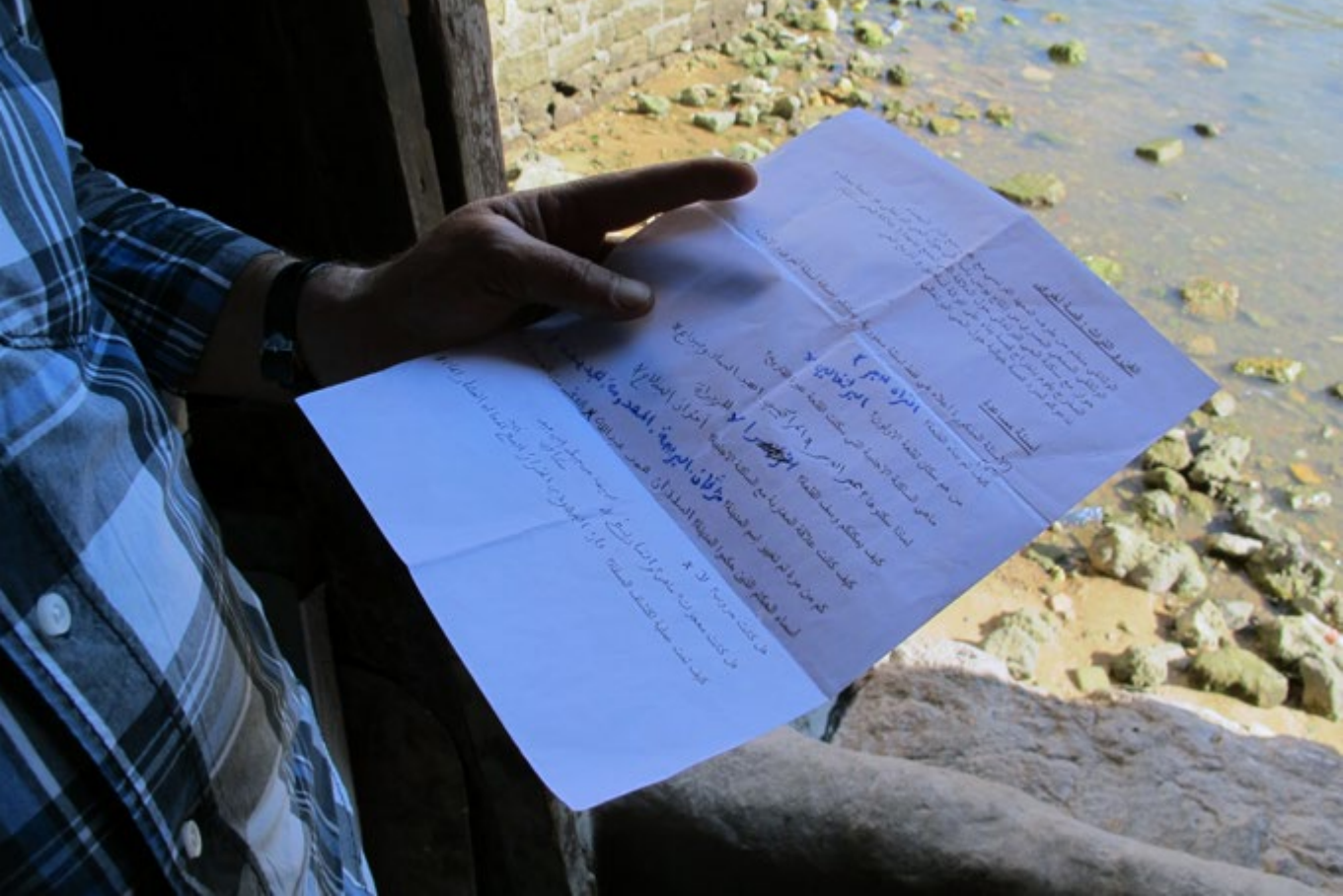
© Ewa Wicka

Installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see more](#)

Social Paintings is a series of readymades directly obtained from street vendors in Naples. These illegal immigrants' stalls are ingeniously designed to be easily set up and dismantled to flee the authorities and thus symbolize a certain aesthetics of precariousness. Transposed to the walls of the exhibition space, they underline the contrasting value of the object when simply placed in an artistic context. Through the artist's intervention, a means of survival is transformed into a precious work of art. The work thus subtly demonstrates how the mysterious social customs surrounding the practice of art - a social comedy - divert attention from the practice of attributing material value to that which has none.





Story Dealers, 2015

© Said Rais

In-Situ multi-channel sound installation

34'05" (in loop)

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Story dealers, a multichannel sound installation in the old Portuguese cistern of El Jadida, plays on the notions of truth and transmission. A choir of histories around the site, composed of memories, projections, anecdotes, myths, and legends, blends archival records with popular beliefs. Inspired by the figures of the storyteller and the tourist guide, continually in search of the best story, the work queries the value of both written and oral transmission. Recounting the myriad narratives of the site, the work brings to light how a places are composed not only of stone and concrete, but even more so of memories and myths.





MORO©©©O, 2015

© Simon Blu

Installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

MORO©©©O consists of a series of shop signs and advertisements - copies of copies. Carefully tweaking notorious logos, from Subway to Facebook, Moroccan merchants toy with legal concepts of copyright in search of a larger clientele. Here, the artist represents their counterfeit brands as if they were ready mades. Playing with notions of plagiarism, authorship, and forgery, he simultaneously lays bare the traces and frustrations of global capitalism. While multinationals pervade impoverished countries, its inhabitants remain excluded from their affluence. As such, the signs in *MORO©©©O* are both traces and metaphors for Moroccans' aspirations to be included in a game that will never deal them the cards.





Kit mains Libres, 2014

© Younes Baba-Ali

Serie of 4 photographs
Digital print on Baryta paper
100 x 100 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Kit mains Libres (or Hands-free kit), is a series of photographic portraits portraying women of Moroccan descent. Against the backdrop of Brussels' archetypal red brick walls, one distinct detail stands out: each of them has slipped their mobile phone in their headscarf as if it were a tool. Whereas the headscarf is traditionally perceived as a barrier between spirituality and secularity, *Kit mains Libres* brings into view how diasporic communities have entwined their religion with functionality and fashion. In constant cultural limbo, reconciling their lifestyles and customs in a new social context, the work illustrates the ways in which migrants maneuver between the two poles of 'here' and 'there', of religion and profanity.






Être et ne pas avoir, 2014

© Younes Baba-Ali & Pierre Antoine

HD Video 16/9
Lenght : 5'54"
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Être et ne pas avoir (or To be and not to have), presents an intimate video portrait of an anonymous Belgian resident. Blurred as if he were a criminal in a crime documentary, the man discloses in a calm, matter-of-fact way how one can benefit from the Belgian social security system. While the camera shifts between almost abstract images of his intimate life and behavior and the obscured figure, he uncovers all strategies underpinning a new form of immigration referred to as social welfare tourism. As European citizens have become more mobile than ever, heated debates rage on the alleged adverse effects of free movement of labour, including in particular “welfare tourism”. *Être et ne pas avoir*, in this sense, offers its viewer an intimate insight into the inner workings of the highly contested system.



To calculate the points of access to social security,



Multiculturalism / Multicommunitarism, 2014

© Luc Schrobiltgen & Saad Alami

LED illuminated sign
200 x 20 cm
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

In *Multiculturalism / Multicommunitarism* a LED sign flickers and fluctuates as it struggles to transmit a clear message to bystanders. The LED box, calling to mind immigrant's night shops in the popular area's of town, is installed facing the street. Endlessly oscillating and erring between two seemingly conflicting terms, multiculturalism and multicommunitarism, the sign reveals a flawed concept. As multiculturalism is propagated as an instrument for and a result of successful integration in global metropolises, this work calls attention to the fragmentation and atomization that underlies its utopia.

MULTICOMMUNITARISM



Zinneke, 2014

© Luc Schrobiltgen & Lea Beloussovitch

In-situ installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see more](#)

Zinneke, an in situ sound installation, consists of a collection of bird's nests installed throughout the exhibition space. The nests, whose squawking and chattering permeates the exhibition space, are carefully assembled replicas of parakeet's refuges in Brussels. Since 1974, after the owner of a local zoo released about 50 birds into the wild because, he said, Brussels needed more colour, the parakeets expanded far beyond their original territory. As over time their flashing green plumage and shrill squawks have become a habituel sight in the metropole, they emerged as an analogy for new immigrants in the city. Living alongside indigenous pigeons and woodpeckers, they soon thrived in their new home and became 'Zinnekes' - Brussel's multicultural inhabitants. As such, the installation reverberates the traces and metaphors of global migration and adaptation.





Everyone is called Mohamed, 2014

© Younes Baba-Ali & Silvano Magnone

Sound creation
Lenght : 26'40'' (in loop)
Courtesy of the artist

Everyone is called Mohamed is a subtle sound installation installed in public space. Repetitively calling out Mohamed - a name whose popularity is unequalled globally and is used in Arab culture to address any anonymous man - the work engages a large audience. By its very nature, the work is an invitation to interact and react - simply by being provoked by it, as our body physically and instinctively reacts to the call.



Maroc de demain, 2014

© S. Mellon & Younes Baba-Ali

HD video 16/9
Lenght : 3'56" in loop
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Maroc de demain (or Tomorrow's Morocco), a video installation, guides its spectator's gaze along a series of billboards advertising one of Casablanca's biggest ongoing real estate projects. Simulacrum of urban experience, they offer nicely-arranged tableaux of city life while investors scramble to get a piece of the city's booming real estate market. While carefully advertizing the collective consumption of space, they constitute a kind of third space that hybridizes Western life and landscape. Its semantic fragility, however, is fractured when now and then passerby come into view, revealing the billboards to be a mere 2D simulation. In between fiction and documentation, the video suggests an imminent archive of the sociopolitical context in which a new perspective of Morocco is brewing.





Untitled (megaphones), 2014

© Younes Baba-Ali

Sound installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

An array of megaphones reproduces the cries of Senegalese market vendors in Dakar. Collected directly from these vendors, the megaphones figure as a group of readymades that the artist merely bought from each of them. As these mass produced objects inundated African markets, local vendors soon adopted them as publicity tools that endlessly pitch their products to bypassers. The cacophony created by them, immersing its listener in the atmosphere of a likely unfamiliar city, recreates the soundscape of the Senegalese capital. The installation captures and reveals the contradictions of our globalized world, discernable even in the most trivial aspects of everyday life and its migrant mass produced artifacts.





Moroccan Anthem, 2013

© Younes Baba-Ali

HD video 16/9
Lenght : 2'11" in loop
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Moroccan Anthem depicts a donkey driver clucking the Moroccan national anthem. The video portrait shows the man seated on his cart while trying to restrain his trusted but flustered donkey. As the donkey tries to adhere to his master's orders - advance when he clucks his tongue - the animal's hesitation subtly suggests the disjunction underlying his masters' stance within his society. Considered the lowest social group in Morocco's society, the donkey driver's ironic, alternative national anthem deftly draws attention to the inequity within his society by usage of the symbolic and semantic qualities inherent in its anthem's melody.





Shalom Aleikoum, 2013

© Yunes Baba-Ali

Printed doormat
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see more](#)

In *Shalom Aleikoum*, one of the most pedestrian objects of our daily lives is imbued with a pun blending Arabic and Hebrew greetings. The linguistic construction, at once familiar and in all invented, reveals the kinship and close ties between both cultures - both phonetically and historically. Moreover, the unnoteworthy doormat, in its simplicity, raises subtle but pertinent questions to its visitor. As an object that commonly divides the private from the public, as a doormat made artwork, as sacred language spread onto the floor. Can the prophet's language be debased to a doormat? Can one step onto an artwork? Can language reveal ties between two cultures? Along these lines, the work asks its public to reflect on the notion of the status of the artwork and of religious language, while recalling our common roots.

2^a KOLONIALE MONUMENTEN
IN BELGIË – JAN KEMPENAERS
EEN DIALOOG MET DE
COLLECTIE

2 WINTRI
ORLA B.
DIETVO

1^b DUO – D
DOOR D
HET JO
UNTITL

1 HOE? BOER!
CERCLE D'AMIS OF
VRIENDENKRING

1 HOE? B
NU, EN
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RAOUL

0 DROMEN VAN PARELMOER
DE ENSOR – VERZAMELING
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28.09.2019
05.01.2020

نیلزوم
عليكم



Barriers, 2013

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see more](#)

Barriers, an installation of handcrafted transennae, explores the challenges raised by rampant global capitalism in lagging regions. Adorned with counterfeit McDonald's logos, the transennae - literal and metaphorical barriers - portray how underdeveloped countries have strategically been included in the global market while remaining excluded from its affluence. Crippled and patched, wobbling on their rudimentary structure, they convey the fragility and restiveness of an artisanal economy in the face of globalism.





Kamikaze, 2013

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see more](#)

Kamikaze, a ready made sculpture, stages the perilous potential of paranoia and poor waste management. As the handcart seemingly succumbs under the burden of an overload of rusty, ramshackle gas cylinders, the work confronts us with the angst of a blast. Signed with the name 'larbi' or the Arab - coincidentally the name of its former owner - the cart cleverly casts an ironic look on the permanent paranoia of Islamist terrorist threats tormenting the West. In this way, the work not only draws attention to the risk in the heedless handling of hazardous wastes but also, and even more so, in mass delusion.





Jouteya, 2012

© Gianpaolo Lauretta

Multi channel video Installation

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

A series of promotional spots for DIY tools, products, and accessories play perpetually in a darkened room. Their overlapping imagery and sound, saturating the space with an overflow of impressions, creates a continuous brouhaha recalling North African souks or Jouteya. Causing an absurd affinity between the carefully curated Western DIY shops and the chaotic Maghrebi souks, the work offers a space for criticism towards the tenets of overconsumption.





Mécénat Alternatif, 2012

© Dario Lasagni & Gianpaolo Laurretta

Wall Painting
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

Mécénat Alternatif is a mural painting following the tradition of Italian frescoes representing my bank account number. It invites visitors to deposit money onto the artist's bank account and thus become patrons, a status that inspires many people. Patronage benefits both parties. One can see in this work a return to traditional painting, but in a very conceptual way and with a good dose of irony. I have always felt the need to establish an interaction with the visitor. For me, there is no work of art without interaction. At its core, *Mécénat alternatif* addresses the question of value and exchange, not only in terms of objects but also and above all in terms of relationships between people who are mediated by these objects.



Relevé d'Identité Bancaire / IBAN

Cadre réservé au destinataire du RIB

Titulaire du Compte
MONSIEUR YOUNES BABA-AUJ

ING Belgique SA
Agence Molenbeek-Karrevel

IBAN : BE21 3770 3709 9103
BIC-ADRESSE SWIFT : BBRUBEBB



Televendita, 2012

© Younes Baba-Ali & Gianpaolo Laurreta

HD video 16/9
Length : 29'25"
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

The work *Televendita* satirizes the rhetoric used to value and give credibility to art. Resulting from an unprecedented performative collaboration between Baba-Ali and Alessandro Orlando, one of the most popular salesmen on Italian television, the video work imitates infomercials by adopting their form and language. However, its usual subjects - from tupperware to obsolete decoration - have been replaced by some of Baba-Ali's conceptual works. As Orlando attempts to sell the works of art through a popular televised discourse, the work creates a discrepancy with regard to the intellectualist artistic language and thus reveals its strategies of standardization and valorization.





Carroussa Sonore, 2012

© Youssef Ouchra & Younes Baba-Ali

Sound installation
Project of broadcasting sound art in public space
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Carroussa Sonore is a ready made object consisting of a stroller equipped with a set of speakers. A common sight in the urban context of Islamic countries, the caroussa is typically used for selling CD's with Quranic recitals. Deemed untouchable as it diffuses the prophet's message, its blaring chants have become a quintessential part of Morocco's urban landscape. As a consequence, passerby have become almost inert to its omnipresence. Here, Baba-Ali reinvents the object as he replaces its recitals by a different resonance: sound art. Its new current product on offer draws a new cartography of each territory it traverses as Baba-Ali curates a unique selection of sound works for each intervention. As both a creation and a platform, ambulating through the streets, the Caroussa Sonore becomes an invitation to re-listen, to re-discover an ephemeral aesthetic experience.





Untitled (Speed bump), 2012

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation In-Situ
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

Disrupting the anaesthetic repetition of white walls, *Untitled (Speed Bump)* separates the exhibition space from its exterior. Installed at the entrance, it forces the visitor to overcome the obstacle to access the exhibition, bringing awareness of the barriers involved in entering the world of art and its white domes. The work originated in Rabat, Morocco, where speed bumps became a separating device adopted by its bourgeoisie. By installing ridiculously high - often unauthorized - speed bumps, the Moroccan elite managed to fence off their neighborhoods, just as art remained separate from other social classes in the country. Elsewhere, the speed bump takes on additional meaning by illuminating the elitist character of the art world and parodying its emblematic white space - a stand-in for an ideal of empty space, a white «void» as a representation of neutrality or a kind of metaphysical isolation.





Ending your life under the sun, 2012

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Ending your life under the sun, a wooden coffin equipped with a sun bed, humorously reveals reversed migratory patterns that - in stark contrast with migration from the Global South - are often left unmentioned in mass media and popular discourse. The fluorescent light glinting off the neons installed in the funereal sculpture elicit an eerie ambiance while evoking images of solarium tanning salons across Europe and North America. Laying bare the tension between Europeans and North Americans relocating to warmer climates on the one hand and stateless refugees fleeing instability and conflict migrating North, the work ironically points out the wealth and power relations at play in global migration patterns.





Untitled (Social Landscape), 2012

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation In-Situ
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Untitled (Social landscape) shows a group of birds frantically flying around the exhibition space. The mass-produced plastic birds, purchased by the artist in a bazaar in Istanbul, ceaselessly circle around the room in search of an elusive destination. Mimicking the migratory fluxes of goods and people, the work draws a poignant portrait of a generation endlessly looking for a fleeting future. Concurrently, as the plastic bluff birds circulate through the air and global economy, they remind us of the inability of certain communities to do so.





Call for Prayer - Morse, 2011

© Younes Baba-Ali

Sound installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

In *Call for Prayer – Morse*, a megaphone broadcasts the Islam call to prayer in Morse code. Five times a day, at precise times according to each location, a megaphone affixed within public space crackles to life as the Adhan bathes its streets. The verbal verses are overwritten by a universal language of emergency, signalling against the dangers of proselytizing and demagoguery. The sound piece condenses complex questions surrounding religious education, loss of spirituality and intensified collectivisation into a minimal sonic pulse, subtly unfolding religious practices as adamant strongholds of control and surveillance.



BORÅS STAD
TMUSEUM





Untitled (Landscape), 2010

© Younes Baba-Ali

Installation In-Situ
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

As approaching spectators enter the installation, their presence triggers an industrial fan. A set of opaque black plastic bags starts to flutter, filling the space with their quivering sound. As globalisation and the mass import of cheap goods flood Morocco's landscapes and society, *Untitled (Landscape)* probes the juxtaposition between nature and nurture. Traces of both environmental and economical concerns, the plastic bags underline the profound cultural changes that mark Morocco's population as its fragile environs try to keep up with the sudden development of industrialization. Dangling from tree branches like ripened fruit, the bags are obvious yet their contents remain obscure. In this way, the installation subtly alludes to ideas of smuggling as global trade ease both licit and illicit transaction of knowledge and power. Hence, the work becomes a poignant metaphor for ideas and changes that are brewing under the surface while capitalist globalism rages on.





Tic Nerveux, 2009

© Carlos Castelleira & Younes Baba-Ali

3 channel video installation

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Tic Nerveux, a three channel sound and video installation, stages the Western neurotic obsession with optimizing time. Three absurdly large hands are shown, nervously manipulating their pens while creating a cacophony of ticks and clicks with an almost mechanical sensuality. The constant, manic and invasive clicking sound invades the exhibition space and the subconscious of its spectator. As if a metronome had gone rogue, the installation creates a new psychic rhythm that stresses the daily madnesses and materializes the tics and manias of our time. As time soon reveals, each image is slightly preceded by its acoustic effect creating an agonizing anticipation of what is to come.





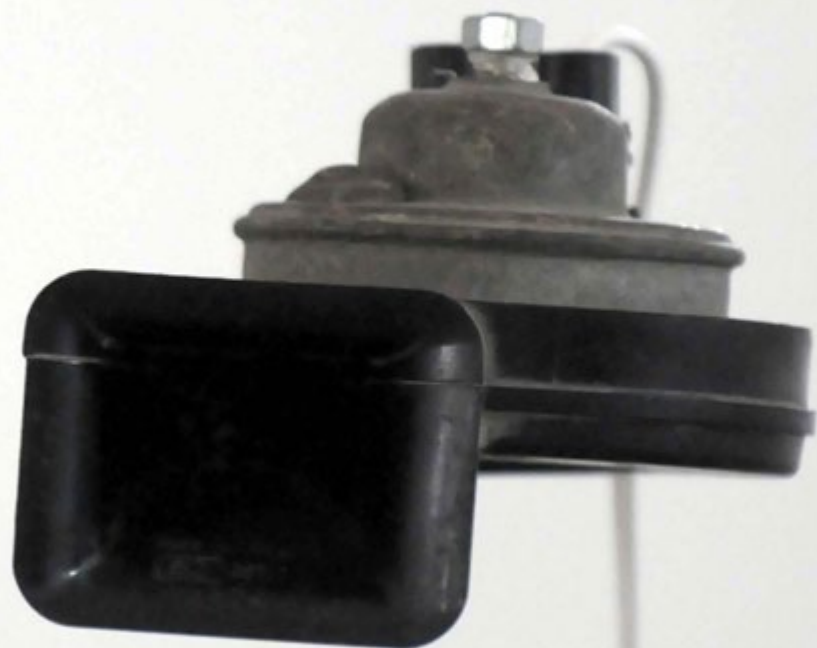
Horn Orchestra, 2009

© Younes Baba-Ali & Hassan Ouazzani

Sound installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Horn Orchestra is a sound installation consisting of a series of 10 car horns suspended in an enclosed space. At first glance, the installation takes on a rather sculptural and silent presence. The public is invited to walk in the space when all of a sudden their presence triggers the installation, reciprocating their entry by a shocking blare of car horns. The horns, filling the space with ear-splitting, gut-wrenching noise, produce an imposing yet intangible sonic atmosphere and expose us the innate power and effect of sound on our bodily experience.





Hairdryers, 2009

© Younes Baba-Ali

Sound installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Rejecting their original docile use, a series of hairdryers start swaying as spectators pass by. Freed from their commonplace use, their new manners and madness grant them a strange, almost human-like existence. No longer able to control or predict their comportments, the public becomes an active witness of their own inertia to quotidian objects as they revolt and renounce.





Tv Beug, 2009

© Younes Baba-Ali

Video installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

A flatscreen TV facing a wall emits blurred light and murmurous noise. The flux of visual data into sound data, a conversion carried out by a simple manipulation of the screen and video source, nullifies the staggering surge of images and information emitted by our televisions. As such, the work highlights the pointless potential of the object by reducing it to its abstraction.





Intrusion, 2008

Video 4:3

13'51"

Courtesy of the artist & Joël Curtz

© Younes Baba-Ali & Joël Curtz

[> see the video](#)

Intrusion is a performative action in collaboration with Joël Curtz. In its video documentation, Curtz is seen entering cars halted before traffic lights, inserting himself into family pictures, penetrating private spheres within the public arena of Paris. By entering into intimate enclaves in public space and (re-)appropriating already occupied territories, the performance seeks to expose the paradoxes and fissures that underlie it. As such, it exposes the definition of 'public space' as fragile and ambiguous.

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I can't



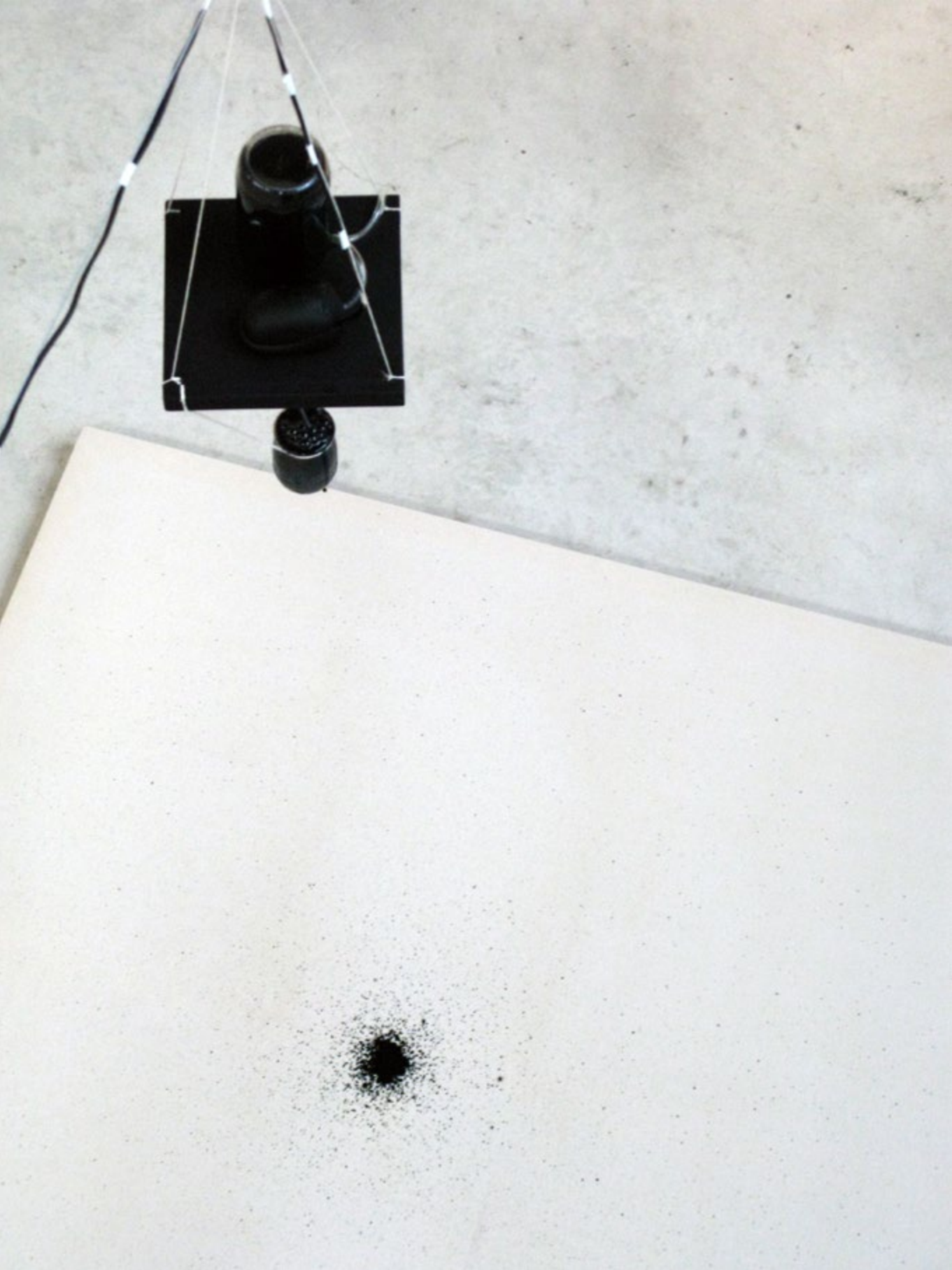
Sound Paintings, 2008

© Younes Baba-Ali

Sound installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Sound Paintings is a series of sound modules turned painting. In traditional fashion, canvas is stretched onto a series of frames. Here, the canvases do not announce themselves as monumental or sacred paintings to behold against a neutralised, white wall. Instead, they are laid out on the floor as they come into being. Underneath their tightly stretched canvas, micro contacts record the sound of Chinese ink gradually dripping onto them which is then echoed through the space. The dripping pots of Chinese ink, alimented by a small pump, replace the artist in the creation of the work, leaving its genesis up to hasard, gravity and time. The drumming sound of the drips reframes our experience of the work, suggesting an ongoing act of labor - desacralizing both artwork and artist - as it makes evident the means and methods of its own production.





Sound Neon, 2008

© Younes Baba-Ali

Interactive sound installation

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Sound Neon is a sound installation consisting of a series of neon tubes. Lighting up haphazardly in the presence of the spectator, they unfold a sonorous and luminous atmosphere while gradually revealing their surroundings. By use of neon lights, emblems of urban life and commercialism, the artist exploits its fluorescent artificiality to explore our ever-changing ties to objects. As visitors become integral to the work's existence, it offers them a renewed sense of time and place.





Différence/Różnica, 2008

© Younes Baba-Ali

6 channel video installation

Variable dimension

Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Difference, or *Różnica* in Polish, is a collection of video portraits of people living somewhere between Wrocław (Pl) and Strasbourg (Fr). In an intimate setting, each of them expresses the idea or notion of 'Difference'. The resulting 36 video testimonials, expressed in various languages, spanning from Polish to Chinese and Lingala, are projected in a darkened room on six screens. Amidst an intimate encounter between the spectator and the portraits, among disparate attitudes, languages, ideas, and appearances, he or she is propelled back into our own differences.





Sound Fabric, 2007

© Younes Baba-Ali

Interactive sound installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy of the artist

[> see the video](#)

Coming into existence only by the touch of its public, *Sound Fabric* explores the tactility of sound and the reverberations of our bodily presence. A wooden structure covered with elastic black textile hides a set of micro contacts underneath its surface. The visitor's actions generate a sound that pervades the space, reverberating every touch and gesture. Inviting its public to interact, the work makes them accomplices of its existence and creation.

