

**PRÈAMBULE**  
**23.6 - 27.6**  
**Hanni Kamaly**

**ABUKAR**  
**2020**  
**Copper, brass, steel, chrome plated copper, aluminum net, zari thread, mirrors.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

**Special Screening w. Hanni Kamaly**  
**DINGS, HEADHANDEYE, BEASTMODE, et al.**

**Saturday 27.6 - 16.00-18.00**  
**Biograf Victoria, Götgatan 65, Stockholm**  
**TICKETS (50 sek) RSVP: info@coyote.pt**

**Draken II**  
**Pelican Self Storage**  
**Fridhemsplan 27**





Though made of otherwise solid materials - welded steel, copper, and brass pipes - Hanni Kamaly's sculpture **ABUKAR** nevertheless seems to balance precariously, under the weight of some unseen gravitational force, on the verge of collapsing in on itself, or out onto the space surrounding it. Assembled inside of Pelican Self Storage, a large warehouse, that used to be a cinema once, the figure looks like some kind of deformed, dystopian, cyborg, hunching under the enclosing architecture, too tall to safely move out of its dedicated confines. The crossed tubes and sharp metal rods that compose this giant suggest movement, itinerancy - an assembly of contorted limbs. Wrapped around the upper sections of this shaky sculpture are nettings of aluminum covered with circular mirrors thread in gold, a direct reference to the embroidery on traditional Balochi garments (a culture from the south of Iran, on the plateau that borders Pakistan and Afghanistan). Zari is the term for this thread, originally made out of fine silver or gold, which is used to decorate ceremonial dresses. The title of Kamaly's work, **ABUKAR**, is given in honor of Mohamed Abukar, a Swedish-Somali person, who died in March 2020 as a result of COVID-19. The "Swedish Strategy", as it has come to be known, is one that favors single over multigenerational households, and also discriminates unilaterally against many working-class families who earn their living through jobs in the service sector, and thus unable to effectively #workfromhome.

The titular dedication follows Kamaly's gestures in earlier works to name her sculptures after victims of racism and state violence, such as **FREDDIE GRAY (2016)**, **CRUTCHER (2017)**, and **AMAD AHMAD (2019)**. These now iconic names, which have been mobilized by the #BlackLivesMatter Movement, among others, evoke a fragile body without ever succumbing the media reproduction of victim imagery around these murderous acts. The openness and vulnerability of Kamaly's figures honors lives without monumentalizing them, relying on the language of abstraction to gesture simultaneously to remembrance and resistance: a body that is not yet fully formed, and can either evolve into something stronger, or perish under the weight of its historical allusions. Kamaly's practice should be seen as filled with both anguish and hope, an outline of a figure whose final outcome is still undecided.

The pairing of painful memory with future potential is a dynamic that is also writ large in Kamaly's video works - **BEASTMODE (2017)**, **HEADHANDEYE (2017)** and **DINGS (2019)** - which provide a moving-image complement to her sculptural analysis of the extremities to which a body is subjected. The bulk of the source material for these works, however, is not built but found, appropriated from images as wide-ranging as Pippi Långstrump, advertisements for African art, ethnological field recordings of indigenous populations, Google Maps, police shootings, riots, beheadings, and other scenes of racist brutality. The still images are woven into filmic essays that refuse a proper narrator, offering instead a heterogeneous voice that confronts viewers directly, without the interference of an author, subverting the authority of a singular position, the conditions that structure the white gaze. Unlike the contemporary figures referenced in her sculptures, Kamaly's video sources are mainly historical, leading from the onset of colonial power structures to their modern afterlives. **DINGS** addresses the making of masks and their appropriation in ethnological and art historical museums, while **HEADHANDEYE** depicts the mutilation of bodies and the removal of their limbs - the guillotine that separates the head from the torso, the "evil" hand that is chopped off, the wandering eye that is pulled from its socket, and the skull that is stolen after decomposition for collection and exhibition.

Altogether, these works address the systems and forms - from the specificity of appropriated images to abstractions of a body in space - through which individuals are subjected to categories, which ultimately enable the violence that is enacted upon them. There is no stable typology of an individual in Kamaly's output, no counterpoint to the wide variety of racist subjugations. This fact ensures that the ambivalences of these racist typologies is reflected in the openness of the voices and configurations of the bodies presented. The video works also include images of ceremonies, in which stolen bones and masks are returned to their rightful "owners", but the point of these reparations on the part of those in power feel like an empty gesture. Can they ever make good on the systems of racialized discrimination and death that have followed in the wake of colonialism?

text by Anneliese Ostertag

