

Avish Khebrehzadeh

(Tehran, Iran, 1969)

Avish Khebrehzadeh's chosen language is that of drawing, animations, and painting. All three of these mediums, through a strong stylistic unity, compose a universe made up of fantastic images, memories, dreams, and fragments of fairy tales.

Khebrehzadeh's characters, both human and animal, emerge from the darkness of the black sheet of paper, from the nostalgia of sepia sheets or from the milky fog of white sheets. Like figures in dreams, they appear whole, isolated like images set into their solitude, or in the form of fragments, like details that are sketched out but incorporeal, made of the same fog out of which they surface, except for some unexpected bright chromatic lights that seem glued onto them, surface claddings at which they themselves seem astonished.

Both in the black paper pieces and in the latest white drawings, the stylistic economy is extremely rigorous and the drawing increasingly pure linear shorthand. "I like to be frugal in giving the visual information to viewers. I want each viewer to participate and finish the story with his or her own imagination." Indeed, even when the works are not animations, they inscribe a narrative dimension. One of the reasons for their existence as stories, even if barely hinted at, lies in the stylistic proximity between the essential nature of the stroke and a certain type of traditional children's book illustration. The lightness with which the artist cleanses her work of every non-essential detail brings to mind the refined ingenuity of children's drawings, but the lack of a resolved narrative structure and the emergence of apparitions from nothingness turns the world from a fable into a world of mystery and sometimes one of melancholy absence.

He Ridiculed, He Mocked, He Transformed, 2012, is a series of drawings made up of layers on white fabric. The clearness of the stroke thus is associated with the suffused effect of transparency and superimposition. In this way the artist pushes us once again to consider the ephemeral nature of her epiphanies, their emergence from amniotic liquid, and their return to erasure in the depths. The meaning and intelligibility of the image is something that should be grasped in its emergence, in its rising for an instant to the surface; in the depths there is only mystery. This is why the theme of the series is the mask, the covering of identity beneath a second skin. As the artist has said: "Our life is like a mask, even to ourselves. It is neither visible nor tangible; it is simply there. We mock, ridicule, transform our masks as we come upon others. What lies beneath is just illusion." (EV)