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Shahnaz Aghayeva

b. 1984, Azerbaijan

"I want my art to question and disrupt the limited perception of women's lives and identities, revealing the hidden dimensions of femininity that are rarely seen or understood".

Shahnaz Aghayeva is an artist who divides her time between Baku and Bodrum, and her work pulses with an intense, visceral energy that defies easy categorization. Self-taught and fearless in her approach, Shahnaz explores complex themes surrounding female identity through a range of mediums - metal, linoleum, wood, glass, and cardboard - always challenging herself to find new forms and processes. Her art is grounded in a raw, subterranean power, a reflection of her commitment to revealing the often-unspoken realities of women's experiences.

Shahnaz's work is deeply personal and politically charged, questioning the depiction of women in societies where perception is often dominated by the male gaze. For Shahnaz, being a woman artist means confronting the constraints placed on women's identities, especially in Eastern cultures. She believes that the reality of women's lives - their shared influences, inherited wounds, and complex relationships - is largely unseen and misunderstood by men. Through her art, she aims to give voice to these hidden narratives, addressing the aspects of female identity that only women recognize and challenging societal expectations.

Her pieces often depict women exclusively, utilizing recurring symbols such as long hair, representing the intimate care women use to organize and protect their lives. Shahnaz's work also draws inspiration from figures like Louise Bourgeois, with stylized forms that balance sensuality and defiance. Between abstraction and figuration, her images of nude female figures manipulate scale and perspective, reflecting a dynamic interplay between women's changing roles, identity, and sexual freedom as society's view of gender evolves.

In challenging conventional perspectives, Shahnaz's work seeks to redefine femininity, inviting viewers to engage with the deeper complexities of gender and female empowerment.

FORA

Through her art, she hopes to influence how future generations perceive women, pushing beyond traditional aesthetics to create a space where women's voices and experiences shape the narrative.

Shahnaz Aghayeva's works have been showcased in several prominent museum exhibitions. In 2018, her art was featured at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. The following year, in 2019, her work was part of the "From Waste to Art" exhibition at the Gala Museum Complex in Azerbaijan. In 2022, Shahnaz exhibited at both the Istanbul Museum of Graphic Arts (IMOGA) and the İBB Museum of Graphic Arts, further solidifying her presence in the international art scene.

EDUCATION

- 2023 - *ongoing* MA degree at Sitgi Kochman University
- 2017 - 2018 Studio Practices at YARAT Contemporary Art Space
- 2008 - 2010 MA degree at Azerbaijan State Art Academy
- 2002 - 2006 BA degree at Azerbaijan State Art Academy

Solo Exhibitions

- 2018 "Essence" / ROOM, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2022 "Sublimation" / Gallery Kambur, Istanbul, Turkiye

Group Exhibitions

- 2022 Struga International Art Exhibition, Struga, Macedonia
- 2023 "20th-21st Century Azerbaijani Painting" Museum, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2022 "Haller Hayaller" / Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkiye
- 2022 "LUSTRUM" / Kun Art Space, Adana, Turkiye

FORA

- 2022 "Make Yourself at Home" / Ta(r)dino 6 Gallery, Baku Azerbaijan
- 2022 UN x Norway organized Gender Equality Exhibition, Museum of Modern Art, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2022 SALOON Dresden x Məclisi-Üns. Residency exhibition in Objektkleina, Dresden, Germany
- 2022 NOT HUMAN ART WEEK, Queer Runaways, Yugen Collective, Aachen, Germany
- 2022 Sebök Margit Gallery, Berekfürdő, Hungary
- 2022 Emart Art Hub & McArtist Group exhibition
- 2022 "Edition No.1 " / Gallery 11.17, International printmaking group exhibition, Istanbul, Turkiye, Exhibit with Damien Hirst and Salvador Dali
- 2021 Fulart Sanat group exhibition of "Yeni nesil sanat" young artists, Istanbul, Turkiye
- 2021 "Open the Floodgates" / McArtist & Kiraathane Project, Ayvalik, Kuchukkoy, Turkiye
- 2021 "Changing World, Changing People" / Rotary Young Artists Selection, Izmir, Turkiye
- 2021 McArtist Art Incubation Center, Istanbul, Turkiye
- 2020 "Stores from isolation" / Sapar Contemporary Art Space and Ta(r)dino 6, New York, USA
- 2019 "Chants d'amour" / Galerie Dix9 Hélène Lacharmoise, Paris, France
- 2019 Collaboration with Zadié Xa's solo exhibition child of Magohalmi and the echoes of creation, YARAT, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2019 Artisterium 12, Kutaisi, Tbilisi, Georgia
- 2018 VR Project with PHOBIA VR and YARAT, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2018 "Think That Everything That Exists, Does Not Exist" / Yay Gallery Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2018 ARTIM, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2017 "ZERO" / ARTIM, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2017 "Imaginary foreigner" / ARTIM, Baku, Azerbaijan

FORA

2017 "Who cares what" / ARTIM, Baku, Azerbaijan

2017 ARTIM exhibition space, Baku, Azerbaijan

Art Fairs, Biennales and Festivals

2023 8th International Art symposium Struga'23, Macedonia

2022 Vernissage "Le Boudoir" Galerie Dix9 H el ene Lacharmoise, Paris, France

2022 Contemporary Istanbul, Galerie Dix9 H el ene Lacharmoise, Tersane-Istanbul, Turkiye

2021 International Bilkent Sanat Festival, Ankara, Turkiye

2021 Art contact Istanbul International Art Fair, Istanbul Turkiye

2020 International Virtual Engraves Print making Biennale, Istanbul, Turkiye

2019 Baku International Contemporary Art Biennale, Baku, Azerbaijan

2019 "From Waste to Art" International Art Festival, Gala Museum Complex, Gala, Azerbaijan

2019 The 7th International Print Biennial China, China Printmaking Museum, Guanlan, China

2019 International Print Festival, MoMa Tbilisi, Georgia

2018 Osten Biennale, Skopje, Macedonia

2018 International Print Festival, Batumi Contemporary Art Space, Kirmeleshvili, Georgia

2018 International Biennial Print Exhibit ROC, Taiwan

Artist-in-residency Programs

2018 AqTusheti Art Residency, Megalo, Georgia

2022 Berekfurdo Artist Colony, Hungary

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2022 Kultur aktiv e. V. X Saloon Dresden x Ta(r)dino 6. group Məclisi Üns. Dresden, Germany

2023 Art Quarter, Budapest, Hungary

Museums and Collections

Housed within private collections.