

## ***Saturns Necklace - Margarida Mendes***

We are surrounded by transient beings. They are gatekeepers to other dimensions, shapeshifting in multiple formations. Their bodies are resonant vessels allured by the cosmos oscillatory vibrations. They are travellers, messengers. In a rhythmic symbiosis with their surroundings, their bodies operate as transmitters and receivers. From their glowing metamorphic skin, they emit patterns of light, they are transducers of energy.

These multidimensional voyagers have imprinted in the strata of their garments visual scores for vibratory sensations. They are both rhythm, path and flow. Molecular proofs of minerological influx, reverberations of parallel temporal dimensions. Like coral reefs, their skin layers multiply rhizomatically as we dare to change the angle of our vision. As a result, we can not witness them as single body, but instead, as intergalactic fountains, whose stream, sprouts under the urgency of a sonic beat.

Laleh Khorramians kimonos are stencilled long habits presented on stands. In the absence of a physical body, they propel us to retro-futuristic temporal dimensions, suggesting to the visitor the presence of an ancestral arcanum, or a primordial archetype from a syncretic cult of uncertain origin. They are cinematic just as much as they remind us of industrial and military-imagined wear. Introducing us to an intergalactic army in potency, this is a squad of transient beings whose rising owes much to the electromagnetic shamans of the psychedelic 70s and their sonic explorations.

The Kimonos; patterns propose a new visual lexicon that works as a cosmogram with a rhythmic appeal to ascension. By using spray gun paint imprinted through stencils of discarded material found in foundries, the artists builds visual scores structured by color frequencies that treat the body as a speaker, as a vessel for reverberation. The 3D schematics of its pantone suggests the kinetics of multidimensional space, a pact with journeying where bodies become not one but a simulation, a potential orchestra of vibrations. Under the unconscious legacy of Sun Ra, they appeal to the continuous performativity of transcendence, projecting earthly life as a catharsis of flows, synchronism's, and attunements. But they also re-affirm our need to imagine distinct cosmologies and speculate about original myths, and other modalities of being.

These kimonos operate as receptacles for wavelengths of different modes of becoming. Experimentations with textiles and fabrics have been the main mode of expression of Laleh Khorramians daily practice over the past years. The founder of LALOON clothing studio, has been focusing her attention on the way how we can alchemically change our skin, creating mesmerizing pieces of couture that operate as empowerment tools. Her kaleidoscopic patterns evoke the metamorphic accuracy of a chameleon-wizard, whose adaptability reveals a superior intuition for its environment. Mostly appearing as stencilled imprints, the geometric patterns of the kimonos expand through cloud-like vaporized formations, that on the case of Powersuit are intermitted by blown grey ink vertical stripes. Powersuit was made in collaboration with her longstanding friend Mumtazz, Lisbon-based artist who stars in this exhibition as a guest. Laleh Khorramian and Mumtazz were students at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago performance program in 1997 and have since then collaborated regularly on artistic creations. In Powersuit we may trace some of the vestiges of this contamination, where a garment sewn at four hands ends up having equally four sleeves, just as the many arms of the creator emerge in a Shiva-like formation, appealing to reproduction and dissolution.

The essential dimension of feminine sorcery is translucent in the circles of kin that form creative production, and central to the work of both artists whose energetic affinity navigates through the ocean that sets them apart – from Lisbon to New York. These same magnetic waves might be seen in Powersuit, whose surface is transversed by stapled metallic lines, where our gaze can endlessly circulate in an hypnotic voyage. On top, a white dotted pattern of the lymphatic system is imprinted with reflective ink, reminding us of the physical bodies below. The conducting properties of this suit may refer to the vital condition of interconnectedness of our bodies, that as in the case of the kimonos, we can imagine as a continuum of pounding signals projecting in the vast immensity of the universe. This consciousness for the magnetic, or circulatory properties of reality comes in the sequence of the artists refined comprehension for the elemental compounds of life, which is present on the animation films that both have in the past developed.

In the case of Laleh Khorramian, animation has been a central vehicle for creation and a means of expression where she can conjunct various aesthetic languages. Over the years, the artist has developed a solid body of work in video animations, that explores the stop-motion technique as a way of allowing movement to her enriched collages. *Water Panics in the Sea*, and *I without end* are great examples of this elemental knowledge applied to animation. In these movies, the artist was trying to give rise properties of both water and fire as

conducting forces behind the universal course, while propelling her visual imaginary further by giving a kinetic dimension to the textured landscapes of her meticulous collages. In *Water Panics in the Sea* we navigate through the distorted topographies of outer-world landscapes, where the phantoms of colonialism and isolation are haunted by submerged creatures and the incessant flow of oceanic tides. We drift through the vastness of red skies while we are sawyed by the torments of water streams that erupt through the screen in an endless flux of bliss.

In these animation films we can identify many similar painting techniques that are also applied to the graphic arts that have been structuring the artists practice all along. The monotype is a reoccurring trademark of her own, that we can identify here in the series *Guardians*. Fluid landscapes of gestural imprint have inscribed in them both the microcosm and the vastness of the universe open space. Through the intermission of layers of colors and cut up-like collages that resemble machinic organisms, we are projected outwards to alternate worlds and abstracted scenarios, where bodily infrastructures condense in them the overlapped strata of centuries of material histories. Rhythmic patterns cross-dissolve with the depth of paint fields and vaporized clouds. These bodies in pulsing invoke once again the presence of an unknown seer, a space age creature that draws back to an unknown primal place, where outer-worldly creatures flow among Jungian archetypes.

We can also see them emerge in the series *Aliens*, where black figures emerge from a stencilled background with minimal gestures imprinted on it. Here the artist applies also spray gun paint, but this time together with rocks and sand, which gives the work an inviting haptic feel. Staring restlessly at us, these Aliens are also landscapes and abstract remnants from the clothings produced, just as much as they are monsters, cyborgs, or shamans, guiding us through paralleled dimensions.

In the exhibition we can also see three other works by Mumtazz, large scale collages of bodysuits made of gold, stone and wooden figures. Resembling articulated armours, these figures are composed by layers of printed reproductions of sculptures from ancient art history that are glued together. Set into basic yoga and iconic painting positions, the bodysuits mirror the body of the viewer, who can delve in the layers of its collage from near and afar. In them we see a fractal collage of overlapped bodies, that constitute sacral altars and reify moments of communication with the divine. Here, kaleidoscopically, we can meditate and navigate through the breaches of history that is merged, at last, as a sole corpus for the visiting eye.





