



the silence of thoughts

eroticism, women and faith. the algerian artist **louzla darabi** seems to cover these three sensitive fields with a tender veil. in her drawings and paintings, the search for the treasure of life, for the final answer, for the unfathomable secret of our existence becomes evident.

expressing herself through drawings was already a kind of life buoy for louzla darabi when she was still a child. darabi grew up between family violence and inner freedom in the northern-african country of algeria and soon developed a kind of graphic “language of the soul” that was dedicated to women, eroticism and faith. as if she always wanted to veil, disguise and protect, most of her drawings and paintings are only hinted at and leave the end open. with her mysterious works of art, the artist, who now lives in paris, time and time again causes a stir.

frequently asked questions

what would you change immediately if you were free to choose?

the relationship towards power that exists everywhere.

what's your life philosophy?

it's basically about the search for absolute freedom. however, it also includes the limits of one's capabilities. basically, it has to settle with the course of life and its necessities, like it has for everybody, i guess.

what do you dream of?

i dream of my freedom.

dear louzla, you're from algeria, how would you describe the basic characteristics of this country?

i am deeply connected to algeria. it's the country of my ancestors and the people there are really warm-hearted and hospitable. it's a very hot country that has a lot of old customs. traditional celebrations like weddings, christenings or prayers play an important role in people's everyday lives. they give life its rhythm. algeria is also home to a variety of different population groups with different customs and traditions although their common ground still is the muslim faith. the best-known population group is the kabyle with their own language. another group is represented by the mozabites who live in the south of the country. what's more, algeria is a very child-oriented country. the children are free, they play with their friends on the streets without having to be afraid of any kind of violence. on the other hand, there is a high unemployment rate especially among young people which is quite alarming. due to the unemployment, there's a general social and identity crisis among the youth of algeria. you could say that algeria is a poor country in spite of all its wealth. a country that you have to explore because it's amazing.

to what extent do you think that your childhood has

influenced your current artistic work?

that's difficult to say. there definitely was a strong urge to create things in my childhood which mostly resulted from the extreme violence that tore my family apart. the desire to draw and paint was like a life buoy for me – a ladder i could climb. on the other hand, my childhood was characterised by the feeling that everything's possible. i don't really know where that came from. maybe it's because my parents always granted us the freedom of creating our own ideals.

when was the first time you discovered that drawing and painting are a means of expression for you?

i started drawing at an early age and became what i was drawing or the opposite of it. later, the “real” work began and i started to paint seriously. it's all about learning to use certain tools and an extended form of language. a language of the soul ...

drawings are understood everywhere around the world, they cross borders of culture as well as language. what do you find fascinating about spreading “drawn thoughts and ideas” across the world?

i think the fact that drawings are understood everywhere is proof that deep within we all have the same thought patterns and archaisms. it's our common heritage. there's nothing really fascinating about that. it's nothing more than personal satisfaction. when i draw, i don't think about spreading my works across the world. i don't really visualize the observers during the creative process. they are part of another process in the future and make the drawing something else. that's when my drawings slip away from me.

today, our world is full of bold, garish signs and messages. your drawings, however, are very tender in their basic structure but at the same time very expressive. do you think that tenderness and love might be the only antidotes to violence and terror?

my drawings differ from the industrialized and “useful” ones in that they are unique. they are the result of a very human process. this process requires a connection to our soul, the silence of thoughts. that's why an artistic work will always be closer to us. i do believe that love and tenderness have the power to disarm the terror in our world. it's what everybody wishes for. i once had a dream where i was fighting with someone dangerous that was full of hate and rage. i was defeated but in the same dream the fight replayed a second time and this time i embraced the other one instead of hitting him and wanted to calm him.

he stopped fighting and lay down on the ground. this dream was like a revelation to me. to me, giving and expressing love is a sign of great intelligence and freedom.

eroticism, women and faith, these are the three topics that keep coming up in your artistic work. what is it that fascinates you about these topics?
the secret behind them.

helmut wolf