

Two Steps at a Time

Hamid Zénati

Large Print Wall Text

25.05 – 08.09 2024

***Two Steps at a Time* is a major survey of the late Algerian-German artist Hamid Zénati (b.1944, Algeria; d.2022, Germany), the first ever in a UK institution. The exhibition is a celebration of Zénati's almost sixty-year career, and the artist's expansive output of over 1000 works. A self-taught artist, Zénati developed his own distinctive visual language and signature 'all-over' style, transforming countless surfaces with his vivid abstract patterns, signs and figurative designs, from textiles and clothing to ceramics and wearable sculpture.**

Zénati's childhood was spent in Algiers where the mix of languages, cultures and architecture and the turbulent fight for Algerian independence from French colonial rule formed foundational influences

on his life and work. In the mid-1960s Zénati moved to Munich, where for a time he worked as a translator. While spending time by the phone waiting for jobs he began drawing and painting on whatever materials were available to him, the genesis of his lifelong compulsive and intuitive practice. Zénati's range of inspirations were inexhaustible, drawing from his travels and eclectic tastes in music and literature, indigenous Amazigh signs and motifs, Sahrawi traditional garments, the set designs of Sonia Delaunay, and organic forms found in nature.

In the spirit of Zénati's persona and practice, the exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary reveals a vast range of his creative endeavours, a collage of materials, pattern and forms. Textile paintings suspended to form an architectural landscape, clothing activated through movement and ceramic objects transformed by Zénati's abstract language are accompanied by personal photographs, books and music from his studio alongside archival

materials expanding on the socio-political and cultural context of post-independence Algeria.

During his life, Zénati received little institutional recognition, yet remained unperturbed and uncompromisingly dedicated to his practice, leaving behind a rich legacy of his creativity. Today he can be seen as an inventive, free thinker and artist of his time, whose intense use of colour and cosmology of pattern created a unique, free and anarchic abstract visual language which disordered hierarchies between fine and applied arts, crafts and design.

RELATED EVENTS

Exhibition Walkthroughs

Wed 5 June, 12pm

Welcome Walkthrough

Explore the exhibition with our team and community partners Ubuntu, followed by refreshments and conversation in the café afterwards.

Wed 12 June, 12pm

Curator's Walkthrough

Join Nottingham Contemporary's curators for a tour of our summer exhibitions.

Wednesday 24 July, 1pm

With Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz, artist, curator and art historian.

Wednesday 4 September, 1pm

With Tom Godfrey, Director of Bonington Gallery and TG Gallery.

12.30 Talks

12.30pm every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, starting 4 June

Join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants for a short exploration of one of our exhibitions.

Summer Solstice Party

Sat 22 June

Join us at Nottingham Contemporary to celebrate the summer solstice and our fifteenth birthday with a day of events, performance and activities.

Film Screening & Performance

Thurs 18 July, 6pm

Film screening organised in partnership with The Mosaic Rooms, London, followed by a devotional vocal performance with Assia Ghendir.

The Screen at Contemporary

Our strand of arthouse, cult and classic cinema continues in August and September.

FREE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Spring Half-Term: 28 – 30 May

Summer Holidays: 30 July – 22 Aug

Explore the themes in the exhibitions through making and play.

For more information about the exhibition, related events and learning programmes, visit nottinghamcontemporary.org or scan here:



Hamid Zénati: *Two Steps at a Time* is generously supported by the Hamid Zénati Exhibition Circle: Barjeel Art Foundation, Rafik & Najoua Foundation, Maria Sukkar, Mercedes Vilardell, Sara Tayeb, Selim and Houda Bouafsoun and those who wish to remain anonymous.

The exhibition is curated by Salma Tuqan with support from Katie Simpson and Niall Farrelly.

Special thanks to Shoag Aladsani, Farah Aladsani and Salar Vaziri, Stefan Baumgärtner, Rabah Bedjaoui, Wassila Bedjaoui, Duro Olowu, Anna Schneider, Kathrina Schneider and Samira Zénati.

The archival materials and texts in the Algeria display have been selected and written by Sheyda

Aisha Khaymaz in collaboration with Nottingham Contemporary.

Exhibition design by Msoma Ltd. Exhibition graphics by Studio Marie Lusa.

All works courtesy Hamid Zénati Estate and Private Collection.

Cover image courtesy Hamid Zénati Estate.

If you would like a quiet space to reflect during your visit, please visit Gallery 0 (room adjacent to Gallery 1).

If you would like to use any alternative forms of interpretation, we have a range of accessible versions on our Access Wall beside Reception.

Environmental: Nottingham Contemporary is committed to advancing sustainability within the organisation and aims to explore and embed sustainable working practices and habits within our workplace and across the sector. This includes

standardising environmental considerations at all stages of decision making.

The artwork in *Two Steps at a Time* has been transported by road freight. Where possible materials have been borrowed, re-used or re-purposed. Archival reproductions have been produced with local suppliers.

Nottingham Contemporary is a registered charity and dependent on the generosity of our visitors, partners and supporters. Donate today to directly support our ambitious exhibitions, and the vital work we do with artists, schools, young people, and our local community.

Suggested donation: £5