

**Sabrina Amrani is pleased to present Transfer, Transport, Transit, the first solo show by Chant Avedissian in Spain.**

For Avedissian, Transfer is the artist's way to connect with the cultural expressions of his roots to bring them into the present. Along with a restless quest to understand his own identity, confused by his Armenian name and origin, Egyptian birth and nationality, his studies in Canada and France, Avedissian feels that the Era of former president Nasser stole part of the cultural and artistic identity of Egypt in favour of the country's Westernisation.

For this search, the artist reinterprets patterns and icons of art and craftsmanship created more than 3.500 years ago. Due to his close professional relationship with the renowned Arab architect Hassan Fathy, he was inspired to develop this interest in traditional art and local materials: The traces and tools that the artist uses to understand and approach his own primary identity as a transversal human being. Fathy is also the man who taught Avedissian to be free. Thanks to this he has managed to maintain his place in the art world without the need of being represented by an art gallery. We are speaking of one of the few artists who managed to break the walls of the usual commercial circuits and became world-renowned with works such as Cairo Stencils or Icons of the Nile.

The concept of Transport implies movement across the borders of lands, kingdoms and countries. It is no longer just the ability to bring the ancient world to the present, but the possibility of shortening distances and adopting forms of arts and crafts from different corners of the planet and projecting them in his pieces. Unlike the process of prevailing globalization, Avedissian tries to rescue cultural manifestations that occurred thousands of kilometers from his homeland and return them to life through his photography and stencils. To do so, the artist has dedicated a good part of his life to travel and photograph crafts, art and architecture. For Avedissian, there is a whole world, a history and origins that barely remain as stones, accumulating dust under the almighty mantle of the now globalizing and former colonialist world of Western culture. In this sense, the notion of Transport is also an important economic element, which exposes capitalism as a clear global reference, able to bury the millennial identity of all these cultural manifestations.

Finally, Transit reminds us of the everlasting, the ephemeral, the transitory state in which we all find ourselves, and the constant re-appropriation of the individual. No one or anything is here for all eternity. And yet, we can move, transport and claim everything from the past and bring it to our time, just as we can recover principles, thoughts, concepts, and artistic and cultural manifestations that help identify us. The individual is constantly recuperating values, cultures, concepts... Avedissian creates a bond with the movement of different times and geographies and brings them to life, this way capturing the roots of the human kind in his famous stencils.

Avedissian's stencils compose works that to many eyes could seem like paintings. But they are not. The artist abandoned painting because of his preference of his hands having the power to replicate: if we inspire ourselves on the past, on a movement, in the learning of the arts, we are assimilating, adopting

and internalising it. And if the purpose is to recover what exists, despite having been forgotten, Avedissian promotes the power of replicating elements as many times as desired, instead of having to paint it a same number of times and copying it each time. Even if by doing this the compositions, the media and the colors change. To achieve this, the artist creates each of his stencils from the encounters he has been making throughout his life of research, mainly along the length and width of the silk route.

And while mentioning this ancient route of commerce, near Samarkand we can find the city of Khiva, in the current Uzbekistan, who inspired the work *Khiva Mud Brick Wall Pattern With Blue Glazed Tiles*, and is a perfect example of the artist's construction pattern. He recuperates this as an essential and millenary part of Persian culture, in the shape of gouache on corrugated cardboard. In another neighbouring city of Samarkand, Bukhara, Avedissian finds floral ornamental patterns and the Ottoman "tiger", motives that are reflected in *Bukhara floral pattern, Ottoman tiger-stripe and cintamani, 3 circles*. Also executed with gouache on corrugated cardboard, *Ottoman textile leaves, ancient Egyptian stars, 3 circles*, mixes Ottoman motives with the arcane stars of the imaginary Egypt. Likewise, and also inspired by another of his trips along an ancestral trail, we find the work *Persian tiles with Plants*, a piece based on the tesserae of a Persian mosaic that, despite being made from insoles and resting on a cardboard support, undoubtedly reminds one of the few things we understand to be genuinely Persian in the Western world: Carpets. Next to this work, *Ancient Egyptian triangles with plants* is presented, a clear transfer of 3,587 years of antiquity that brings the roots of the Egyptian culture to Avedissian's present. These triangles form a recognizable geometric pattern, which seems to have been replicated to satiety over time, from the immensity of man's cultures to fusing it with our DNA. As a meticulous scientist, or paleontologist, the artist has condensed history with his filter, in the form of stencils: the best artistic tool he finds to continue replicating DNA series. Thus he replicates these essential patterns on simpler pieces such as *Ancient Egyptian pattern, red triangles on white*, and *Ancient Egyptian pattern, dark gray triangles on White*.

With these works, the artist moves away from his pop flair in his series Cairo Stencils and maintains its essence: the cultural pattern found throughout his journey in search of the identity . The voyage in which he tries to recover the integrity of civilisations such as the Egiptian, whose origin is event more ancient than that from the cultural European colonisation. For Avedissian, the end of the **Transfer, Transport, Transit**, expedition is reflected in an artistic conquest which recovers the lost millennial heritage and brings it to today; from centuries ago, through frontiers and current countries.