

HUNGER

DANCING MONKEYS AND FINGER PUPPETS, NOUR EL SALEH WANTS YOU TO FEEL

words Connie Mangumbu

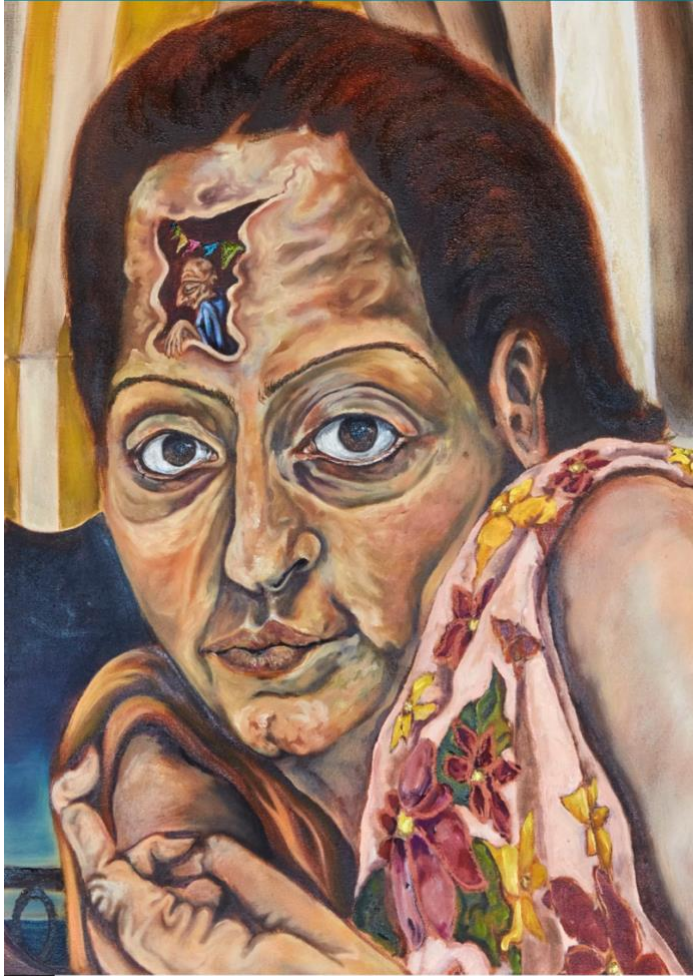
images Courtesy VO Curations, London



The artist creating alternate dreamscapes

Great artists aren't a rarity, however, great art... Well, in the words of renowned curator, Hans Ulrich Obrist "so clearly...has a huge transformative potential. It can transform us. It can lead to transcendence." And that is rare. Transmitting an audience to a space so very far removed from one's own, and cultivating complete dreamscapes in ways that, not only transport you to lands unknown, but will render you completely still. Nour El Saleh possesses that very skill.

With an eye towards obscuring the mundane, the recent graduate's works have a unique capability of presenting narratives so universally recognisable yet unsettling and troublesome, underpinned by excruciating absurdity. From dancing monkeys to three wise women in the form of finger puppets and the



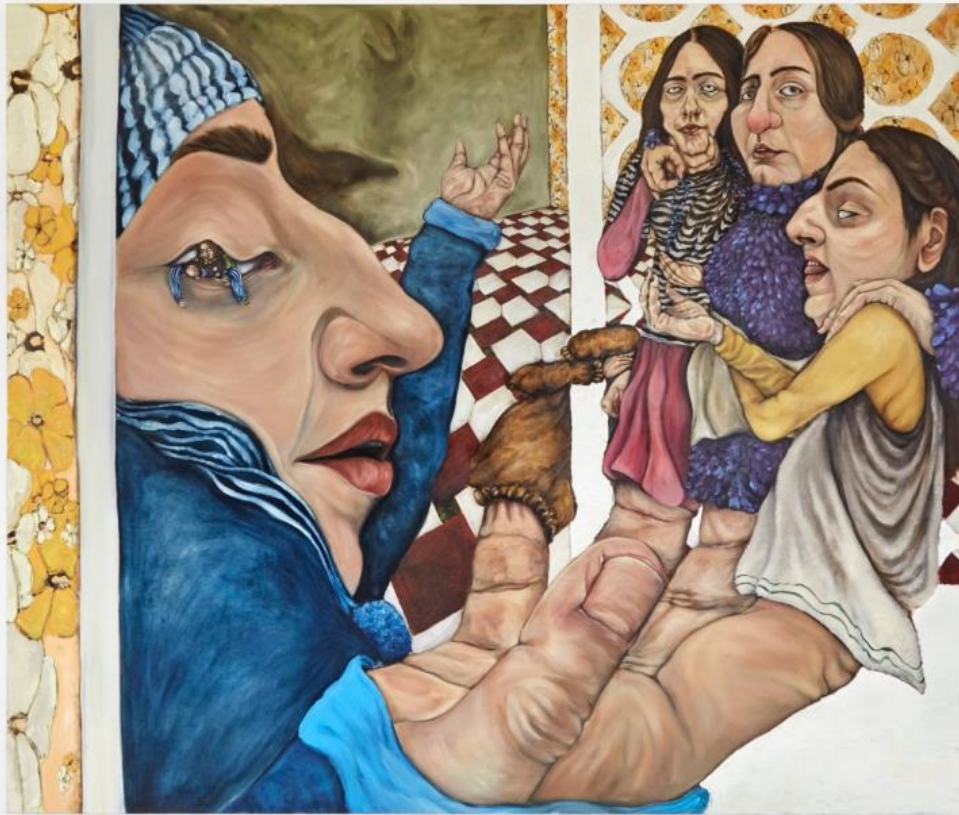
Wrong side of the table, 2019

inner workings of a woman whose mind is filled; the artist's works are stimulated by heritage and her dual cultures. Lebanon and London may be worlds apart; however, they are fused to create wonderfully grotesque works intrinsic of all things, "home". The vibrancy of life in the middle east: the sandy hues in the background and replicated in the complexions of these characters, auburn, rust, and gold, accented by the white walls of her London studio and the grey hues of our very British scenery, these pieces are far cognizant of how many first generational children can feel both at home and displaced. Often home is not where one's family originated- it is where we comfort resides at present. Many feel the pressures, so often, on ways to communicate this. Saleh

states that her mind is most "enclosed" within the comfort of her studio and for that, "Dance Monkey" was a vessel of communicating such thoughts.

Inspired by the theatrical practices of Toulouse Lautrec and James Ensor, Nour's works draw on themes of beauty ideals, family, nature versus nurture and belonging. From prominent features, sagging skin and imperfect assets, 'Exquisite Farces' is an arresting visual tale of social pressure and the complexities of conformity.

VO Curations and Nour El Saleh present "Exquisite Farces" from the 5th of September - 11th of October 2019 at the 12th floor gallery of VO as part of a three month residency. For more information about VO Curation and Nour El Saleh visit vocurations.com



The Puppeteer of Karakas, 2019