

Zalameh

By Mahdi Baraghithi

January 26 to March 5 - Zawyeh Gallery, Ramallah.

Composed of a survey of Mahdi Baraghithi's early to most recent works, *Zalameh* delves into the notions of the body, home, and the mundane through the manipulation of found images and texts. The exhibited works were produced in Palestine, France, and Lebanon, and range from performance to installation to collage, with a focus on ongoing themes of engaging and deconstructing images of the Arab man found in popular, national, and religious culture. Baraghithi explores the positioning and gendering of the male body through the different frameworks of social and political stereotypes inscribed onto the body, which contour definitions of manhood and acceptable forms of masculinity in society.

Infused with fantastical elements of popular culture, craft, and kitsch, the artist often inserts his own body and recycled images downloaded on social media accounts to carefully perform and

fabricate situations as a way to probe the stereotypes interrogated in these works. The series of collages and immersive installations together become an environment that breaks through the patriarchy and gives an access point to a critical deconstruction of the perception of the male body. Alongside the decorative adorning of bodies and scenarios with florals, lace, and repetition, Baraghithi collects and produces cutouts of local iconography and other faceless subjects, placing them against white backgrounds to produce an effect that is no longer personal yet that empowers these cutouts in their isolation. Here, the exhibition transports us to a maneuvered sphere determined by local popular culture, technical manipulation, and the image imaginary.

Mahdi Baraghithi (born in 1991 in Ramallah, Palestine) is a visual artist who works across a range of media including performance, installation, and collage. He explores and deconstructs the representation of masculinity and the male body in Arab societies, specifically in his own context of Palestine through his use of materials, such as found images and ready-made objects.

Baraghithi received an MFA from ENSA Bourges, France (2018), a BA in contemporary visual art from the International Academy of Art Palestine (2015), and a diploma from the Palestine Film Institute in Ramallah (2010). He has participated in many workshops and residences, including the year-long Home Workspace Program at Ashkal Alwan – The Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts (2015–2016) and has exhibited his work in several group exhibitions, including *Cities Future* (2013), Naples, Italy, and *Cities Exhibition 6 / Lydda – A Garden Disremembered*, Birzeit University Museum, Palestine (2018).

