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# 'Heretic Spaces' by Thameur Mejri at Elmarsa Gallery, Dubai

BY BLOUIN ARTINFO | SEPTEMBER 07, 2017

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Thameur Mejri, Heretic space 4, 2017. Mixed media on canvas, 180 x 140 cm (Courtesy:El Marsa Gallery)

Heavy with political and societal comment on the injustices he has observed in the Middle East and North Africa, Thameur Mejri has created a new body of work for exhibition in Dubai. The Elmarsa Gallery will present these dynamic and important paintings and drawings, titled 'Heretic Spaces' until October 19.

Mejri's experimental style draws on equally strong painting, drawing, and video practices to depict how social, political and cultural dynamics in the Arab world, especially Tunisia, are projected on the male body through images in mass media.

Mejri is inspired by artists like Francis Bacon, Pablo Picasso and also American filmmaker David Lynch, through which the artist creates large-scale mixed media works on canvas and smaller drawings on paper. Mejri also presents a short video that depicts the physical and psychological effects of the commotions causing major upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa.

Everyday objects from televisions, toys, cars and light bulbs are mixed with menacing tools of state control and surveillance like microphones, guns and tanks. Floating around the figures like secondary characters and props, they are omnipresent in Mejri's compositions, symbolizing the disturbing state of contemporary life and the dehumanization of everyone involved in it.

In an essay included in the exhibition catalog, founder of the Sharjah-based Barjeel Art Foundation Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi describes his first encounter with Mejri's work as being "the first time that I saw a work from the region that directly confronted the rising levels of violence and incitement in the Middle East and North Africa. Much before ISIS videos and the revolt against democracy by extremist forces, Mejri had the clairvoyance to capture the chaos of the breakdown of human order."

Born in 1982 in Tunis, Mejri trained as painter at the Institute of Fine Arts in Tunis and now lives and works in Nabeul, Tunisia. He currently teaches at the Higher Institute of the Arts & Crafts in Kairouan while completing a PhD in Sciences and Technology of Arts and continuing to exhibit in Tunisia and beyond.






The exhibition will be on view from September 13 through October 19, 2017 at Elmarsa Gallery, Unit 23, Alserkal Avenue, Al Quoz 1, Dubai, UAE.

For details, visit: [www.galerielmarsa.com](http://www.galerielmarsa.com) (<http://galerielmarsa.com/>)

Click on the slideshow for a sneak peek at the exhibition.

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