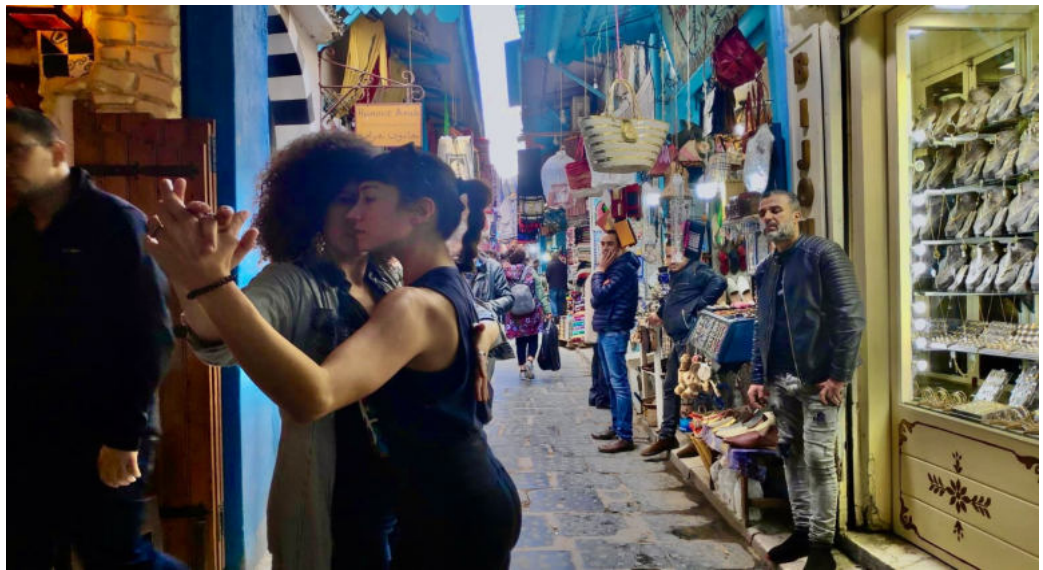


# VIEWS FROM THE VOYEUR

detailed project description



Idea & Concept

**Fatma OUSSAIFI**

In collaboration with

**Rosalie Wanka**

## CONCEPT

In this project we want to experiment with connotations, the degree of acceptance and, more generally, the reaction to the female body and same sex/gender couples in the public space in different cultural contexts.

Fatma Oussaifi, Tunisian, and Rosalie Wanka, German, both multidisciplinary dancers and artists, have in common a long practice of Argentine Tango.

Tango, more than a dance, is a popular artistic manifestation that originates from a very specific socio-cultural environment, and which in its staging of bodies, rituals/social codes and attitudes, addresses highly socio-political problematics as well as profoundly current gender issues.

In this project, the Argentinean Tango is used by Oussaifi and Wanka as a provocative tool in an intercultural experiment: by exposing themselves in a Tango performance in the public space, first in Tunis and then in Munich, they want to see how and with what differences the female body, same-sex couples and free artistic expression are perceived in these two very different environments.

The Tango is not a random choice. This dance and its "abrazo" place strangers in a subtly intimate relationship, allowing them to transcend the physical body and its external signs. But Tango also has its cliché and its commercial image; the Tango "for export" traditionally danced by a man and a woman, defines and opposes the two sexes, it makes them communicate only through the prism of seduction/hunting. Yet the essence of Tango is a connection and subtle communication between two people regardless of gender. Tango often struggles to free itself from this restrictive image.

This experience will be filmed/photographed and discussed in both cities in the context of a public screening of the documentation of the public intervention. The public screening will be preceded by a Tango beginner's class for those who wish to experience from the inside what the connection of a dancing tango couple can be. After zteh debate should take place a Milonga, a happening where people come together to dance Tango socially.



## METHODOLOGY

With this work, we want to highlight the male gaze on women and on dance.

This gaze is primarily attracted by the performative nature of the project and by the fact that it invests the public space (the street as a public space in Arab-Muslim countries is often occupied by men). By extension, it is intended to be a witness to the way women are perceived, fixed and often judged in the Arab-Muslim street even today; whether this is due to a dress, an attitude or a comment.

The locations chosen are a weekly market (Hafsia, Tunis), a café frequented exclusively by men (Tunis/Bizerte) and a public square (Bir Lahmar, Tataouine). The body of two women is thus exposed in movement, through the Tango, to these male gatherings in order to capture their looks and reactions. Like a sort of life-size laboratory.

## TARGET

The target audience is an essentially male audience caught off guard in their daily lives (and therefore unprepared for the show), hence the precise choice of urban locations.

First of all, the public who go to the same places every day (the usual café, the group of friends in the café, the sellers on a weekly market, etc.).

The reaction of women in the street is also essential to the subject and could help to define the barometer of patriarchy in every chosen location.

Secondly, an audience of dance, performance and visual arts enthusiasts in general, who would be interested in the subject and in attending the happenings programmed on the fringes of the street performance in Tunis and in Munich. (projection of the documentation, Milonga...)

The project also has a large digital dimension through the creation of a Youtube and Instagram channels with the #viewsfromthevoyeur in order to draw attention to the gender issue that is still relevant in the public space in Arab-Muslim countries but also in other parts of the world such as Europe and Latin America, as evidenced by movements such as the famous #metoo and other feminist and women's rights initiatives as the #movimientofeministadeltango in Argentina.

We also expect different people in the audience to film the performance with their phones and share it on their social media as the animation of the day. This would give the project extra visibility. We hope to gather a few hundred people in the street performances and a few thousands in the digital logbook which can then conquer other public spaces in other countries.

## OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

This project aims to represent a form of social resistance to pre-established patterns and unchanging traditions. It aims to desecrate a certain masculinity in its own self-proclaimed territory and to impose a form of tolerance to the presence of 'the other' in the public space through an artistic tool.

The masculine territory represented here by the café, the market or the square is only the reflection of a masculine predominance in all spheres of society including the regalian spheres (police and maintenance of order, religious authority, etc.)

The first difficulty we expect to face is the administrative aspect of our enterprise with the local authorities (obtaining permission to film in the public domain), then the possibility of extreme reactions, violent or otherwise, from the public.

## CONTEXTUALISATION

### CONTEXT TUNISIA

Over the past twenty years, Tunisia has witnessed a rise in the culture of the Islamic veil from the Middle East, Turkey and the Gulf States. This accompanied the advent of Qatari and Emirati television channels in the early 2000s. The image of women in the Saudi media (veiled, pious...) is mixed with that of the Turkish Telenovela for which the female is often represented by the "oriental odalisque", favorite of the harem.

The generalization of the veil since 2011 on one hand, and the Instagram revolution less than a decade later on the other, have both placed the female body in a dichotomy: the body in private space VS the body in public space.

Partial or full veils, make-up/botox/extensions/reductions/depigmentation, the female body is 'prepared' before entering the public space.

This body belongs to three categories which are ultimately three types of veiling: body hidden from view, body overexposed or body neglected.

The female body in Arab-Muslim public space is either hidden from view (under patriarchal domination) or overexposed in a plastic pseudo-femininity, always made up, always coiffed, always 'sappered' according to the most widespread codes of femininity. If it is not part of the first two classifications, this physical body may be the object of total disinterest by certain women and constitute the category of the neglected body.

Thus, veiled women VS women with hair extensions, Brazilian straightening, gel encapsulated nails and other Instagram filters. Or women/dolls VS neglected bodies already excluded from the male 'market'. This last category can include old women, old girls and mothers.

The neglected body due to lack of time is often covered but without specific intention nor too much attention. Bodies of those who have neither the time, nor the desire, nor the luxury sometimes to have a relationship with their bodies.

## STAGING TUNISIA

The stage space is chosen in different places where men gather (the streets are, as mentioned above, an essentially male territory). The choice of locations was therefore quickly made: a café with an exclusively male clientele, a weekly 'souk' and a public square.

Two dancers, two women with a neutral appearance and no make-up, voluntarily expose themselves to the gaze of men (and women) in the street. Without resorting to signs of staged femininity, they seek the gaze through the sensual intimacy of Tango.

The absence of staging places the two performers in an intimate relationship (facilitated by the dance) while at the same time transforming the spectator into a 'voyeur', placed against his will in a situation of non-recognition of the woman's body according to the codes established by society.

Two cameras film the scene. One is fixed and the other carried.

The first camera focuses on the reactions of the audience and blurs the dance, while the second camera gets closer to the two moving bodies, sometimes capturing snatches of physical contact (the coming together of faces, the sound of breathing, moments of action and lulls...) until it tries to penetrate the embrace that links both dancers.

The aim of this second camera is also to direct the viewer's gaze towards these zones of intimate contact between the two bodies in movement. The camera itself takes the place of the 'voyeur', obviously highlighting the "abrazo", this unique and singular link.

## CONTEXT MUNICH GERMANY

In Munich / Germany, we find ourselves in a completely different situation, be it on the level of the urban morphology, of the traditional gender roles and their connotation or the collective associations / imaginary concerning signs of muslim/arabic presence and culture in the public space (i.e. women wearing veils, arabic letters, music, shops).

Germany has seen immigration waves of different sizes from arabic or muslim countries: the turkish guest workers in the 60ies, immigration from the balkan countries around the 90ies and more recently the reception of syrian (2015) and afghan (2021) refugees to just name the most important ones. The latter have been very mediatic, but the majority of the muslim minorities are of turkish or balkanese provinience.

An ambiguous relation can be observed between german citizens without (what is german ? This is another huge topic that can not be discussed profoundly here) and citizens with migrational or intercultural background, on an individual as well as on a political level: problematics of integration, debates of tolerance (i.e. the use of the veil in public functions), initiatives for intercultural dialogue and integration programs on one hand face the fear of islamic terrorism at least since 9/11, an increasing visibility and their contestation of sponsoring (football clubs) and trade agreements with autocratic arabic regimes, medical tourism and the buying of high end goods and properties inaccessible to most german citizens on the other side.

Especially interesting for our project was the debate in 2015 about the 'protection' of western values, especially of the equality of men and women that got engendered and heated up by the arrival of Syrian refugees. The central concern was how to deal with cultural traditions which are or can be perceived in Germany as a disrespect of women's rights or their discrimination. The concept of a german 'Leitkultur' ('guiding culture') has been discussed, which is of course very problematic and hasn't led to any consensus in the public debate.

Also should be mentioned here a vivid activist scene for LGBTQI+ rights and visibility as well as an ongoing debate on political correctness and inclusiveness in linguistic expression, a strong endeavor to transcend traditional and restrictive gender role models and systemic / intersectional discrimination and a finally happening reflection on the colonial past of Germany and related issues such as cultural appropriation.

## STAGING & FRAMING ACTIVITIES MUNICH

Meanwhile we keep on having the mentioned ongoing public debate on formats of inter- and transcultural dialogue and integration on a political, cultural and social level, we can still observe a quite clear division of the public space: in the center and in the middle to high class residential neighborhoods a mostly european / white population, and around the central station and peripheral middle - low class neighborhoods a very high percentage of inhabitants with migrational backgrounds.

As there are not really male monopolized areas in public space in Munich, we opted to use the above described division as a guideline to choose performance spaces: lively and touristic central places, with a high percentage of white and/or financially potent passers-by (i.e. high class tourism from the arabian peninsula) and opposed to that peripheric, popular neighborhoods whose habitants have a high percentage of migrational background (mostly from Turkey and the Balkans) and rarely are exposed to (contemporary) expressions of art and are also rarely included in the former described public debates.



In order to find suitable spaces in the suburbs and to create a perhaps stronger incentive for dialogue, we wanted to collaborate with cultural associations active in these areas (such as Kulturbunt Neuperlach or Ackermann e.V., Rosalie has already worked with both) in order to choose the spaces, possibly advertise in advance and offer an introduction to tango).

The final event should take place in KÖSK (we have an oral agreement, but we can fix dates only when we will have an overview of our financial means). We hope to gather people from the neighborhoods we performed in, Tangopupils of Rosalie, Habitúés of the space and we will especially target the Tango Queer scene.

## BIOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCES & STARTING POINT OF THE PROJECT

By Fatma Oussaifi

I was born and raised in the suburbs of Tunis in a small town that despite being a seaside and port city in the past with its mild climate and summer dolcevita retains a remarkable popular and conservative side.

Tunis, despite having hosted and cohabited different cultures (and religions) throughout the 20th century (Muslims, Christians and Jews), remains an Arab-Muslim city with strong patriarchal indicators. Masculinity is still predominant in the public space (by this we mean the streets, its cafes and squares). A masculinity that is often idle because of the successive crises and an unprecedented unemployment rate since the 2011 revolution.

Being a young woman in the street in Tunis is not an easy task every day, nor for everyone. The provocations and the male gaze are often insistent, the flirting often clumsy, the sexuality often frustrated because of a social context more than castrating and a family weight and traditions crushing. So many factors that make the male both executioner and victim of a patriarchal heritage that is out of step with the times and especially with the female gender among the society.

The dance that is traditionally exposed to the eyes (essentially male but also female) is the belly dance, provocative undulations that offer smiles and cleavage to the most financially generous.

Belly dancing is overwhelmingly practiced by women and consumed by men. It remains

the entertainment par excellence of oriental nights in North Africa and elsewhere.

On a symbolic level, belly dancing and Tango form two totally antagonistic bodily expressions. While belly dancing offers the body to the outside eye, the Tango offers the body and its movement to the partner inscribed in the bubble of the abrazo( embrace).

The seduction which is undoubtedly common to both expressions and probably to many other dances and body expressions, has also in the case of Tango and belly dancing totally different targets. Belly dancing tries to seduce the audience, whereas Tango seduces from the inside.

The person who watches the Tango is often likened to a 'voyeur' who tries to penetrate through the keyhole the mystery of the 'abrazo' of this mystical and mysterious dance  
Belly dancing is a spectacle, whereas tango has a purely introspective essence.

In this sense, the Tango used here as a spectacle places itself in a position that is difficult to recognize as such. All the more so as no stage tool would reinforce the trait (no stage make-up, no high heels, no rhinestones or sequins, no hair plastered back). The Tango dance in this work has no spectacular or "show" pretensions. It is the mirror in which the woman's body and her presence are reflected.

**@residencetango - @fam.ao**

**@rosaliewanka - @\_visual\_vibrations**



# **VIEWS FROM THE VOYEUR**

ARTISTIC TEAM

Fatma Oussaifi

Rosalie Wanka

## FATMA OUSSAIFI

Fatma Oussaifi has been immersed in Tango universe since 2003 in dance, research and teaching. Trained in several disciplines (classical and neoclassical ballet, Modern Jazz, Latin and standard dances and Flamenco), her tango has an imprint of different languages and body techniques.

She considers dance as a physical and cultural product. Her work extends from the physical body to the social body, the fundamental axis of all social dance.

In 2013, she founded Residencetango with regular classes and workshops between her hometown Tunis and her adopted city, Paris. She teaches in Italy, Sweden and Germany but also in Reunion Island and Madagascar. In addition, Fatma is trained in yoga and organises yoga events and retreats as well as yoga training for dancers.

Her teaching combines a fundamental dance technique, an organised and organic body language strongly inspired by yoga practice and a global reflection on the social, cultural, historical and also political dimensions of tango.

After a Master's thesis in Paris 3 on "Tango and Argentine politics between propaganda, censorship and instrumentalization", multiple stage experiences in Tunisia and France then in Jordan ( Jarash festival Carrascoh Quartet), Italy ( Tour of the show Tango Historias de un Amor- 2018) and Reunion Island ( Tour of the show Libertango - 2013), Fatma co-directs with the south american singer Ana Karina Rossi her first show "Tango et pas Perdus" in Paris in 2014. in 2021 with the French singer Fred Metayer she founded « Booma », an association whose aim is to facilitate cultural exchanges between the two shores of the mediterranean (between Europe and Tunisia) by exchanging artists, organising art residencies and live shows (music, dance, theatre, circus arts etc) Her new project "Orientango" is a show that mixes Argentine tango and classical Arabic music and tells the story of a couple of dancers in an Arab-Muslim country in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.



## ROSALIE WANKA

*My fascination lies in the observation of intra-human relating beyond words and socio-cultural conventions. I am always wondering if communication is actually possible, and if dancing might be a way.*

*In my artistic practice I work a lot with Improvisation, as it seems to me to be the 'the technique of life', for all our technical tools and skills are useless if we can't spontaneously apply and use them to our advantage in a given situation or context.*

*This investigation is also reflected in my specialization in Argentine Tango, whose improvisation-technique allows an incredible subtle yet very precise communication between the partners; also, the reflections on gender, roles and identity that the observation of its physical mechanisms allow, keep me fascinated.*

*This has led me to numerous intercultural and interdisciplinary cooperations, always investigating the interactions of two different parts (interactions of bodies from different cultures, movement and sound, movement and visual arts...), as I see the friction created by differences as an incredible source of potential and innovation.*

### BODY OF WORK

I worked as a performer for different international companies between 2009 and 2012.

In 2009 I founded with Cecilia Loffredo the **Cia. Quiero Ser Agua**, whose six productions we performed in Europe and Latin America.

Working under my own name since 2015, I create interdisciplinary productions with musicians, visual artists and actors (and fellow dancers of course).

In 2014 I worked on two short pieces merging Tango and contemporary dance: **SKINHUNGER**, fully choreographed and with a male partner and **MANTIS**, fully based on improvisation with my female partner Cecilia Loffredo.

Followed by **BEZIRZUNGEN/CIRCATIONS**, a cooperation with the Museum Villa Stuck including live music, short-film screenings, acting and dancing, commissioned by the city of Munich, in 2015.

In 2016, I premiered my second evening filling production: **LANDSCAPES OF MY INNER DIASPORA**, about the fragmentation of identity due to life experience in different cultures, with live music by cello soloist Ana Topalovic and videomapping.

In the same year, I created **PLAYGROUND**, a Solo-work, as artist in Residence of the city of Klagenfurt, Austria, about the sedimentation of dance techniques as a embodied biographical register (2016) and **TERRITORIO ( ) CUERPO ( ) MEMORIA**, a cooperation with long-term Partner Cecilia Loffredo and the Russian born painter Olga Wiedenhöft about body memory and the relation of language and the female body-image.

2017 brought two cooperation with the visual arts: **REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN**, a Solo commissioned for the Werner Berg Museum in Carintia, Austria, and a series of Instant Performances for the Exhibitions of Julia Schewalie, Thomas Breitenfeld and Simon James at the Art Gallery Anne Uhrland in Munich, Germany.

In 2018 I came back to the format of duos: **COMMON GROUND**, with Chris-Pascal Englund-Braun, a commission of the Gesellschaft für Neue Musik to pieces of 4 contemporary music composers, and **EBONY & IVORY**, with the deaf dancer and actress Kassandra Wedel, questioning the (im)possibility of intra-human communication and understanding, merging dance and sign language.

In 2019 I was commissioned two site-specific creations: **WANDERLUST** for the Cathedral in Linz/Austria, and **BECOMING** for the Memorial space of The "Weiße Rose" (a student resistance group under the Hitler Regime) in the historical entrance Hall of the Munich University.

I also ran a research-project in collaboration with Argentinian Choreographer Rodrigo

Pardo: **ENTANGLEMENTS – comparing gender roles and cultural identity in argentine Tango and contemporary dance techniques.**

In the season 2020/21, I prepared the creation **ASYMMETRICAL ENCOUNTERS**, based on the Research-project ENTANGLEMENTS.

Later in the same year I created the site specific performance **VISUAL VIBRATIONS**, one more collaboration with deaf dancer Kassandra Wedel, merging sign language, contemporary dance and hiphop moves to techno beats and performed all over Munich city.

Also in 2021, I developed the Solo **PINK LADY**, merging contemporary floor work with argentine Tango on high heels, which is still touring through Europe and recently got the award for the best creation at the Festival Solocoreografico in Turin/Italy, a mention of honor at the Festival 10sentidos in Valencia/Spain and the second Price at Seoul International Dance Competition in Korea.

In 2022, Kassandra and me were encharged by the NSU Tribunal, a group of young political activists, to create a group performance for 500 people for the occasion of a demonstration commemorating the victims of right-wing violence - MANI-FEST.

Also this year, several RESEARCH projects are coming up:

**TANZBIBLIOTHEK (@tanzbibliothek):** a very personal library of movement material, made possible by GVL Stipendium;

**CAPTURES / MOMENTAUFNAHMEN** with photographer, architect and former dancer Paola Gallarato about the potentials of photographic documentation of dance in different architectural contexts, made possible by DIS-TANZEN SOLO;

**MADAME PINA'S** a pilote project for a dance archive in virtual reality, in collaboration with [XR HUB Bavaria](#), funded by [Stepping out](#).

## PRICES I AWARDS I RESIDENCIES

### 2022

PINK LADY - Seoul international Dance Competition 2022, category 'Choreography / professionals' / Korea

PINK LADY - Award for the Best creation at Solocoreografico Festival Torino / IT

PINK LADY - Mention of honor by the Jury of the Festival 10sentidos Valencia / ES

### 2016

L'ENJEU - Solo created as Dancer in residency ('Stadttänzerin') of the City of Klagenfurt / AT

### 2013

THE DAY YOU WILL LOVE ME, MALENA - created in Residency at Centro de Espectaculos Figueira da Foz / PT

## PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

### 2021-2022

Postgraduate studies 'Curating in the performing Arts' University of Salzburg / Freie Universität Berlin

### 2009-2013

Master of Arts in contemporary Dance at the Anton Bruckner University in Linz, Austria

### 2009-2010

Postgraduate "Tendencias contemporáneas de la Danza" en el Instituto Universitario Nacional del Arte in Buenos Aires (Argentina)

### 2006-2009

Bachelor of Arts in contemporary dance and pedagogics at the Anton Bruckner University in Linz (Austria)

### 2003-2006

Student at the Vienesese State Opera Ballet School (Austria)

### 1999-2003

Student at the Bavarian Ballet Academy in Munich, Germany (Heinz-Bosl-Stiftung)

Dances **Argentine Tango** since 2000

Experience in **aerial dance** (with harness)

**Singing lessons** from 2000-2003

**Piano lessons** from 1995-2003

**Languages:** German, French, Italian, Spanish, English (fluent); russian, portuguese, german sign language (basic level)

Wide experience in dubbing and acting in the TV-Serie Familie Merian (1992).

Currently based in Munich (Germany)

## CONTACT

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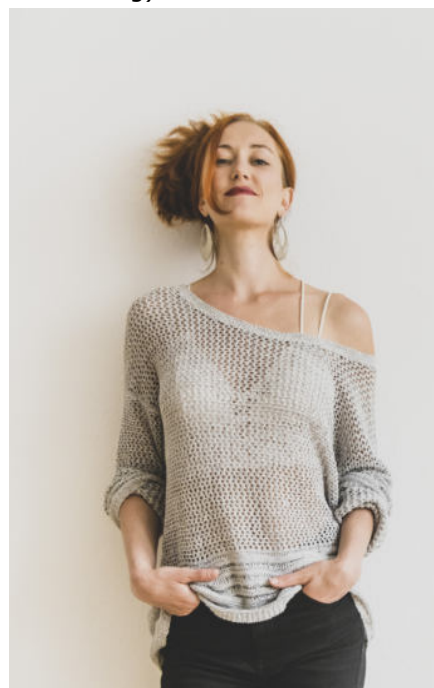
## Social Media

Instagram: @rosaliewanka (personal)

- @\_visual\_vibrations (performance projects)

- @tanzbibliothek (researchprojects)

Facebook: Rosalie Wanka (profile & site)







PAOLA EVELINA | Photographer:

Architect (Berkeley, California), Architecture associate professor (UBA, Buenos Aires), MFA in Urban Morphology (UBA, Buenos Aires), specialized in Architectural and Urban Space Photography (UP, Buenos Aires), develops a career in Performing Arts Photography in Argentina, Europe and USA, as well as set designer and lighting designer. Since 2010 she has been capturing performances and performing artists related to dance, music and theater, from contemporary dance, tango, flamenco and experimental dance and physical theater in general.

She collaborated with numerous theaters and companies throughout the world, including Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal, while developing research projects related to the dancing body, the stage as a space and the human habitat, with a special focus on the urban space and its particular cultural and historical characteristics.

Ig: [@paolaevelinaperformingarts](https://www.instagram.com/paolaevelinaperformingarts)

Facebook: Paola Evelina Gallarato

## SLIM GOMRO | Cameraman

Visual artist with scientific background.

Born August, 7th 1969 in Tunis where he lives and works. Slim Gomri started his practice as an artist with photography and migrated to other materials and expressions.

His photographic researches on voluntary alteration of the image using solvent on photographic paper led him to etching. Interested by time effect on things and raw materials, Slim has made an incursion in industrial world to transform (by laser/plasma cutting) flat sheet steel in monumental sculptures, sometimes associated to architecture.

Thus photography remains the pivot of his creation process; Slim allows himself positive experiences as cineaste.

Scientific experimentation is mixed to his artistic language.

He has been regularly exhibiting since 2007.

Slim Gomri is actually in charge of program & communication in Safia Farhat museum/ Radès Art Center (Centre des Arts Vivants de Radès) where he continues his art practice.

[www.sloimgomri.tn](http://www.sloimgomri.tn)

