

NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

Saif Azzuz

All that is between them

November 20-January 3, 2025

Opening Thursday, November 20, 6-8pm

Nicelle Beauchene Gallery is pleased to present *All that is between them*, Saif Azzuz's second solo exhibition with the gallery. This presentation introduces sculptural work with kinetic and auditory elements, alongside new paintings and works on paper.

In *All that is between them*, Azzuz explores interstitial space, contemplating the nuances and lived experience of his combined Libyan and First Nation Yurok heritage. The resulting works draw from each of these spheres while simultaneously belonging to neither, yielding something personal and new. He undertakes this pursuit not in an effort to draw specific conclusions, but rather as a process of self-interrogation, orientation and synthesis through making. In a country where both communities have long experienced marginalization and erasure, Azzuz's practice allows him not only to articulate his own relationship to these cultures, but also to consider which facets he passes down.

Permission granted, a grouping of percussive, kinetic sculptures, anchors the exhibition. These works reference the darbuka, a North African drum with a history stretching back to antiquity. Azzuz realizes these sculptures with a similar, stylized goblet form to the darbuka, and ornaments them with plasma-cut markings that recur throughout his sculptural work. *Permission granted* unites the darbuka's simple, efficient form with a deer hide covering, to yield an instrument more akin to the traditional and ceremonial drums used by the Yurok community. Motorized and synchronized, these sculptures work in tandem, each bearing the artist's 3-D printed hand that tentatively taps the instrument, producing minimal sound.

An expansive suite of works on paper titled *As i recall* depicts a mixture of plant life indigenous to Yurok and Libyan terrain: the former experienced firsthand, the latter sourced through research online and reimagined on paper. Azzuz explores them in multiple dimensions, examining where the different facets push against one another, overlap with each other and, through this work, give rise to something novel. In addition to these works, two large scale paintings —*where'd you expect us to go?* and *We answer to future generations ('werrp')*—further ground the exhibition. The patterns of these paintings refer to traditional Yurok basket weaving methods practiced in specific locations, the second of which incorporates charcoal produced by cultural burns that have long been employed by the Yurok to maintain and renew the landscape. These works, and the works through the exhibition, are united by the vulnerability of being in between—in between cultures, in between materials, and in between ideas.

Saif Azzuz (b. 1987, Born in Eureka, CA) is a Libyan-Yurok artist who resides in Pacifica, CA. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Painting and Drawing from the California College of the Arts in 2013. Azzuz has had solo presentations at the Blaffer Art Museum and the ICA San Francisco, and his work is in selected public collections including the Rennie Museum, de Young Museum - Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gochman Family Collection, Facebook, North Carolina Museum of Art, Kadist, University of St. Thomas, Stanford Health Care Art Collection, and UBS Art Collection.