

**LAVERONICA**  
arte contemporanea

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Saddie Choua

*The Chouas – We are the movie!*

Opening Monday, 30 December 2019, 6,30 p.m.

31.12.19 – 28.03.20

**Laveronica arte contemporanea** is proud to present *The Choua's – We are the movie*, the first solo show in Italy by the belgian maroccan artist Saddie Choua.

Five men pushed in a corner of a room. A photo. Found in a newspaper. Or in a family album lost in the attic. A picture that produces questions. Where has it been made? During a party? A holiday? What is the relation between these men? And who took the picture? A photographer? Or one of the men's wife?

"Being the daughter of the man in the middle, I know: they are five brothers. These are the Chouas. This picture is made in Morocco. Three of the five brothers emigrated to Belgium. One turned back. Two stayed in Morocco. There are a lot of questions the picture does not answer".

*The Chouas* is balancing between fact and fiction, between personal and political considerations.

On show the epic story of a family through a series of video installations of various format realized in the last few years.

Combining autobiographic stories with history, literature and popular culture the distinction between fiction and non-fiction fades away. The episodes form the soap series *The Chouas*, but this is a meta-soap that invites the viewer to discover the structures of stereotypical image-formation, dominant codes and partial histories.

The challenge is not only to present the particular story of a family dealing with migration, but to create a situation in which the spectator discovers the tricky mechanisms of film and entertainment (soaps, documentaries,... etc) in order to experience the true nature of human existence.

Therefore, *The Chouas - A Work IN Progress* - is not a reality show or a soap about family matters with juicy stories on conflict of cultures and religions, superstition... It's rather an environment in which I, daughter of one of the Chouas, try to find, try to restore, the language of the migrant him/herself. In the tradition of Frantz Fanon, whose known as a radical existential humanist thinker on the issue of decolonization and the psychopathology of colonization, I am aware of the fact that migrants don't have any control anymore over 'their images'. The images of migrants as shown in the media are not their images. Those images create a fake perception of 'the other', which creates at last estrangement and alienation. My approach is to create a situation, an environment where images, sounds and spaces break with the language of contemporary media, break with the excited hunger for exoticism or worse, the pseudo reality shows where an assumed dayliness is evoked. As Guy Debord promoted any method of making one or more individuals critically analyze their everyday life, and to recognize and pursue their true desires in their lives, I would like to base this continuous and never-ending work on this basic assumptions, and go beyond the atrocities of the 'Society of Spectacle'.

**Saddie Choua** (Bree, 1972)

Lives and works in Brussels.

She uses meta-documentary tactics, humor, own (film)material, re-appropriation and collage of popular intercultural formats and autobiographical elements to put racism, discrimination against women and class, and her cats in the spotlight. She creates a new pseudo-realistic imaginary world that is at once highly recognizable and utterly alien. It is her way of undermining the (visual) language of our media and sharpening the critical and political self-reflective gaze of her audience.

Am I the only one who is like me? This is a question characteristic of Saddie Choua's life and work.

It problematizes the position of the solitary I that is also never disconnected from the other.

The power order that conditions the solitary "I", is another central subject. Where does this otherness sit in the hierarchy of power? Where is her oppression and exploitation concealed or exoticed? Saddie Choua asks us to think about how we consume images and dialogues about the other and how they affect our self-image and historical consciousness. How can we intervene in the images that write our history and conceal social struggle? Do we first have to refute memory to tell another story? Or is the removal or recombining of certain associations and references already sufficient to create a different history and self-image? Saddie Choua's work can therefore be read as a fragmented self-reflective visual essay that questions the relationship between maker and image. „How to speak differently from a subaltern position, or is it just the concept of "the other" that locks me up in dominant images and narratives?" Saddie Choua is doing a phd in the arts at RITCS School of arts and was recently nominated for the Belgian Art Prize 2020.

Saddie Choua had solo and group exhibitions including BOZAR, Brussels, 2014; WIELS, Brussels, 2015; Marrakech Biennial, Marrakech, 2016; Mu.ZEE, Ostend, 2016; Showroom, Sint Lucas School of Arts, Antwerp, 2016; KIOSK, Ghent, 2017; Festival Concreto, Fortaleza, 2017; Kooshk - Air Antwerp, Tehran, 2018; Kanal - Centre Pompidou, Brussels, 2018-2019; Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, 2018; Akademie der Künste der Welt - Richas Digest, Cologne, 2018; Villa Empain, Brussels, 2018; Laboratoire Bx, Bordeaux, 2018; Contour Biennial, Mechelen, 2019; Biennale Warszawa, Warsaw, 2019; Kunsthal Ghent, 2019; Croxhapox, Ghent, 2019; Kunsthalle, Wien, 2020

Her work is in national and international private and public collections; Mu.ZEE Ostend, Kanal-Centre Pompidou, Brussels/Paris, Kadist Gallery, Paris/San Francisco, Cosmos, Brussels