

Donja Nasser

The artist Donja Nasser has not only participated in an impressive amount of national and international group exhibitions, but she has also received several scholarships and prizes. Upon completing her studies in Dortmund, Istanbul, and Münster, Donja returned to her home town, where she currently studies under Gregor Schneider at the Kunstakademie. In her works, she deals with photography and its diversity, as well as with multimedia audio-visual installations. Subversively, she uses the respective medium to examine social issues such as morality, convention, and ideology. Her artistic language is characterised by symbolism and traditional forms of expression. Overwhelmed by the daily flood of information, we long for Donja's work – a return to the essence.

When did you start taking pictures and how did it happen?

I remember feeling super cool and more secure with a camera when I was a child. What hasn't changed is that I'm still interested in architecture and still life, whereas people are too humdrum for me.

How would you describe your artistic approach?

I would describe it as playful-concrete. On one hand, I'm experimental and try many things, on the other hand, I'm explicit in the sense that I deal with specific topics, for example: Marriage, communication, the human psyche, and so on...

Besides art: What are your passions?

My friends call me 'travel agency' because I really like looking for travel deals. If I wasn't doing art, I'd probably be working for Lufthansa. My uncle used to be a Lufthansa steward and he would in-line skate to work. I wanted to be this type of human. Other hobbies of mine include taking walks in supermarkets.

With which artist, dead or alive, would you most like to collaborate with?

My artistic role model has been Francis Alÿs for a long time. From him, I know that one doesn't require much to create profound art. The work "Making Something Leads to Nothing" from '97, for example, means a lot to me. It's comprised of an ice block, which Alÿs pushed through Mexico City for nine hours until it melted completely. Aspects like time, substance, and urban space often play a big role in his works. I'd love to create a piece with Alÿs from *nothing*. A few years ago, I met him at one of his exhibitions in Vienna, he seemed very down to earth and pleasant.

What impact has the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf had on you as an artist?

The academy is today's art world in a miniature format, meaning: Hierarchies are noticeable, the construct of a system is palpable, one experiences freedom and restriction. It's thrilling, annoying, and confusing — just the thing!

Your three words to describe Düsseldorf are:

Overly perfectionistic, creative, sleepy.

Düsseldorf as an artwork: What would it look like?

Already, there are "Rhein I" and "Rhein II" by Andreas Gursky. That's Düsseldorf as an artwork.

What places in Düsseldorf inspire you as an artist?

The central station and everything around it.

ART

TEXT · MERIT ZIMMERMANN · PHOTO · SIMON GEHLEN



NAME
DONJA NASSERI
AGE 28
JOB ARTIST
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
**KUNSTAKADEMIE
DÜSSELDORF**
DONJANASSERI.DE