

Villa Arson is holding four individual exhibitions from April 19 to June 15, 2003: Simon Starling, Scottish artist, Saâdane Afif, formerly artist-in-residence at the Villa Arson, and Stéphane Albert and Karim Ghelloussi, former students at the art school.

Opening on April 18, 2003 at 6 pm.

SAÂDANE AFIF was born in 1970.

He lives and works in Glasgow and was artist-in-residence at the Villa Arson in 2001.

Between the “watchdog” and the “random tourist”, Saâdane Afif essentially strives to produce shifts, all manner of shifts—shifts of meaning, form and responsibility, and at times shifts of flow (*Mise à flot/Floating*, 2001 and *Courant d’air/Draught*, 2001). In the great jumble sale of contemporary art, Saâdane’s little undertaking only proposes one-off items and ends of lines, attempting in every exhibition to thoroughly reinvent, from top to toe, the methods of existence of his own work, and reinitialize its parameters. Counters at zero. His visual devices juggle with clichés and conventions (of the genre? Rather, of all genres...), turning them and overturning them, using them, throwing them out and starting all over again somewhere else. New balls. As a formula for *bringing things together*, the compilation often recurs in Saâdane Afif’s work: compilations of slogans and images (*Poetic Lambda*, 2001), compilations of names (*Special Dedication*, 1998); similarly the many meanings and the impreciseness of identity (he doesn’t hesitate to order *precise* works from other artists), which lend a broad scope to an art that is hectic and endlessly pivoting upon itself, like a quantum cat methodically chasing the many different coincidences of its own tail.

STÉPHANE ALBERT was born in 1971.

He was formerly a student at the École Nationale Supérieure d’Art de la Villa Arson, and now lives and works in Paris.

Pallets, trays, chairs, trolleys, builders’ floats, benches, breezeblocks... Stéphane Albert reproduces these rudimentary things, obscure walk-on characters in the compartment of ordinariness, which we don’t often look at (they all look alike), on a 1:1 scale, using salvaged wood, quite faithfully, but without any showiness, within the boundaries dictated by the dexterity of his own hands. He subsequently implements them and presents them in other constructions and installations which are frequently minimalist, and rarely chatty; a wall, or a pile... For Stéphane Albert’s objects only come by their full meaning when they are confronted with one another, displaying their differences with the archetype. We get a better grasp of what a Stéphane Albert chair is when we have two of them before our eyes; neither is the original, neither is the copy, and yet... In tandem, Albert’s ironical-cum-utilitarian doggedness finds its most synthetic expression in the use he makes of literature. In it, he flushes out the occurrences of his patronymic, recopies (format, typography, nothing is missing) these pages, and puts them together like a blurred, off-centre biography in the making.

KARIM GHELLOUSSI was born in 1977.

He was formerly a student at the École Nationale Supérieure d’Art de la Villa Arson, and now lives and works in Paris.

By means of installations combining sculptures, precarious arrangements, manufactured things, altered pieces of pottery, appropriations, collages and drawings, and by the use of “lesser art objects [coming] from a non-western horizon”, Karim Ghelloussi casts an out-of-tune and ironical eye on exoticism, and its clichés, as well as on de-synchronizations and misunderstandings of every kind in a more general way. The state of “satisfactory unfinishedness” in which he keeps most of his works stops them from ever sinking into kitsch (that ocean of the *overly* finished), and this is despite the use and recycling of various ornaments, which he makes much—and much use—of. The many nooks and crannies, the bedside tables, the small pieces of furniture and the “cute” animals which fill Karim Ghelloussi’s installations are forever taking his works to the brink of a sort of almost “domesticated” and falsely familiar sculpture.

SIMON STARLING was born in 1967.

He lives and works in Glasgow and Berlin.

Simon Starling is a meticulous and well-organized dilettante, a sort of cultural tourist who passes through, recycles and splices the scattered determinations of modernism (in design and architecture, in particular). He is fond of shifts and incongruous comparisons, and, above all, he has a soft spot for detours to attain his ends. Building a glider and getting it to fly (*The Hanging Garden*, 1998), cooking an egg (*Burn-Time*, 2000), and cooking fish (*Blue Boat Black*, 1997) all become complex, tortuous and even adventurous undertakings for Starling. Simon Starling focuses on re-doing, under new restrictions, what others have already managed to do before him, often on an industrial basis. Every stage of every production process is dismantled, analysed and reproduced, usually *by hand*. Sometimes the works emerge from an unexpected hybridization, whereby the materials undergo nothing less than a *metamorphosis*. In so doing, for the Bern Kunsthalle, he literally transformed an Eames chair into a Martin Sausalito bicycle, and vice versa (*Work, Made-ready*, 1997). By eradicating the object from ways of seeing and uses which, in the end, lend it the appearance of a nature, Simon Starling reintroduces the object’s possibilities of a poetic deviation. At the Villa Arson he will present a project devised specifically around a Le Corbusier building at La Sainte Baume. The now dilapidated structure was originally intended to be part of a huge housing development called “La Cité permanente”.

These projects received support from the Délégations aux Arts Plastiques, the Drac Paca (Ministère de la Culture), the Conseil Général des Alpes-Maritimes, the Conseil Régional Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur and the Ville de Nice.

Exhibition Curator: Laurence Gateau, Director of the National Contemporary Art Center

Exhibition and editorial assistant: Maxime Matray

Manager: Patrick Aubouin

Assistant: Eric Grandbarbe

Secretary: Anne Ginesy

Outreach: Christelle Alin, Julien Bouillon

Teacher seconded by the local education authority: Jean-Guy Cuomo
Press and publicity: Camille Courtinat 06 64 53 68 52

VILLA ARSON NICE

20 avenue Stephen Liégeois F-06105 Nice cedex 2 www.villa-arson.org

phone 04 92 07 73 73 fax 04 93 84 41 55

opening hours : 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. closed on tuesdays
Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication

19/04 – 15/06/2003
SIMON STARLING
KARIM GHELLOUSSI
STÉPHANE ALBERT
SAÂDANE AFIF