

Press release

Tarik Kiswanson | *Surging*

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Gallery Weekend Berlin

Tarik Kiswanson's third solo exhibition at carlier | gebauer furthers the Swedish-Palestinian artist's recent investigations into life and death, transformation and being. In 2017, Kiswanson's last exhibition at the gallery presented a series of suspended reflective, ever-shifting metal vessels which, by defamiliarizing our perception, also dismembered the illusion of a fixed, finite self.

Surging is attuned to a wider paradigm shift: the loss of grand anthropocentric narratives and the crisis of human singularity. A speculative act of worldbuilding, the exhibition leads into an elsewhere. In the redesigned gallery space, we arrive through a narrow entry in the main room. At first, it is unclear whether this transfixed environment, achromatic as if bloodless, indicates an ongoing catabolic suffocation or the premises of a new birth.

It is, however, not devoid of life. Two ovoid forms, at once enigmatic and weirdly familiar, occupy the surroundings: one is nested inside a doorframe (*Cradle*), another perched above the opposite entrance (*Nest*). While their form evokes the natural world – a chrysalis or a grain – their eerie human-sized scale brings to mind a constructed shelter.

Spanning the artist's multifaceted practice, an ensemble of works from recent series show various states of stasis. Trapped in translucent resin, a candle melts away mid-air (*Respite*) while fleeting, powdery charcoal drawings (*The Window*) display children lingering at the threshold of visibility. X-ray scans of ancient and contemporary garments – overlapping or absent – (*Rising Opacity; Passing*) transform scientific imagery into a poetic multiplicity or a pitch-black void (*Assembled Opacity*), while collages juxtapose ancient etchings of catastrophes around a central ellipsis hovering over human-made history (*Seeds; Traveler*).

Kiswanson's previous works extended the transient experience of a second-generation migrant to the condition of the present-day individual: one increasingly left to navigate a set of tumultuous, global realities. In turn, *Surging* delineates an uncertain yet familiar shared context, one not unlike a waiting room, where beings – their heritage as much as their bodies – are left to adapt and evolve. What is born remains in transit, what takes shapes can only survive afloat.

Text by Ingrid Luquet-Gad.

Tarik Kiswanson's work encompasses sculpture, writing, performance, drawing, sound and video works. His fundamental question is ontological: it is inscribed in philosophical research into Being as being. Notions of rootlessness, regeneration, and renewal are recurring themes in his oeuvre. Born in Halmstad, Sweden in 1986 where his family exiled from Palestine, his artistic practice evinces an engagement with the poetics of métissage: a means of writing and surviving between multiple conditions and contexts. His various bodies of work can be understood as a cosmology of related conceptual families, each exploring variations on themes like refraction, multiplication, disintegration, levitation, hybridity, and polyphony through their own distinct language.

Tarik Kiswanson received his MFA from École National Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Paris (2014) and BFA from Central Saint Martins – University of the Arts London (2010). He has recently presented his work at Centre Pompidou (2019), Ural Biennial (2019), Performa Biennial (2019) Lafayette Anticipations (2018), Fondation Ricard (2018) and the Gwangju Biennial (2018). His retrospective exhibition *Mirrorbody* is currently up at Carré d'Art – Musée d'Art Contemporain accompanied by a monograph published by Distanz. His upcoming solo exhibitions include M HKA Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, Bonniers Konsthall, Hallands Konstmuseum, and MMAG Foundation in Amman.