

Shahryar Nashat on the inexorability of failing bodies

interview by Myriam Ben Salah

**Myriam Ben Salah** You work with sculpture and video, addressing the dynamics of desire and the need for representation. Your partner in life, Adam Linder, is a dancer and choreographer. Can you talk about your exhibition "The Cold Horizontals" at the Kunsthalle Basel? How did it come about and how does the project interact with Adam's own show that was on view at the Kunsthalle immediately before yours?

**Shahryar Nashat** The Kunsthalle's director Elena Filipovic had started separate conversations about working on solo shows with both Adam and I. At some point in the preparations, the three of us got the idea that we could have the exhibitions back-to-back and create a ceremony that would conjure the moment where the space of Adam's exhibition is handed over to me. We called the ceremony "The Handover": Adam's dancers usher the audience out of the space, Elena resets the space and we open the doors on a new show...

**MBS** How did you start collaborating with Adam in the first place ?

**SN** Actually, we never collaborate. Or at least, whatever it is we do, we don't like to call it a collaboration because there is always only one captain of the boat. These moments where we let our works bleed into each other are similar to how any artist is more or less permeable to the influence of his entourage. Only, we are together in life and we make that part visible for these rare occasions, like the Schinkel Pavillon project last year in Berlin, in which we put our practices in dialogue, all the while questioning traditional boundaries between disciplines; or now "The Handover" in Basel.

**MBS** At the core of your work for the Kunsthalle is the question of the image. Can you elaborate on that and the video you will present?

**SN** Throughout the twenty minutes of the film, there is this voice intermittently saying "Image is an orphan" or "Image is a hustler"; another most frequent line is "How will I die?" This back-and-forth between the condition of an image and the condition of a body/a human/myself is what my new film wants to explore. It's the palpability of zeroes and ones vs. the transience of water and cells. And all the sculptures that share the space with the film are there to support this failing body. **K**



"Back-and-forth between the condition of an image and the condition of a body."



**SHAHRYAR NASHAT (B. 1975, GENEVA) IS CURRENTLY SHOWING AT KUNSTHALLE BASEL THROUGH JANUARY.** IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS ANGELES