ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH 2026

PROFESSIONAL ACCESS:
December 2, 11am - 7pm
December 3, 4pm - 7pm

PUBLIC ACCESS:
December 4, 11am - 6pm
December 5, 11am - 6pm
December 6, 11am - 6pm

DATES:
December 2 - December 6, 2026

ADDRESS:
Booth Z16, 1901 Convention Center Drive
Miami Beach, FL 33139

MIAMI, USA
12.02 - 12.06.2026

VOLOSHYN GALLERY

For Art Basel Miami Beach, Voloshyn Gallery is pleased to present «Saharaja» by Abi Shehu. The video installation is composed of fifteen vintage television sets, each displaying a looping animation derived from photographic documentation of graffiti found on the walls of the former Spaç prison and labour camp in Albania (1968–1990).

IMAGE:
Abi Shehu
Saharaja, 2021
vintage television sets



The installation takes its title from a poem by Albanian poet Vilson Blloshmi, who was arrested and executed by the communist regime after his poetry was declared hostile to the state. In the poem, the desert emerges as a barren, lifeless landscape. This image informs the conceptual framework establish a connection with the ruins of Spaç, a site marked by violence, isolation, and decades of deterioration. Although now, a cultural monument continues to deteriorate due to the absence of adequate preservation. The graffiti documented by the artist have survived only on isolated sections of the walls where the original plaster remains intact. Many other traces have already disappeared as a result of the building's gradual deterioration. Captured in photographs, these drawings, inscriptions, and signs resemble archaeological findings, preserving not only the images themselves but also fragments of the surfaces on which they were originally created.

The graffiti are believed to have been drawn during the final years of the prison's operation (1987–1990), although their authors remain unidentified. The recurring motifs, including television sets, advertisements, sports, erotic imagery, and characters from foreign cinema, reveal an imaginative world shaped by the prisoners' perception of life beyond the camp. They reflect an impulse to move beyond the ideological framework of the communist regime and maintain a connection with a reality that remained inaccessible within the conditions of isolation and strict control. Among these motifs, the television set occupies a particularly significant place, appearing as an imagined window onto an inaccessible world. By presenting the animations across fifteen vintage television sets, the installation returns this recurring image to physical space, establishing a dialogue between the original graffiti and the objects through which they are now encountered.

Each animation unfolds in a continuous loop. Repetition functions as a reflection on the cyclical recurrence of history. As Spaç continues to deteriorate, the uninterrupted movement of the drawings resists this process of erasure. Through the convergence of archival documentation, moving images, and obsolete technological objects, "Saharaja" explores the fragile relationship between memory, historical preservation, and the persistence of images beyond the conditions in which they were created.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Abi Shehu

Abi Shehu (b.1993 Lezha, Albania) is a multi-disciplinary visual artist, whose artistic research can be described as an archeology of unconsciousness. Through a combination of visual and media art, from installation to sound art, she creates landscapes that embody the unrepresentable and unknowable dimensions of people, societies, places and historical events. Shehu's work has been exhibited at Liste Art Fair; Manifesta 14, Pristina; Zeta Gallery, Tirana; 'In Waves,' with Women in Covid, various locations; Bazament Art Space, Tirana; Galeria e Bregdetit, Vlora; EMOP, Berlin; Kino Rinia, Pristina; CLB, Berlin, and others.

ABOUT VOLOSHYN GALLERY

In 2016, Max and Julia Voloshyn established Voloshyn Gallery in the heart of Kyiv, Ukraine. Situated in a historic 1913 building, Voloshyn Gallery's space provides an unconventional setting for contemporary art. It exhibits a broad range of works in a variety of media, representing both emerging and established artists. Voloshyn Gallery hosts solo and group exhibitions, works with accomplished curators and museums, and takes part in leading contemporary art fairs.

In 2022, Voloshyn Gallery made the difficult decision to close temporarily due to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In 2023 the gallery reopened its doors in Kyiv, Ukraine and also expanded with a space in Miami, Florida.

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