

## Ania Soliman

(Warsaw, 1970)

Ania Soliman uses drawing as her expressive medium of choice, often carried out on the basis of pre-existent images found on Internet or news reports. Her work originates from careful research into archive documents and interdisciplinary studies, and is accompanied by videos, texts and performative conferences which explore the artist's reflections beyond the visual element itself. The relationship between nature and technology is always at the heart of her discourse, each time declined through her observation of the effects of progress on the body, on the environment and on means of communication.

There's a *fil rouge* that coherently links her debut works and her more recent research. *Biohazards* (2000) is the title of a group of four large drawings on paper produced by overlapping layers of wax and coloured pigments. The images, the upshot of a process of simplification of the shape that makes them impalpable, are taken from a documentary transmitted at the end of the 1990s on the Discovery Channel, and which traced the origin of the main epidemic outbreaks in the world. Traces may be found of the same attention towards the sensationalistic and morbid tones with which the media convey information in the online project that Soliman undertook in April 2020. Closed in her home in Paris as part of the containment measures of the Covid-19 pandemic, the artist made use of the virtual pages of her Instagram profile to put together an 'isolation diary', entrusted once again to drawing. With an almost daily introspective exercise carried out in a state of time dilatation, she shared her reflections on the virus, the experience of isolation and her memories of the past, also commenting through her images on news from around the world.

The multicultural environment in which she grew up – Soliman is the daughter of a Polish mother and an Egyptian father; she has lived between France and Iraq and trained in the United States – shapes many of the artist's works, dealing with the mechanisms of production and consumption from a post-colonial point of view. She deals with this, for example, in the collages of *Natural Object Rant: The Pineapple* (2007–2010) which, on the basis of the history of the cultivation of the pineapple traced through historical accounts and financial reports, interpret the fruit as a symbol of conquest and exploitation. The relationship with machines – and between machines – is instead at the heart of a series of drawings with thin strokes, accompanied by almost imperceptible fragments of text, like in the work in the collection *Untitled (Large Landscape with Bots)* (2018). For these works, Soliman let herself be influenced by the news that appeared in newspapers around the world of an experimental dialogue between two artificial intelligences used by Facebook. Due to a programming error, the two bots – humanised with the names Bob and Alice – abandoned English and began to converse in an incomprehensible language, thus raising fears of an upcoming computer rebellion to the detriment of mankind.

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