

MUSÉE CANTONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS LAUSANNE Babi Badalov. Xenopoetri



2.2 – 28.4.2024

Press kit

Musée cantonal
des Beaux-Arts
Plateforme 10

Place de la Gare 16
1003 Lausanne
Switzerland

Espace Projet
Entrée gratuite
mcba.ch



QUARTIER
DES ARTS
LAUSANNE

Press release

The Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne (MCBA) is pleased to mount the first solo show in Switzerland devoted to the work of the artist Babi Badalov. Born in 1959 in Azerbaijan, the artist grew up at the crossroads of Persian and Azeri cultures then under the heel of the Soviet Union. Today, living and working in Paris with a French passport after a series of exiles that led from Russia to the United States with a stay in the United Kingdom in between, he still cannot shake the feeling of forever being a foreigner.

The artist's visual poetry, simultaneously writing and drawing, explores the poetic and political possibilities of language. Rooted in the experience of displacement and marginality, his work explores the question of communicability. How do we interact with people who don't share the same alphabet, the same set of references? How can we create a common space for relating with others? The result is a prolific body of work strongly influenced by the aesthetics of collage.

Xenopoetri

Dissecting language in its most concrete aspect – letters and syllables – Badalov reinvents a decorative tongue that is as much a battleground as it is a utopia. Drawing plays a central role in the artist's practice. Giving free rein to his pen, Badalov covers pages of his sketchbooks daily, which then serve as a base for the rest of the work to unfold. Some of these sketchbooks are evidence of his graphic research. Others bear witness to his learning to speak and read French. Still others incorporate elements gleaned from the street, often with a political content. Business cards, fragments of election posters, administrative documents, prescriptions, and photo booth pictures offer a kaleidoscopic image of a particular era while also providing humorous commentary on that same period. His drawings often start from existing images; with the line continuing the initial motif to create visual games. Badalov transposes this method to a much larger scale to compose his on-site murals, where he also incorporates paintings done on recycled cloth.

Works exhibited

Through a selection of historic paintings, drawings, collages and sketchbooks, along with a new wall installation especially created for our Espace Projet gallery, the exhibition gives visitors a clear idea of the scope and scale of this artist's practice.

Rarely exhibited, Badalov's paintings from the late 1980s already demonstrate an interest in collage. They reveal a formal vocabulary that mixes references to Russian Constructivism and decorative calligraphy. The titles speak of a process at work in a world that was – in the USSR of 1989 – on the verge of being completely reconfigured. *Européisation, Orientalisation...* What comes to the fore is an off-kilter point of view that observes the world from the periphery, seeking its path from the experience of oppression and rejection. An anarchist, punk and homosexual, as he defines himself, Badalov had to bid farewell to his native country in order to conquer his freedom. Starting in the 2010s, he came up with a different way to embody this view by creating visual

poetry that resists being assigned to any one language in particular while being dominated by the use of *Globish*, a simplified version of English that takes shape in exchanges between non-native speakers and is sometimes called broken English. It is a poetry forged from a broken language in which error is standard, a tongue that is beyond norms, brimming with accents and full of spoken words.

O suor da noite – Babi e Genet [Sweat in the Night – Babi and Genet, vidéo]

In 2022, Portuguese artist Mauro Cerqueira (*1982) filmed Badalov following in Jean Genet's footsteps in Morocco. A poet of freedom and foreign lands, a delinquent, a man with no ties, no home, no country, Genet is a figure of inspiration and admiration. As a teenager, he longed to leave France. So began a nomadic life drawn by the magnetic pole of the Mediterranean. The camera records the trip that takes Cerqueira and Badalov from Tangiers to Larache, where Genet is buried, while stopping at the Gare du Nord and room 205 of Jack's Hotel in Paris, where the writer died in 1986. Recording moments from rural life, *O suor da noite – Babi e Genet* [Sweat in the Night – Babi and Genet] is punctuated by Badalov's reading of *The Man Condemned to Death*, a long poem written by Genet in 1942 while he was incarcerated at Fresnes Prison near Paris. In the French of a foreigner and with his singular pronunciation, Badalov pays tribute to Genet's language. By looking at these parallel lives made of wandering, marginality, and exploration of language, Cerqueira brings together two artists who have made poetry a homeland beyond borders.

Lausanne, Januar 2024

Biography

Babakhan Badalov, known as Babi Badalov, was born in 1959 in Lerik, Azerbaijan. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Baku from 1974 to 1978.

Since the late 1990s, his work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris (2022); the New Museum of Modern Art, Saint Petersburg (2018); the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (2018); the MUSAC, León, Spain (2017); the Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden (2016); the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2016); Kunstraum, Munich (2015); and Karvasla in Tbilisi (2004).

Babi Badalov also took part in the Gwangju Biennial, South Korea (2016); the Jakarta Biennial, Indonesia (2013); Manifesta 8, Murcia, Spain (2011) and the first Thessaloniki Biennial, Greece (2007). In Switzerland his work has been shown in group exhibitions at the Shedhalle, Zurich (2018); the Kunstmuseum, Bern (2011) and the Manoir de la ville de Martigny (1993).

Works

Works of the artist in the collection of major institutions

Babi Badalov's work is found in the collections of a number of important institutions, such as the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg.

To see

To see in Paris

In parallel, the Jérôme Poggi Gallery will present in Paris, from February 9 to March 9, 2024, a solo exhibition of Babi Badalov.

Curator of the exhibition

Pierre-Henri Foulon, curator of contemporary art, MCBA

Publication

Pierre-Henri Foulon (ed.), *Babi Badalov. Xenopoetri*, with texts by Pierre-Henri Foulon and Julie Abbou (Fr./Eng.), 52 p., 23 ill., Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne, 2024

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CHF 8.–

at the MCBA Book- and Giftshop:

shop.mcba@plateforme10.ch

Babi Badalov.
Xenopoetri

MUSÉE CANTONAL
DES BEAUX-ARTS
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Public engagement – Public outreach services

Reservation required for all events

→ www.mcba.ch

Guided tours for the Amis·e·s du MCBA (in French):

Thursday 22 February, 6:00pm

Tuesday 19 March, 12:30pm

With Pierre-Henri Foulon

Guided tours (in French):

Thursday 14 March, 6:30pm

Thursday 4 April, 6:30pm

With Eleonora Del Duca, assistant curator

Workshop with Babi Badalov – 19 and 20 March 2024

Babi Badalov is offering a writing and drawing workshop open to everyone. During this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to explore the graphic and poetic possibilities of language. There will be chances to write, draw, meet others, exchange ideas, or even listen to music. No experience in drawing or writing is necessary, and the ability to write in a foreign language is an asset!

The workshop takes place over two days, Tuesday, 19 March, and Wednesday, 20 March from 10am to 4pm. Information and registration:

→ mcba.ch/agenda

Press images

For download → mcba.ch/presse

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Portrait of Babi Badalov in Lausanne
2024
Photo: MCBA, Jonas Hänggi



Antipoem, 02/2021
Painting on fabric, 197 x 195 cm
Courtoisie Galerie Poggi, Paris
© Babi Badalov



Portrait of Babi Badalov in Lausanne
2024
Photo: MCBA, Jonas Hänggi

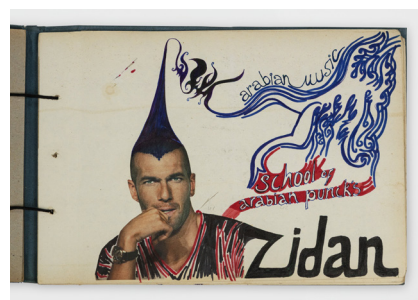


Revol You See On, 11/2022
Painting on fabric, 103 x 67 cm
Courtoisie Galerie Poggi, Paris
© Babi Badalov

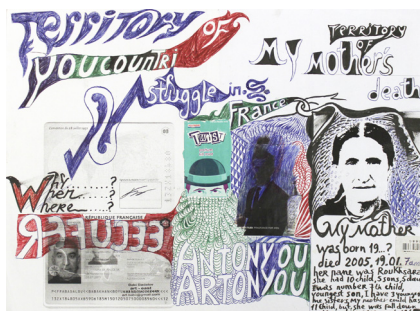
Press images



Sketchbook, 2021
Ballpoint pen on paper, 23,5 x 17 cm
Artist's collection
© Babi Badalov
Photo: Tanguy Beurdeley



Sketchbook, 2009
Collage, ink and felt pen on paper, 24,5 x 34,5 cm
Artist's collection
© Babi Badalov
Photo: Tanguy Beurdeley



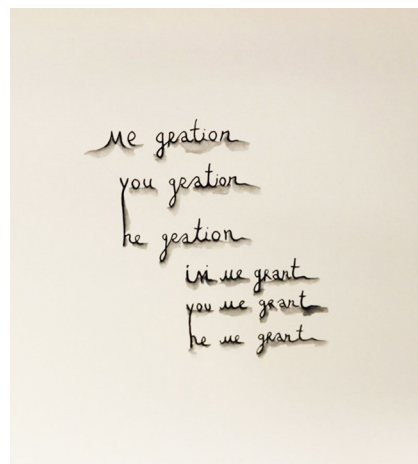
Territory of my Mother's Death, 2014
Collage and drawing on paper, 29,5 x 41 cm
Courtoisie Galerie Poggi, Paris
© Babi Badalov



Oriental Gallantry-Haberdasheries, 1989
Oil on furnishing fabric, 111 x 172,4 cm
Collection Arina Kownner
© Babi Badalov
Photo: MCBA, Jonas Hänggi



European Gallantry-Haberdasheries, 1989
Oil on furnishing fabric, 120,2 x 159,9 cm
Collection Arina Kownner
© Babi Badalov
Photo: MCBA, Jonas Hänggi



Migration, 2015
Ink on paper, 35 x 30,5 cm
Courtoisie Galerie Poggi, Paris
© Babi Badalov

Views of the exhibition



Captions to be reproduced:
View of the exhibition *Babi Badalov. Xenopoetri* at the
Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne, 2024
Photo: MCBA, Etienne Malapert

Views of the exhibition



Captions to be reproduced:
View of the exhibition *Babi Badalov. Xenopoetri* at the
Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne, 2024
Photo: MCBA, Jonas Hänggi

Informations and contact

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All our press releases and press kits are available under:
→ mcba.ch/presse/

Press conference:
Thursday, 1st February at 10 am in presence of the artist or by appointment
→ presse.mcba@plateforme10.ch

Hours:
Tuesday-Sunday: 10 am – 6 pm
Thursday: 10 am – 8 pm
Monday: closed
Easter Monday: 10 am – 6 pm

Admission:
Free
Tickets online → mcba.ch/billetterie

Access:
SBB Lausanne train station, 3 minutes on foot
Bus: 1, 3, 20, 21, 60, Gare stop
Bus: 6, Cecil stop
Metro: m2, Gare stop
Car: Montbenon parking, Reduced fee

Further information:
Access, hours → www.mcba.ch

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