

Qalqalah قلقله

Plus d'une langue

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Sophia Al Maria, Mounira Al Solh, Nouredine Ezarraf, Fehras Publishing Practices, Benoît Grimalt, Wiame Haddad, Vir Andres Hera, institute for incongruous translation (Natascha Sadr Haghghian and Ashkan Sepahvand) with Can Altay, Serena Lee, Scriptings#47: Man schenkt keinen Hund, Ceel Mogami de Haas, Sara Ouhammadou, Temporary Art Platform (Works on Paper)

Graphic intervention: Montasser Drissi
Guest curators: Virginie Bobin and Victorine Grataloup

18 February – 22 May 2021

Thursday February 18th 2021
Press preview – 10.30 am

La Kunsthalle Mulhouse welcomes “Qalqalah قلقله : plus d'une langue” an exhibition curated by Virginie Bobin and Victorine Grataloup.

The name Qalqalah قلقله comes from two short stories by Egyptian curator and researcher Sarah Rifky¹. The eponymous heroine of these works of fiction, Qalqalah, is an artist and linguist who inhabits a near future reconstructed by the financial crisis and the popular revolts of the 2010s. Her poetic meditations on languages, translation, and their critical and *imagining* power accompanied our reflections, and have stayed with us ever since. Qalqalah قلقله became an online research platform involving three languages (Arabic, French and English) and two alphabets. It is taking the form of an exhibition.

The title “Qalqalah قلقله : plus d'une langue” [Qalqalah قلقله: More Than One Language] orchestrates a meeting between our heroine and a quote by Jacques Derrida. In *Monolingualism of the Other*², the philosopher, born in 1930 in Algeria, writes of his ambiguous relationship with the French language, ensnared in military and colonial history. The book begins with a paradoxical statement: “I have only one language; it is not mine”, contradicting any proprietary, fixed or unequivocal definition of language—whether it be French (as the researcher Myriam Suchet nicely puts it, the “s” in “français” should be understood as a mark of plurality), Arabic (taught as a “foreign language” in colonial Algeria, and today the second most widely spoken language in France, in its various dialects) or English (a globalised language that is dominant in contemporary art).

These three languages (and more) will come together in the exhibition, each bringing its own political, historical and poetic issues that intersect and respond to one

another. Letters and voices will run through the exhibition, reminding us that **languages are inseparable from speaking and listening bodies**—all speakers express themselves “also through their eyes and facial expressions (yes, language has a face)”³, to borrow the words of Moroccan writer and researcher Abdelfattah Kilito.

The works echo multiple, hybrid languages, acquired in the course of family migrations, personal exile or uprooted encounters. Native, secondary, adoptive, migrant, lost, imposed, common, minor, invented, pirated, contaminated languages... How do we speak (to each other) in more than one language, using more than one alphabet? How we listen from within the place and language in which we find ourselves? Between the lines, the exhibition examines the perspective from which we view works, according to the political and social imaginations that shape us.

Most of the invited artists place the works' publication, circulation and reception modalities at the heart of their practice. Operations of translation, transliteration, rewriting, archiving, publication, republication, montage, even casting and karaoke appear as attempts to offer the eyes and ears stories that are sometimes evasive. Beyond a linguistic approach, it is about establishing a space in which plural stories and heterogeneous accounts can be presented, based on one possible meaning—in more than one language—of the Arabic word قلقله: “a movement of language, a phonetic vibration, a bounce or echo.”⁴

Virginie Bobin and Victorine Grataloup

1 Sarah Rifky, “Qalqalah : The Subject of Language”, in *Qalqalah* no. 1, KADIST/Bétonsalon - Villa Vassiliev, 2015; and “Qalqalah: Thinking History”, in *Qalqalah* no. 2, KADIST/Bétonsalon - Villa Vassiliev, 2016
2 Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*, Stanford University Press, 1996

3 Abdelfattah Kilito, *Tu ne parleras pas ma langue* (in French), translated from the Arabic (Morocco), Actes Sud, 2008

4 In “Qalqalah: The Subject of Language”, *ibid.*

In 2020 “Qalqalah قلقله : plus d'une langue” was featured at the Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain Occitanie in Sète.

About “Qalqalah قلقله”

Qalqalah قلقله is an editorial and curatorial platform dedicated to the production, translation and circulation of artistic, theoretical and literary research in three languages: French, Arabic and English. It was founded in 2018 in France by Virginie Bobin (curator, researcher and translator) and Victorine Grataloup (curator, researcher and teacher). Today, the editorial collective of Qalqalah قلقله consists of Line Ajan, Virginie Bobin, Montasser Drissi, Victorine Grataloup, Vir Andres Hera and Salma Mochtari. qalqalah.org

Opening hours

Saturday to Tuesday, from 2 to 6 pm
Wednesday to Friday, from 12 to 6 pm
Closed April 3rd, 4th, 5th, May 1st
Free entrance

Location

La Kunsthalle Mulhouse - Centre d'art contemporain
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La Kunsthalle is a contemporary arts centre (*Centre d'Art Contemporain d'Intérêt National*) and a City of Mulhouse cultural establishment. With the support from the Regional Cultural Affairs Office of Grand Est - French Ministry of Culture and Communication and Collectivité européenne d'Alsace.

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