

**Latifa Echakhch &  
Zineb Sedira  
For a Brief Moment [...]  
Several Times  
3.6.—17.7.2022**

At some point in Zineb Sedira's film, which is being shown at the French Pavilion in Venice, Latifa Echakhch appears: it is only a brief scene, in which she slowly turns toward the viewer with her hair down, wrapped in ornate silks, wearing earphones. You might think that on this occasion—this year's Venice Biennale, where Zineb Sedira is representing France, and Latifa Echakhch is representing Switzerland—it made sense for Sedira to invite a number of her artist friends to participate. However, this gesture of inviting, working with, and including friends and colleagues has long been part of Zineb Sedira's artistic strategy. The French-born artist Sedira, whose Algerian parents emigrated to France, now lives mostly in London and Paris, frequently visits film archives in different places and countries. Her greatest interest: sequences of found footage from films made during the 1960s, a period of great political importance for Algeria—the period in which the country fought for its independence, received it in 1962, and was seen as a catalyst for other liberation movements in Africa and South America. At the same time, the era between the 1960s and the 1980s was also when the Algerian film industry was able to flourish extraordinarily in an anti-colonial environment—and with it the country's creativity in general.

Zineb Sedira's personal story is inscribed in this narrative of a country and in the collective memory of its people, which Sedira also traces with an astonishing fund of publications, LPs, postcards, and the most diverse objects. In the film's *mise-en-scène*, which can be seen in the large display at Kunsthau Baselland, the artist combines fragmentary excerpts from various 16 mm film contributions originating from the military context of Algeria in the 1960s. She edits together the extracts, which are often difficult to interpret and reminiscent of experimental film sequences, to form a new narrative. In this short yet powerful sequence of images, the loss of history and its fragmentary nature is rendered tangible, as is the constant struggle of people like Sedira to remember it, together with a belief in the power of collective experience, sharing, and exchange through the mediation of art. That is why the inclusion of collective and personal histories has been the most important driver of Zineb Sedira's work from the very beginning, which incorporates cinema settings, films, large-scale

spatial installations, and assemblages of objects predominantly from the 1960s and at the same time narrating liberation from postcolonialism and the aftermath of colonialism. The way Sedira approaches her audience is also evident in her exhibition at Kunsthau Baselland: a grand gesture of invitation, like a living room, designed for visitors to spend a while there, settle down, look, marvel, discover, and remember themselves. Sedira's artistic history lesson is a poetic one, one that can shift from being collective or even seemingly distant to something personal. And that is precisely why it is able to become significant for each viewer.

Latifa Echakhch's work now inscribes itself into this display order as both a dialogue and catalyst; it almost forms the foundation of the holistic experience of the space and its content. Born in Morocco, Echakhch has been living and working in Vevey and Martigny (CH) for years and weaves together different media such as painting, sculpture, installation, music, and sound to create a work of fractures, omissions, imperfections, all that is irretrievable, but that does not lose sight of the poetic or the forward-looking.

Like a personal cartography, the visitor walks across the carpet-like works laid out on the floor. On them, various objects such as LPs, shoes, shirts, glasses, and empty cigarette packets, sports equipment, and concert admission ribbons mostly covered with black ink, not unlike contemporary still lifes. The circular apertures, which stand out against the black surface, seem to briefly illuminate the scene—as if a spotlight were directed at it and let all that seems to disappear in the dark become present for once with all its power. They are, according to the artist, memories of a month of a love story, much that has happened in these weeks and can be remembered. A memory that individual scenes become clearer and clearer, edited and remix, others again leaves in the dark. Latifa Echakhch frequently works from a starting point of darkness and blackness, allowing parts of the work to burn down or up—like in her current contribution in Venice—and visitors to step into the darkness. In the light, what has been experienced can resonate, we can see and trace fragments of what has gone before—and yet it is primarily the power of the imagination that Echakhch activates and to which she gives the last word. In the same way, the work *Several Times* at Kunsthau Baselland is more like fragments of a narrative—of a time spent together, of music heard, of drinks enjoyed together. Much is inexorably lost: moments, her own history. It is these fragments that can become Echakhch's personal narrative as an artist—or as the person laying this trail—but also her own narration of her work.

But neither Zineb Sedira nor Latifa Echakhch remain stuck in the melancholy moment of remembering. Rather, looking back enables them to believe in the power of what is possible through imagination, creativity and lived togetherness—with all kinds of cultural differences, but most importantly, with all kinds of cultural, linguistic, and political diversity. The unique work installation by Sedira and Echakhch at Kunsthhaus Baselland tells of this togetherness, this chance to be in dialogue with each other and to develop a common language from it despite many differences with the possibilities of art.

Thus, the dense trail of personal and collective memories is first and foremost an open, almost tender invitation to the visitors to let themselves in, to settle down, marvel, imagine, and remember together—the presence and the absence of people, situations, times, (film) clips, songs, texts, smells, images. A journey through spaces and times, paused in a moment that is open for visitors to go through. A multilayered space of experiences that succeeds in sensitizing our perception to fundamental themes of identity and belonging as well as individual and collective memory, and which can also give us the decisive impetus to act and to shape tomorrow.

(Text by Ines Goldbach)

## **Art Basel Conversations: Zineb Sedira & Latifa Echakhch**

Wednesday, 15 June, 3pm

Location: Messe Basel

Premiere Artist Talk: Zineb Sedira and  
Latifa Echakhch

Moderation: Zoé Whiteley, Director  
Chisenhale Gallery

(in English)

Free admission

Supported by the Institut Français and Ambassade de France en Suisse et au Liechtenstein and two supporters who wish to remain anonymous.

Zineb Sedira is represented by kamel mennour, Paris  
Latifa Echakhch is represented by Dvir Gallery, Pace  
Gallery, kamel mennour, kaufmann repetto

More events at [kunsthausbaselland.ch](http://kunsthausbaselland.ch)

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Opening hours  
Tuesday to Sunday  
11 am – 5 pm

Extended opening hours  
during Art Basel  
13.–19.6.2022

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri-Sun, 10-6 pm  
Wed 2-8 pm

Approx. 15 minutes from  
Basel SBB main station or  
Basel Bad. Bahnhof

Many thanks to the Kunsthhaus  
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remain anonymous.

