

simone fattal
demeter and dionysus
september 26 - november 16, 2019

kaufmann repetto is pleased to present *Demeter and Dionysus*, the third solo exhibition by Simone Fattal with the gallery.

The need to act on matter is a behavioral trait shared by man and the tiny squid that produces corals, along with the sea and its incessant movement, raging against the face of the cliff as it erodes.

In the glistening Mediterranean, where for millennia "we have lived like ants or frogs around a pond", the friction between the passing ships sailing across its waves, and the crisscross of routes and exchanges have led to some of the earliest spikes in temperature, the first encrustations due to human activities - Anthropocene.

The historical and geographical basin from which Simone Fattal's work spreads out is this: a place which by virtue of its early civilization developed awareness of the inventive and nourishing power of fragments of the past, of the—partially liberating—destiny of every historical narrative, becoming ruin.

After training in philosophy between Beirut and Paris, Simone Fattal decided to to abandon her work as a painter in 1979, in the wake of the growing political tensions in Lebanon. She eventually finds shelter in California, where in 1982 she founded The Post-Apollo Press (a name inspired by the adventurous spirit ushered in by the Apollo space program), publishing and distributing experimental titles of prose and poetry by authors such as Etel Adnan, Marguerite Duras, Jalal Toufic, Barbara Guest, Lyn Hejinian, and Leslie Scalapino.

In 1988, she returned to the artistic practice, focusing this time on sculpture of a figurative nature, yet like her painterly practice, a figuration tending towards abstraction. It is during this time that she creates a body of work drawing on figures featured throughout the history of the Mediterranean: a cosmogony of standing bodies and resistant architectures.

In her first sculpture *Torso Found in Today's Downtown Beirut*, 1988, the repositioning of a "shred" of bombed Lebanese landscape, here sculpted in alabaster, becomes a place where the history of an entire geographical area and the splendor of a virile torso collapse: the estheticizing result of a persistent crafting of the body/matter.

In this exhibition, the various temporal and geographic scales of Fattal's work collapse: the paintings from the '70s made in Beirut are presented in a juxtaposition alongside the results of recent sculptural research carried out through 2019 in the studios of the Fondation Artigas in Barcelona—a place rich with the modernist and industrial history of one of the capitals of the Mediterranean—of the same substrate that nourished the works of several of the key figures of European modernism, like Mirò and Picasso.

Simone Fattal was born in Damascus, Syria and grew up in Lebanon.

Her work is part of the exhibition *Luogo e Segni*, curated by Martin Bethenod and Mouna Mekouar, at Punta della Dogana—Fondation Pinault, Venice. In 2019 MoMA PS1 dedicated to her *Works and Days*, a monographic exhibition curated by Ruba Katrib and Josephine Graf; in the same year she participated to exhibitions held at Mudam Luxembourg - Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean and the Archaeological Museum of Mykonos, Mykonos. In October Fattal will open her upcoming museum exhibition at Lille métropole Musée d'Art Moderne.