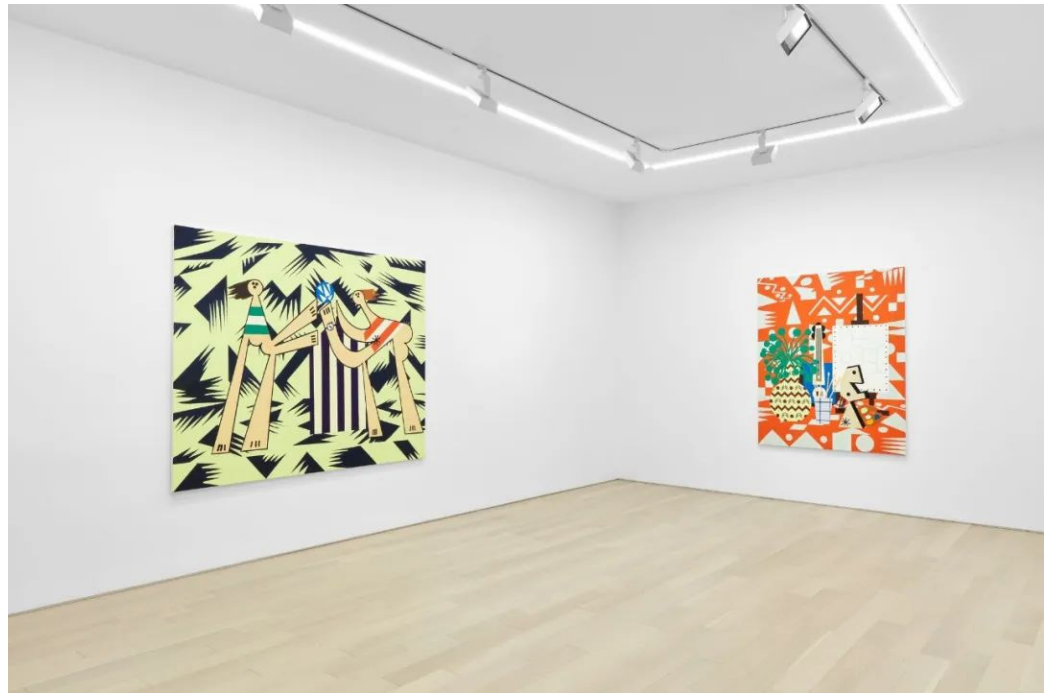


Artnet:  
**Farah Atassi: The Power of Women in a Chaotic World**

2022.05.05

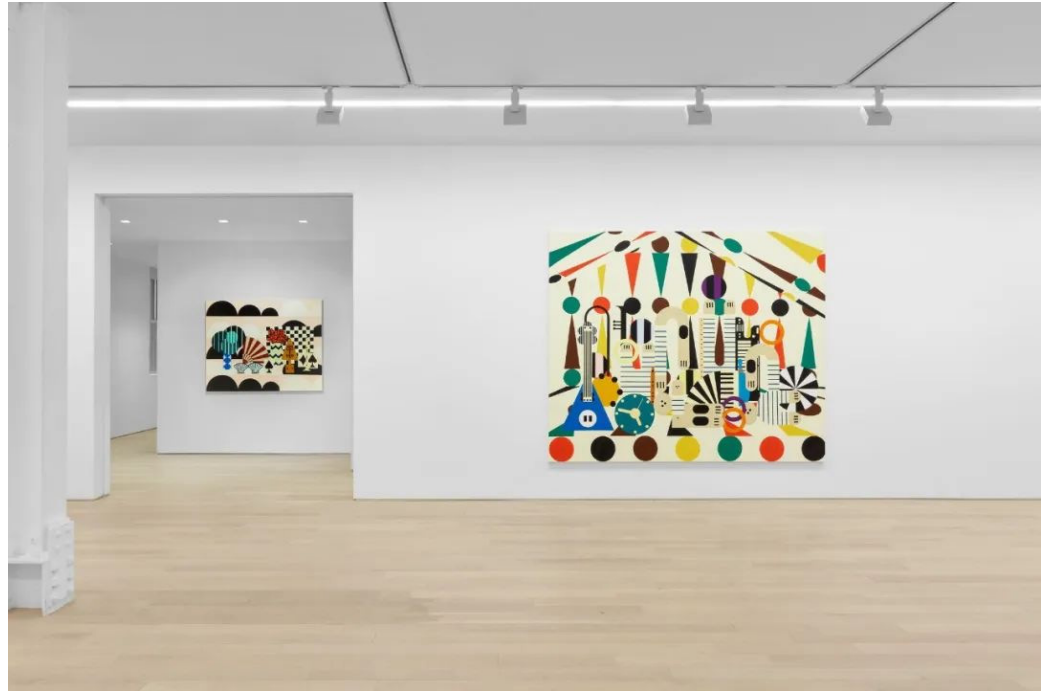
by Yiren Shen

Geometric shapes, ceramic flowers, framed miniatures, interlocking space-time and overlapping forms ..... When you stand in front of Farah Atassi's work, you don't know where to place your focus, and it takes some time to digest the elements of the painting: in the single-point perspective, curtains appear that disrupt the visual pattern, creating an ambiguity between depth and flatness. Even well-ordered lines suddenly disappear at a certain point, revealing layers of overlapping space and time.



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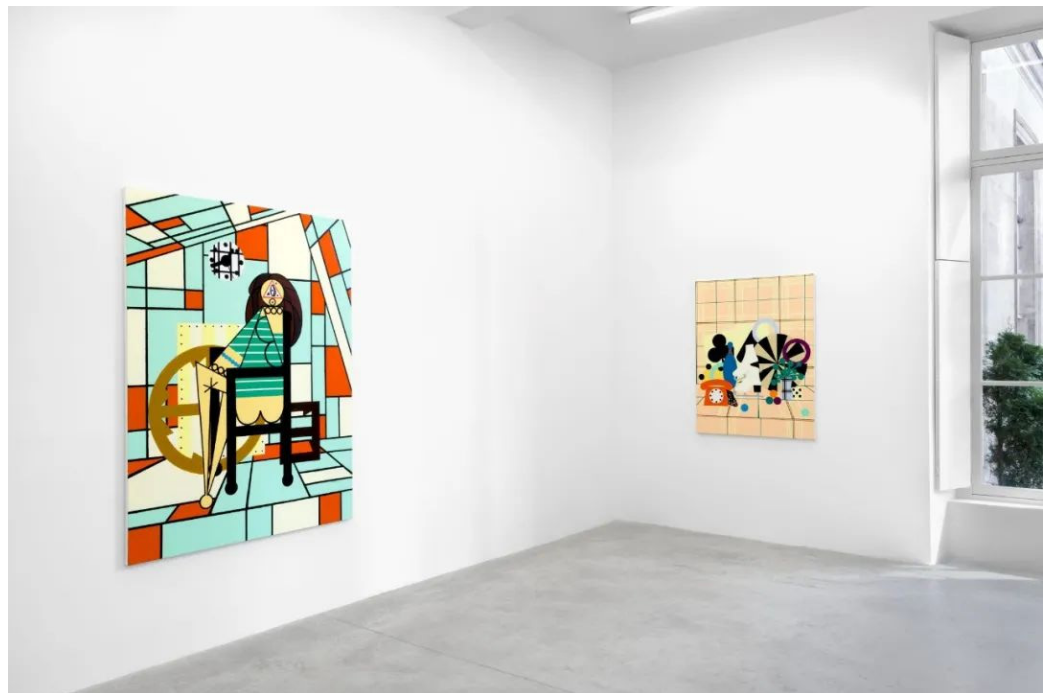
Farah Atassi, *Paintings*, Almine Rech New York, June 20 - July 26, 2019., ©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech

Farah Atassi at the age of 41, is happy to create such a sense of chaos. Born in Belgium, she moved to Paris with her family in 1990. At the age of 18, Atassi enrolled in the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where she studied with Jean-Michel Alberola and other painters.

For more than a decade, Atassi has depicted figurative scenes in an abstract manner, studying still images in interior spaces - once a specific space has been created, she possesses the power of a creator. In her holistic-oriented images, there is no longer an absolute distinction between foreground and background or subject and accompaniment; whether it be Malevich-style abstraction, Memphis-style color combinations, Matisse- and Picasso-style portraits, or Missoni-style iconography, they are all blended naturally by her in an unpretentious collage. Atassi absorbs and reinvents modernist elements of color, still life, the human body, and geometry, breaking through the limitations of time and place to form a creative grammar that is uniquely hers, reflecting the present, and a universal language that can be perceived by the world.

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Farah Atassi, *Paintings*, Almine Rech Paris, September 5 - October 3, 2020  
 ©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
 Photo: Matt Bohli

The female figure has long been Atassi's main subject, and she aspires to liberate them from the sadness and desire conveyed by the traditional Odalisque paintings, and to give them strength and free spirit. In the exhibition "Farah Atassi: Resting Dancers" at Almine Rech Shanghai (\*Due to the epidemic, this exhibition is currently on show only online, you could enter gallery's online viewing room by clicking on "Read More" at the end of the article), Atassi continues to deepen her exploration of feminine and classical painting themes, as well as multiple art forms, starting with dance, theater, ceramics, music, and other imagery, and moving on the edge of abstraction and figuration, deconstruction and reconstruction, dislocation and intersection.

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Farah Atassi, *After the Show*, 2021, Glycero and oil on canvas, 200 x 160 cm / 78 1/2 x 63 in  
 ©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
 Photo: Matt Bohli

“After the Show” depicts a dancer with her head bowed in front of a ceramic prop of her size. Surprisingly, the feet in ballet shoes are detached from the body and appear in a more relaxed position in the small painting on the left side of the ceramic. The work is also enhanced by a curtain that contains the same pattern as the background, but rotated at a 45-degree angle. A similar composition appears in the painting “Resting Dancer in Black Interior”. The stage curtain pulled up from the left and the floor that conforms to the logic of single point perspective seem to divide the space, but are confusing because of their flattening effect. The gesture of the resting dancer in her performance costume, rising to look at the viewer, and the predominantly black squares of the interior convey a message of alertness that makes one feel guilty for inadvertently intruding on her private domain.

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Farah Atassi, *Resting Dancer in Black Interior*, 2021, Glycero and oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm / 64 x 51 1/2 in  
©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
Photo: Matt Bohli

Unlike the other works in the exhibition, “The Acrobat Dancer” and “The Red Shoes” do not contain direct images of dancers, but rather ballet shoes, vases and flowers, as well as figures in mirrors and sketches to suggest the theme, using dramatic geometric shapes to connect the staggered elements and give a sense of reverie. space. Within these specific spaces, free from any constraints, Atassi creates her own codes with the women she writes about.

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Farah Atassi, *The Acrobat Dancer*, 2021, Glycero and oil on canvas, 250 x 180 cm / 98 1/2 x 71 in  
©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
Photo: Matt Bohli

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Farah Atassi, *The Red Shoes*, 2021, Glycero and oil on canvas, 130 x 97 cm / 51 1/2 x 38 1/2 in  
©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
Photo: Matt Bohli

On the occasion of Farah Atassi's first exhibition in China, we talked to the artist about her love of painting and the story behind Almine Rech's solo exhibition.

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Farah Atassi in her studio  
©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
Photo: Matt Bohli

**Q: What does art, in general, mean to you?**

A: Art, and especially painting is a language for those who don't want to use words, but shapes and colors. It's a way to express the world that is understandable by everybody, through all the time periods. It has this unique power to be timeless and universal. However, my favorite definition of art is the one of Gilles Deleuze: 'Art is an act of resistance'. Resistance here is not to be understood through the political prism, but the individual one. The artist resists with his art, because he's free and invents his own rules.

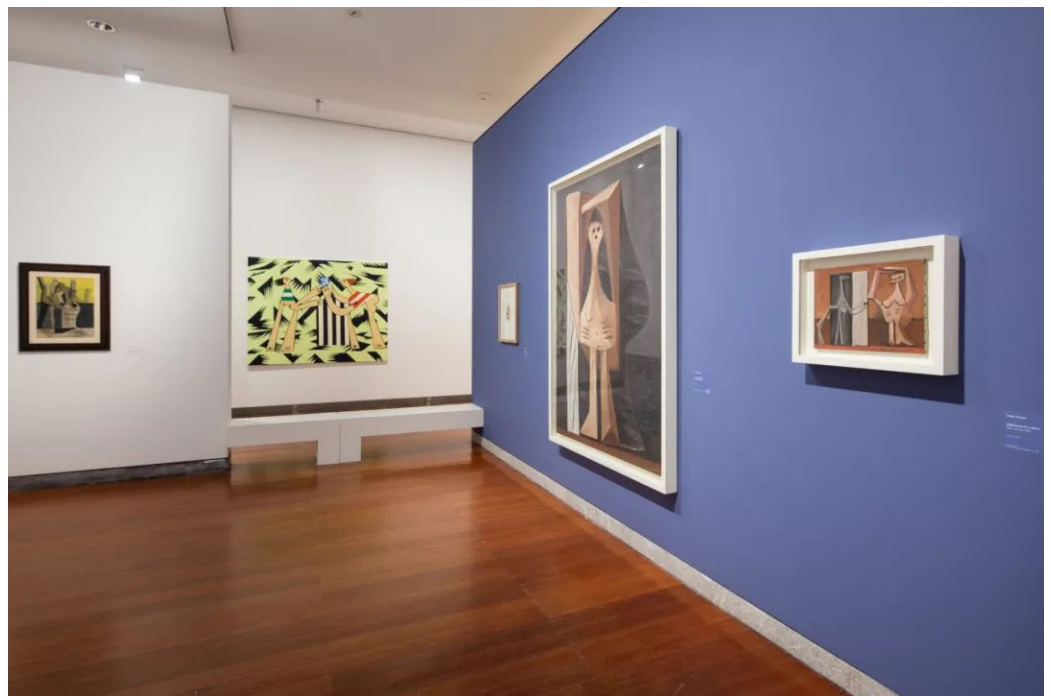
**Q: Has there ever been an artwork that left a long-lasting effect on you?**

A: There are many. I'm obsessed by the paintings and drawings of L'Atelier de La Californie from Picasso. Or by some Matisse's Odalisques. I couldn't pick one. Also, some landscapes of Jean Brusslemans that depict Belgium exactly how I see and how I feel it, have always haunted me.



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Farah Atassi, *Picasso: Baigneuses et Baigneurs*, Musée des Beaux arts de Lyon, France, July 15, 2020 - January 3, 2021, ©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
 Photo: Martial Couderette

**Q:** You cited several artists that had inspired you, including Picasso, Fernand Léger, Malevich, etc. Could you tell us why you are more drawn to the 20th century than to contemporary or before the 20th?

**A:** I have many sources of inspiration : the early Renaissance for instance, contemporary art or a part of American painting (Tom Wesselmanns and Alex Katz mainly). But my most important one is indeed the art of the early 20th century. The modernists invented a pictorial language that fit perfectly with my artistic intentions and beliefs. I feel that I belong to them and that their

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language is mine. I'm like them, into the obsession of the pure line, and of the efficiency. The way they would paint things (figures or objects), is like saying them, without describing them.

**Q: Does your perception of painting change overtime? If so, what does painting mean to you now?**

A: I have the same perception today, it hasn't change. And years after years, I'm more and more passionate about painting I totally understand David Hockney, who said something that I love recently after he spent 2 years in Normandy during confinement : all he wants to do now that he is free of social life and social issues (his mid-80's)- is painting and smoke cigarettes all day!



Farah Atassi in her studio  
©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
Photo: Matt Bohli

**Q: Have you experimented with art forms other than painting? If so, what keeps you focusing on painting? How have other art forms benefit your painting practice?**

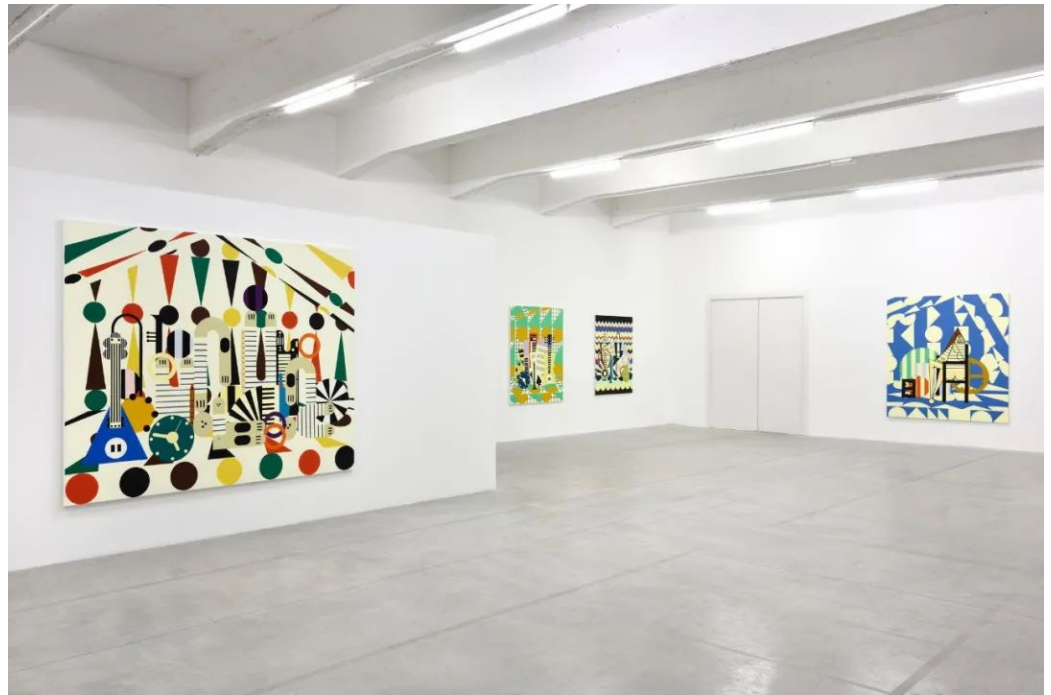
A: I had never experimented anything else than painting, but I'm very much inspired by art installations and sculptures. The three-dimensional word is present in my paintings. I'm also passionate by ballet and music. All these arts are also a source of inspiration in my work, the series Resting Dancer is a good example. In that series, I make composition that depict painting practice, sculpture, and dance. They are all staged and significant in the idea of the show.

**Q: Why did you choose to depict dancers and “resting dancers” in particular?**

A: The idea of painting resting dancers came randomly. I'm depicting women in my paintings for a long time now, mostly odalisques and bathers. The last models were more and more displayed on stages, and I decided to go further in that narration by making them become dancers, resting after their show. Also, I like the idea that they are artists, as I like to feature art in my work.

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Farah Atassi, *Farah Atassi*, Le Consortium, France, November 29, 2019 - March 1, 2020  
 ©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
 Photo: Rebecca Fanuele

**Q:** You have always been painting interior spaces, with roofs and horizons. Why are you fascinated by interior spaces, especially stages?

**A:** I had a kind of revelation in front of the Fra Angelico Annunciations ten years ago. I understood that if you create a delimited space in a painting, you can make anything happen with a lot of power. The commensurable space is made to welcome the miracle. Then years after years my spaces became stages, now they even have curtains that replace the roofs. I un-

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derstood recently that it is because I am actually questioning representation itself. In my last paintings, even the artist studio is staged !

**Q: How do you compose a painting?**

A: I always start with making a delimited space, like a said earlier. Right now this spaces are stages, with curtains that will determine the composition of the painting. Then I paint the figure. At the end I add the elements of the decor that act like a final punctuation (oranges, frames, etc.).



Farah Atassi's studio  
©Farah Atassi - Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech  
Photo: Matt Bohli

**Q: At what point do you know that a painting is finished?**

A: It's physical. Like a delivery, I know when it happens because I feel relieved and liberated.

**Q: Figurative and abstract elements co-exist in your paintings. What is your understanding of the two?**

A: I'm a figurative painter that uses an abstract painter vocabulary. This dichotomy between figuration and abstraction is an important aspect of my painting. It's something I want to maintain, even reinforce.

**Q: What is your next project?**

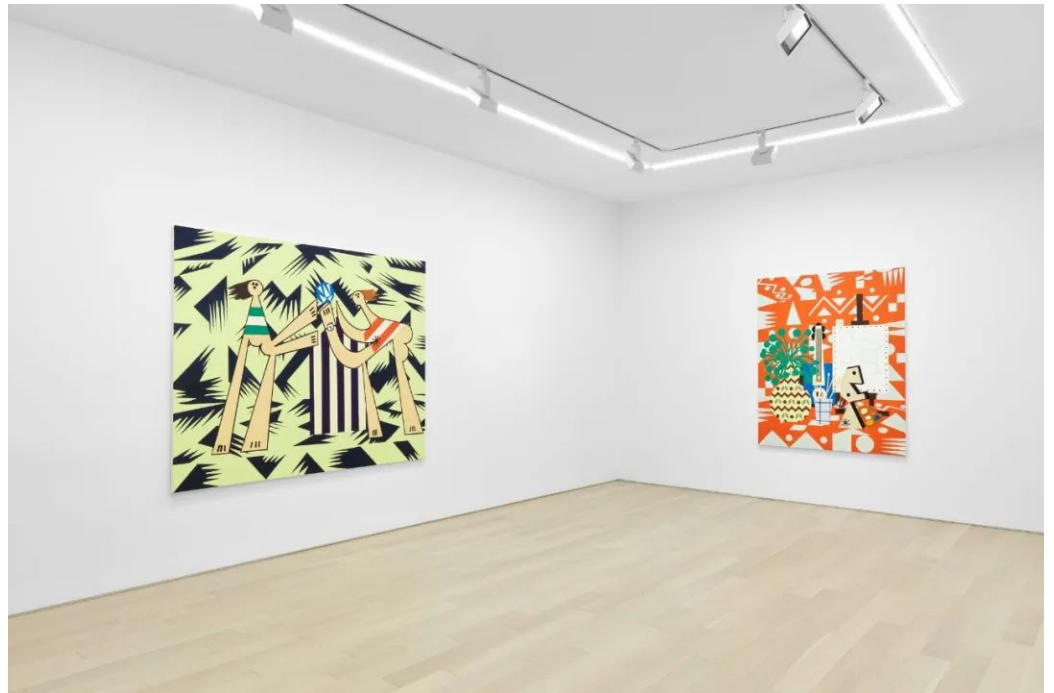
A: I'm now preparing a solo show at the Musée Picasso Paris, starting next September.

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法拉·阿塔斯：混沌世界中的女性力量

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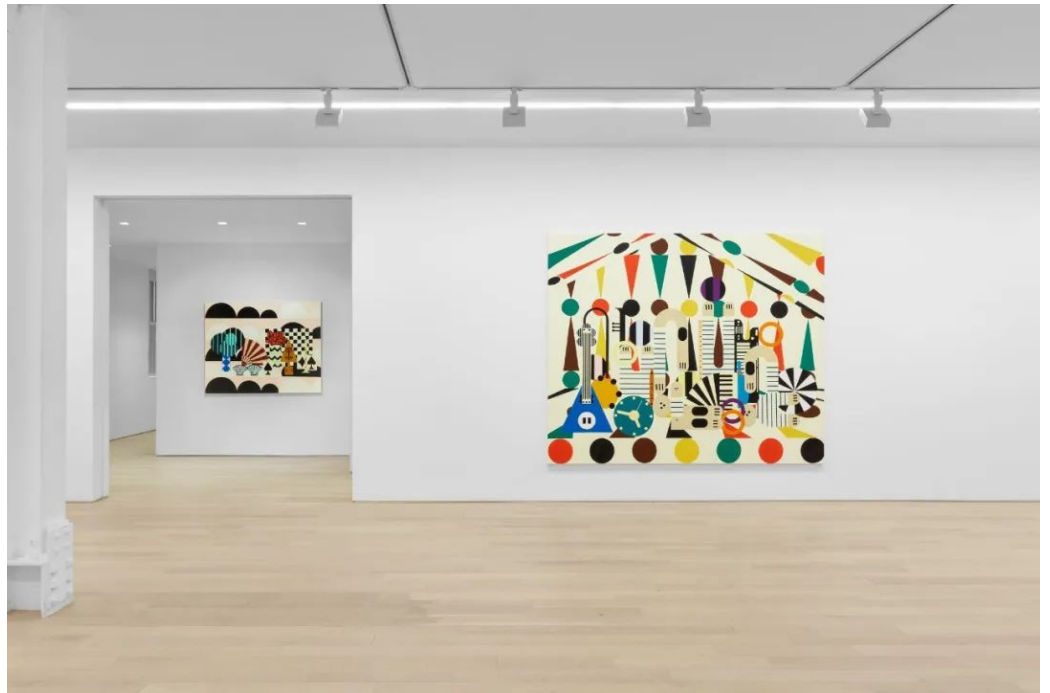
文/沈逸人

几何图形、陶瓷花卉、画框小稿、交错的时空和重叠的形态……当你站在法拉·阿塔斯 (Farah Atassi) 的作品前时，会不知该如何安放你的目光，需要经过一定时间的消化才能理清画中元素：在单点透视的画面中，出现了扰乱视觉规律的帘幕，创造出深度和扁平之间的模糊性；在铺天盖地的几何形状中，闪现出风格突兀的双重人像，仿佛是掌握了平行空间的密钥；即便是井然有序的线条，也会在某一个节点突然消失，呈现出层层交叠的时空。



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法拉·阿塔斯《绘画》展览现场, 阿尔敏·莱希-纽约, 2019年6月20日-7月26日  
图片: ©法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希

现年41岁的法拉·阿塔斯对创造这样的混沌感乐此不疲。她出生在比利时, 于1990年随家人一起搬到了巴黎。在美术馆中耳濡目染的经历让她很早就坚定了想要成为一名画家的信念。18岁那年, 阿塔斯考入巴黎国立高等美术学院, 师从让·米歇尔·阿尔贝罗拉 (Jean-Michel Alberola) 等绘画大家。

在过去十多年间, 阿塔斯都在以抽象的手法描绘具象场景, 研究室内空间中的静置图像——一旦创建出特定的空间, 她就拥有了造物主的能力。在其注重整体性的画面中, 不再有绝对的前景和背景或主体与陪衬之分, 无论是马列维奇式的抽象, 孟菲斯式的色彩组合, 马蒂斯和毕加索式的人像, 还是米索尼式的图样, 都被她以一种毫不做作的拼贴方式自然而然地融合在一起。阿塔斯把现代主义的色彩、静物、人体、几何等元素吸收再改造, 突破时间和地域的限制, 形成了独属于她的、反映当下的创作语法, 和能为世人所感知的通用语言。

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文/沈逸人



法拉·阿塔斯《绘画》展览现场，阿尔敏·莱希-巴黎，2020年9月5日-10月3日

图片：© 法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希

摄影：Matt Bohli

长期以来，女性人物都是阿塔斯的主要创作题材，她期望能把女性角色从传统的宫女 (Odalisque) 画作所传递的忧伤和欲望中解放出来，赋予她们力量和自由精神。在本次于阿尔敏·莱希上海空间呈现的“法拉·阿塔斯：休憩的舞者” (Resting Dancers) 展览 (\*由于疫情原因，这场展览当前正以线上形式呈现，可至文末点击“阅读原文”访问线上展厅) 中，阿塔斯继续深化她对女性和经典绘画主题，以及多种艺术形式的探讨，从舞蹈、戏剧、陶瓷、音乐等意象出发，游走在抽象与具象、解构和重组、错位与交汇的边缘。

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法拉·阿塔斯,《演出结束后》, 2021, 布面缓干丙烯与油画颜料, 200 x 160 厘米 / 78 1/2 x 63 英寸  
图片: © 法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希  
摄影: Matt Bohli

《演出结束后》(After the Show) 描绘了垂首低眉的舞者在与她等大的陶瓷道具前休憩的场景。出乎意料的是, 穿着芭蕾舞鞋的双脚脱离了身躯, 以一种更为放松的姿态出现在了陶瓷左侧的小幅画作中。该作品还因含有与背景相同的花纹, 但旋转了45度角的帘幕而显得更为妙趣横生。类似的构图也出现在了《在黑色室内空间休憩的舞者》(Resting Dancer in Black Interior) 一画中。从左侧拉起的舞台幕布和符合单点透视逻辑的地面似乎是在分割空间, 却又因其扁平效果引人困惑。正在休憩的舞者身着演出服, 起身望向观者的姿态和以黑色方块为主的室内空间传达了警觉的讯息, 令人不禁为不慎侵扰了她的私人领域而感到愧疚。



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法拉·阿塔斯,《在黑色室内空间休憩的舞者》, 2021, 布面缓干丙烯与油画颜料, 162 x 130 厘米 / 64 x 51 1/2 英寸  
图片: © 法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希  
摄影: Matt Bohli

与其他展出作品不同,《杂技舞演员》(The Acrobat Dancer) 和《红色舞鞋》(The Red Shoes) 中并无直接的舞者形象, 而是由芭蕾舞鞋、花瓶和鲜花, 以及犹如在镜面中的身影和简笔画来暗示主题, 用充满戏剧性的几何形状连接起错落有致的元素, 给人以遐想的空间。在这些不受任何约束的特定空间内, 阿塔斯和她笔下的女性一起创造出属于她们的准则。

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法拉·阿塔斯,《杂技舞演员》, 2021, 布面缓干丙烯与油画颜料, 250 x 180 厘米 / 98 1/2 x 71 英寸  
图片: © 法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希  
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法拉·阿塔斯,《红色舞鞋》, 2021, 布面缓干丙烯与油画颜料, 130 x 97 厘米 / 51 1/2 x 38 1/2 英寸  
图片: © 法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希  
摄影: Matt Bohli

正值法拉·阿塔斯的中国首展之际, 我们与艺术家聊了聊她所钟情的绘画, 以及阿尔敏·莱希个展背后的故事。

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法拉·阿塔斯在工作室

图片: © 法拉·阿塔斯 – 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希

摄影: Matt Bohli

**Q: 艺术对你来说意味着什么?**

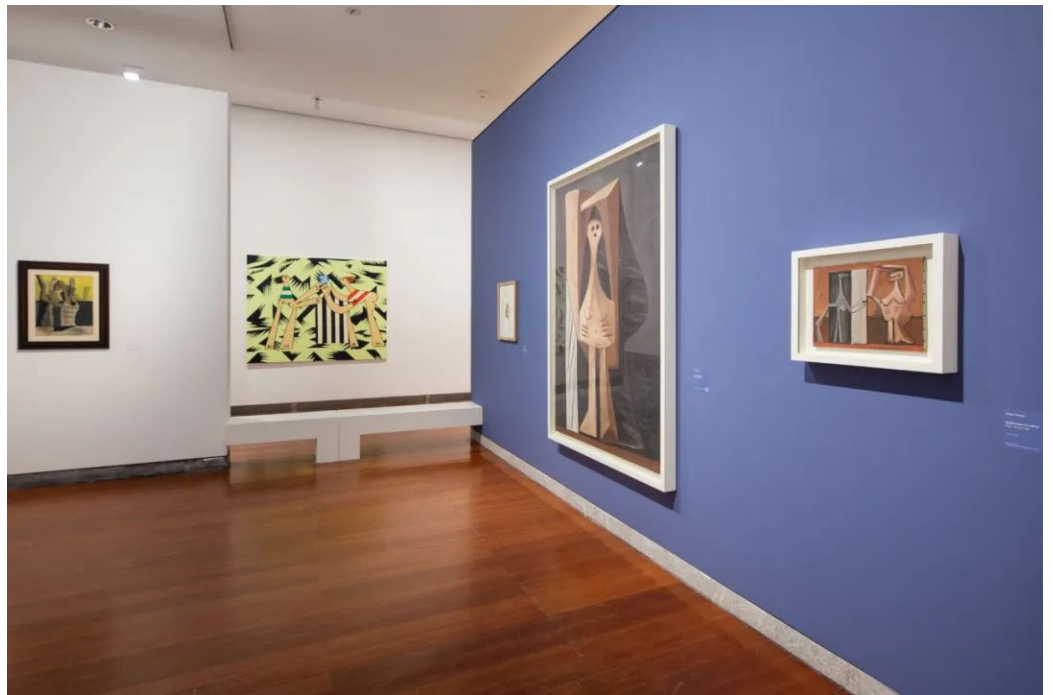
A: 对于那些相较于文字, 更青睐于使用形状和颜色的人来说, 艺术——尤其是绘画——是一种语言。这是一种古往今来, 任何人都可以理解的表达方式。它具有永恒和普世的独特力量。我最欣赏的是法国哲学家吉尔·德勒兹 (Gilles Deleuze) 关于艺术的定义: “艺术是一种反抗行为。” (Art is an act of resistance) 这里的“反抗”不应从政治的角度, 而应通过个人的角度来理解。艺术家用他的艺术来反抗一切, 因为他是自由的, 并且发明了他自己的规则。

**Q: 有没有哪件艺术作品给你留下了尤为深远的影响?**

A: 有许多。我痴迷于毕加索 (Picasso) 的“加州工作坊” (L' Atelier de La Californie) 系列中的绘画和素描, 以及马蒂斯 (Matisse) 的描绘宫女 (Odalisques) 的作品。此外, 让·布鲁斯勒曼 (Jean Brusslemans) 的一些风景作品时常出现在我脑海中, 因为它们十分准确地描绘了我对比利时的印象和感受。

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法拉·阿塔斯《毕加索: 游泳者们》展览现场, 里昂美术馆, 法国, 2020年7月15日-2021年1月3日

图片: © 法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希

摄影: Martial Couderette

Q: 你曾提到过几位对你颇有启发的艺术家, 包括毕加索、费尔南德·莱格 (Fernand Léger) 和马列维奇 (Malevich) 等。为什么相较于其他时代, 你更钟情于20世纪?

A: 我有很多灵感来源, 比如早期的文艺复兴艺术、当代艺术和一些美国画家的作品——主要是汤姆·韦塞尔曼 (Tom Wesselmans) 和亚历克斯·卡茨 (Alex Katz)。但的确, 对我来说最重要的还是20世纪初的艺术。现代主义者发明了一种与我的艺术意图和信仰完美契合的绘画语言。我就像他们

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一样，对纯粹的线条情有独钟。无论是人像还是物件，他们的绘画方式并非是描述，而是平铺直叙。

Q: 你对绘画的看法有随着时间而改变吗？

A: 直到今天，我对绘画的看法都始终如一，对绘画本身的热情也有增无减。我完全能体会大卫·霍克尼 (David Hockney) 的感受。疫情期间，现年八十多岁的他在诺曼底住了两年，无需再受社交生活的牵绊。他说了句我特别喜欢的话：他想做的一切——就是每天画画和抽烟！



法拉·阿塔斯在工作室

图片：© 法拉·阿塔斯 - 致谢艺术家和阿尔敏·莱希

摄影：Matt Bohli

Q: 你是否尝试过绘画之外的艺术形式？其他艺术形式对你的绘画实践有何帮助？

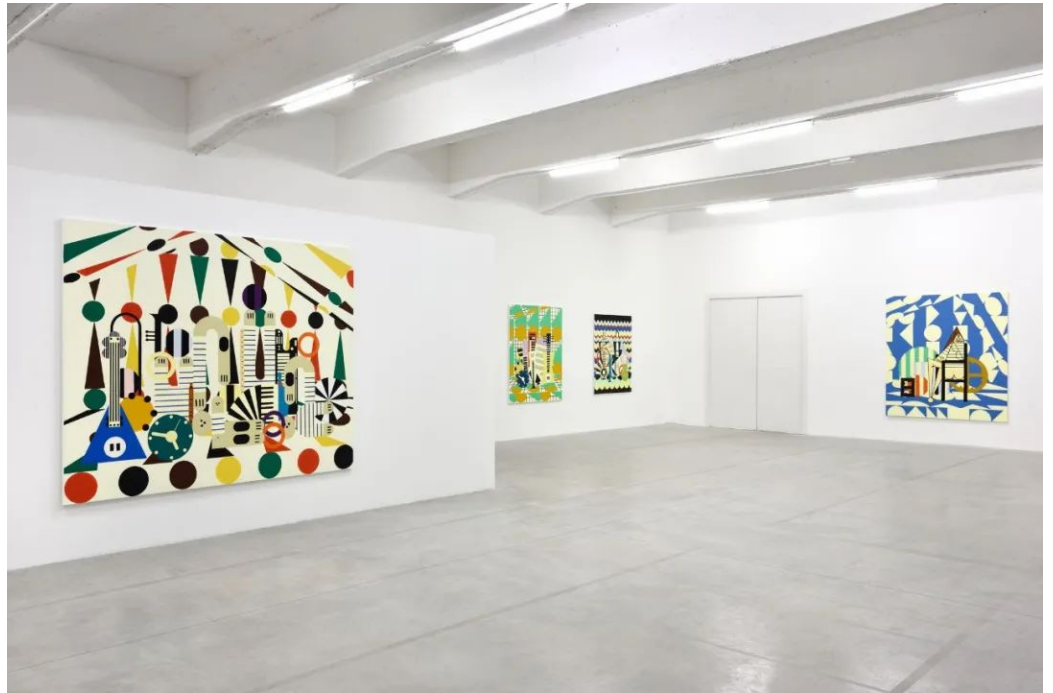
A: 除了绘画，我从未尝试过其他的创作媒介，但我的灵感源泉中不乏装置和雕塑。在我的画作中也常会出现三维元素。另外，我还十分热爱芭蕾和音乐。这些艺术形式都给我带来了许多启发。“休憩的舞者”系列就是一个很好的例子。在这个系列中，我描绘了画中画、雕塑和舞蹈。它们都在展览的构思中起到了至关重要的作用。

Q: 为何会选择描绘舞者，尤其是“休憩的舞者”？

A: 以“休憩的舞者”为创作主题的想法是随机而来的。不过很长一段时间以来，我都在描绘女性，主要是宫女和沐浴者。后来，我在工作室中搭建出舞台，画了越来越多在这个场景里摆造型的模特，于是我决定在这个方向上更深化一些，把她们呈现为在表演结束后休息的舞者。此外，我也很喜欢他们是艺术家的这个想法，因为我喜欢在作品中展现艺术元素。

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法拉·阿塔斯：混沌世界中的  
女性力量

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法拉·阿塔斯《法拉·阿塔斯》展览现场，第戎Le Consortium艺术中心，法国，2019年11月29日-2020年3月1日

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摄影：Rebecca Fanuele

**Q:** 你的画作中经常会出现有天花板和地面的室内空间。为什么你对室内空间——特别是舞台——如此着迷？

**A:** 大约在十年前，我在安杰利科 (Fra Angelico) 的《受胎告知》(Annunciation) 前获得了某种启示。我发现如果你在一幅画中划出一个特定的空间，你就可以让任何事情在其中发生。能度量的空间是用来迎接奇迹的。年复一年，我的空间演变成了舞台，用帘幕代替了天花板。我最近想明白

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了,这其实是因为我在质疑“表现”本身。在我最近的画作中,连艺术家工作室都成了搭建好的舞台!

**Q: 你是如何构思一幅作品的?**

**A:** 就像前面所说的那样,我总是从创建一个特定的空间开始。在最近的创作中,这些空间是舞台,而帘幕则决定了画面的构图。然后我会添上人物,最后则是装饰元素,如橘子、画框等,它们就像最终的标点符号。



法拉·阿塔斯工作室内景  
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**Q: 你如何判断一幅画作已经完成了?**

**A:** 这是物理性的一种感受。就像分娩一样,当我感到如释重负和自由时,画作就完成了。

**Q: 具象和抽象元素在你的画作中并存。你如何理解这两者之间的关联?**

**A:** 我是一个使用抽象绘画语言的具象画家。这种对于具象与抽象的二分法是我绘画实践中的一个重要组成部分。这也是我想要继续保持,甚至强调的。

**Q: 可以和我们分享下你接下来的项目吗?**

**A:** 我正在准备九月在巴黎毕加索博物馆举办的个展。