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IN THE INTERVIEW: FINALIST SHAHAR MARCUS

Art meets everyday life: In his video, Shahar waves as he drives a convertible through Dresden. “Have you heard of Shahar Marcus, the artist?” he asks the passersby who see him. We can see how some of them are forced to think hard. Should they have heard of him?



What is the message of your work “Homecoming Artist (Dresden)”?
Throughout my years of artistic activity, I have been concentrating, emphasizing the unfounded action; one which takes place in a neat and orderly manner, but contains an element that in the 21st century is fundamentally baseless. The use of an absurd element integrated with humor allows me to criticize, to point out social phenomena, to awaken the viewer's thoughts on various issues addressing society and politics.
The work Homecoming Artist (Dresden) is a remix of work Homecoming Artist, which I did a decade ago in Israel. This work, like the previous one, points to the existing bubble in the art world by demonstrating the range, the gap in the artist's feelings which are determined according to the arena in which he operates in; While winning an award in the art world creates a sense of recognition on the part of colleagues, curators and art institutions, this feeling shatters when encountering the real world, that is, the one that does not belong to the art scene. The work also speaks of the current reality in which the general public expresses little or no interest in visual art, let alone if this art is not present in mass media, then even the little audience that was interested does not exist. In other words, the work points to the gap between the desire of the general public to be perceived as cultural and intellectual seekers, while in practice they do not devote their time to consumption of this kind. The work is viable also in the realm outside the art arena and in the artistic discourse, and speaks to the figure of a leader as oppose to the common people - a universal issue of a political nature - leaders as celebrities; surely an elevated figure in the public sphere – therefor I choose the artistic action of a wave.

Why did you perform your artwork in Dresden?
In the video there is the concept of the Victory Round - which deals with the image of the leader, the icon to which the people cheers. The round in which the icon travels across the city, waving to the commoners, a royal or a despotic movement, is certainly an absurd act in the 21st century in democratic Israel and Germany.
Beyond the mere location that each of the works were filmed- Homecoming Artist in my home town of Petah Tikva, Israel with my parents as actors, in Homecoming Artist(Dresden) my parents were replaced by German models, the essential difference lies in choosing the point of departure for the tour. Dresden was chosen because it is a democratic city with a rich and charged past that allows me to shed light and refine the artistic process. The reason of secondary order for choosing specifically Dresden is the prospect of a victory round precisely from the point where the trains left for the concentration camps during World War II. Personally, as an Israeli and a Jew, the possibility of doing my artistic work, to embark on a triumphal tour from this charged historical place, is of tremendous personal importance to me. The combination of the location with fruitful cooperation with a German team is a sign of normalization in my eyes. I would like to emphasize that this is not the reason why I did the work, nor the sole reason why Dresden was chosen, but it did play a part. The main reason, as stated, is the possibility of carrying out the artistic process as I see fit and in a way that

will intrigue, provoke thought, laugh and provide a political dimension.

Which emotions do you want to evoke in the spectator?
I wish to extract from the viewer the whole range of emotions – those that come from using humor, laughter and thought, curiosity and identification, empathy and wondering. I seek to evoke an internal discussion with the viewer amongst himself regarding the place of the citizen vis-à-vis the leader and the government (represented by the leader), the private versus the public, the personal vs. the establishment.
Music plays an important role in producing emotions. In both versions the music is of the Austrian composer Mahler, Mahler's music was banned as "degenerate" during the Nazi era and only later experienced a renaissanc. Mahler who has a bombastic style saturated with glory and splendor. In fact, the more bombastic the music, the more the leader's image is perceived as more refuted and allows me to present the artistic action in a distinct and clear manner.





What has been the highlight of your artistic career so far?
I see the highlight in two ways: the first is of technical character- the location of the exhibition which is the accepted form of measurement by which artistic success and the realization of professional aspirations are measured. Fortunately, my works have been exhibited in prestigious museums around the world, including The Tate Modern in London, The Hermitage in Moscow, The Maxxi in Rome, the MOCA in Hiroshima as well as other dignified venues. The second reason which bares equal importance lies in the aspect of artistic progress and personal development from a professional perspective. The latter has come to a realization during my video work "The Curator", a project which extended over a significant time span and was the first of its kind for me, as it was the first time that I transitioned from the performance media and dabbled in the medium of film. This transition has enabled me to develop capabilities that I use in my work today. Working in a medium that is fundamentally different is the essence of a creative highlight in my eyes.

Why did you choose a performance to express yourself artistically?
Like many things, the selection of performance as my artistic medium was random and accidental, and it was because it was the first medium that connected me to art. I fell in love with the work and the medium and proceeded in the path. Later I realized that I was also good at it. Over the years, I have developed this medium and spread to different yet complimentary areas. I have transformed the performance to the medium of video, print and installation. These always appear as if the stem of my initial performance.

Why did you decide to apply for the BLOOOM Award by WARSTEINER 2017?
What attracted my attention and what I loved about the award was the ability not only to receive a prize but the fact that the award was mainly about career development. It spans over a period of time with a positive trajectory. I can break down the pieces and visualize the ways this award can truly advance my career and help me reach my set out goals; in

essence, that is the real prize. This is essentially different from most of the awards, thus I chose to submit - recognition accompanied by artistic advancement.

Why did you choose this artwork specifically for the application?
Homecoming Artist (Dresden) was chosen as I tend to submit works that have been recently completed. Although I have done two more works since then, I chose the Homecoming Artist (Dresden) because it has universal values and therefore appeals to a wide audience. Consequently, I found it best suited for such an award as Bloom by Warsteiner.