

Tarek Lakhrissi

BLISS

10.2.–20.5.2024

Curator:
Dr. Michael Birchall

Curatorial Assistant:
Louisa Behr

In his solo exhibition *BLISS*, Tarek Lakhrissi invites the audience on a journey: in a stage-like setting, visitors become protagonists in search of dreamy moments in the midst of chaos. Over the course of three acts, they encounter installations, film works and sculptures.

The French poet and artist has a particular interest in conversations about race, class and gender. He creates alluring poems and installations aiming to transform traditional narratives. He often uses autofiction – the interfusion of a biographical report with fictional elements – as a tool. Therefore, Lakhrissi simultaneously offers audiences opportunities for identification through subtle hints to his own experience and tells an imagined story through a myriad of layers.

Lakhrissi's queer and BIPOC first-person perspective is transferable to the daily experience of minorities within a society dominated by a white, cisgender and heterosexual majority. *BLISS* takes the reflective state of mind of melancholy as a starting point to explore themes such as self-discovery, one's own desire and the social exclusion of marginalized groups.

In the room *pending*, Act I, a large glass pendulum swings in circles in a hypnotizing way, its constant oscillation referring to circular time. Similar to the white rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*, it symbolizes entry into a wondrous world, and the suspension of normative temporal and spatial structures, and thus social conventions like marriage and the nuclear family. The pendulum becomes the guiding force, prompting visitors to follow its rhythm and choose to move to the right or the left in the exhibition.

In Act II, *dancing in a limbo*, the circular arena-like space suggests the expression «running in circles». At the centre of Act II is the film *Bright Heart* (2023), which follows a young man's fairy-tale journey of self-discovery. Jahid, the protagonist, flees from a hopeless situation and finds refuge in an eerily quiet museum. There he encounters extraordinary events and fabulous creatures. They teach him about exclusion, beauty, self-confidence, everyday dangers and love. He is overcoming his internalized fears. The film's finale shows Jahid in an intimate kiss with his lover, a former half-dinosaur half-human figure. Both are surrendering to queer desire.

In the final part, Act III, *the monster's resolution*, monstrous sculptures are revealed in an immersive landscape. Merging fiction and autobiography in a journey of self-discovery, the stage is set for the climax, complete with fake nails, stars, moons, hearts and devils. In this way, the artist expresses the intricate interplay between light and darkness, bliss and melancholy.

Info / Agenda:



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PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS (EN, GER)

Public tours of the current exhibitions in the museum take place at regular intervals on *Saturdays at 3 pm and Thursdays at 6.30 pm*. The guided tours last approximately one hour and offer an in-depth insight into the themes and backgrounds of the exhibitions. *The individual dates are published online on the website.*

On *Thursday, March 7 and Saturday, April 6*, the public tours will be accompanied by *sign language translation*.

The audio-descriptive tour in German on *Thursday, March 21 from 6 pm* offers people with visual impairments the opportunity to get to know various works of art in the exhibition.

ARTIST CONVERSATION WITH TAREK LAKHRISSI (EN)

Thursday, March 14 from 6.30 pm

In a conversation between the artist Tarek Lakhrissi and the curator of the exhibition Michael Birchall, questions about the exhibition will be raised and Tarek Lakhrissi's art will be explored in greater depth.

READING & LISTENING SESSION (EN)

Thursday, May 16 at 6.30 pm

Poet and artist Tarek Lakhrissi will be giving a poetic reading of his own texts in the museum. The performance will be accompanied by music.

BLISSFUL READINGS – READING CIRCLE FOR THE EXHIBITION BLISS (EN)

Tarek Lakhrissi's artistic practice is always based on text, poetry and language. The exhibition is therefore accompanied by a regular reading circle. The reading will be from Kai Cheng Thom's *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir* (2016). Much like in Lakhrissi's exhibition, the goal of the protagonist in Kai Cheng Thom's novel is neither adaptation nor rejection – rather, it is to create her own world. After reading aloud to each other, there will be time to discuss the interweaving of fiction and reality. The reading circle meets six times (Tuesday and Saturday) in the evening.

ART FRIDAY

Once a month on Fridays, people with and without refugee experience meet in the GZ Wipkingen meeting room at Bundesasylzentrum (BAZ) to create together and have an inspiring exchange. The focus is on encounters and creativity. We paint, draw, collage or work with clay and enjoy our work together.

All events are free of charge, but registration is required for some. Further information will be published at on www.migrosmuseum.ch and in our newsletter. We look forward to your visit!