



Sanam Khatibi

lives and works in Brussels



Sanam Khatibi's work explores notions of animality and the primal impulses that we all share. At the core of her practice is a questioning of our relationship with power structures, and the duality of triumph and failure. The recurrent themes that feature in her work are chaos, destruction, excess, loss of control, domination, and submission. Khatibi is also interested in the thin line that exists between fear and desire, and how closely they are interrelated.

Her subjects live on their impulses, set within alluring, exotic, and dangerous landscapes. Wildlife and animals are an integral part of her practice, and her figures are often depicted within the same plane as the flora and fauna. Power, violence, and sensuality mingle, intermix, and overlap with each other ambiguously, giving rise to multifaceted scenarios that juxtapose the animal and the human, past and present, cruelty and seduction.

Her practice consists of paintings, embroideries, tapestries, sculptures, and installations.

**Sanam Khatibi** (Belgian with Iranian heritage) lives and works in Brussels.

Her recent solo shows include: **Mendes Wood DM**, São Paulo (2022); **Groeninge Museum**, Bruges (2021); **Kunsthal Gent** (2020); **rodolphe janssen**, Brussels (2019); **BPS22 Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut**, Charleroi (2019); **P.P.O.W.**, New York (2019).

Khatibi's work has also been part of institutional group shows in **National Museum of Contemporary Art**, Athens (2022); **Kunsthal KAdE**, Amersfoort (2022); **Centraal Museum**, Utrecht (2021); **S.M.A.K.**, Ghent (2021); **Kortrijk Triennial** (2021); **Kunstverein Dresden**, Dresden (2020); **M HKA**, Antwerp (2020); **16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial** (2019); **Centre Régional d'Art Contemporaine Occitane**, Sète (2018); **Musée d'Art Contemporain (MAC)**, Marseille (2018); **Museum of Deinze and the Leie region**, Deinze (2016).

A painting of a tropical landscape. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark loincloth, holds a flaming torch. She stands next to a brown animal, possibly a pig or dog. To her left, a skull and a bowl are on the ground. In the center, a thatched hut with a yellow roof and white pillars sits on a dark, rocky outcrop. The background features several tall palm trees and other tropical vegetation in shades of blue and green. The sky is a light, warm tone. The overall style is reminiscent of early 20th-century tropicalist art.

SELECTED  
EXHIBITIONS



2022

Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo

*In my dreams, I kill him every night*

Khatibi's work, which is primarily painting and drawing-based but also expands to include sculpture and installation, draws on a multi-cultural pantheon of art-historical references and imagery which the artist combines to great effect, provoking intriguing and unexpected narratives to emerge from her carefully constructed and magically symbolic compositions.

Three new large-scale works, in oil and pencil on canvas, dominate the exhibition, one of which lends its title to the show: *In my dreams, I kill him every night*. At once Naive, but with an alluring sense of Magical Realism and the Medieval violence of Hieronymus Bosch, the giant figures in these works appear as grand visions of both destructive and seductive female power. The nude, oversized women that dominate Khatibi's edenic but otherworldly landscapes are either engaged in acts of cannibalism or in playful acts of seduction, perhaps, although all is not quite as it seems in these compositions. Painted in miniature on the ground next to each of these figures, are what appear to be Still-Life compositions of objects that function as libations, offerings of some kind, that follow no specific religion or set of beliefs, rendered almost in a Flemish Golden Age painterly style. Pristine, detailed, lifelike, and yet strangely enigmatic in their relationships between one another, these objects include human bones, vases and pottery from various historical periods, from ancient Greece to Imperial China, bowls of fruit and flowers, dead and living animals.



*In my dreams, I kill him every night*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2022



*In my dreams, I kill him every night*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2022



*In my dreams, I kill him every night*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2022



2021

Groeninge Museum, Bruges

*Lemon Drizzle*

*Lemon drizzle* is the name of the solo exhibition with paintings and an artistic installation of the Belgian artist Sanam Khatibi. Khatibi's oeuvre is diverse. Her art is enigmatic.

The artist does not only make paintings large and small size. She also creates sculptures, embroidery, tapestries. Megalomaniac paintings on canvas are reminiscent of the iconography and compositions of Lucas Cranach the Elder, Jan Van Scorel, Frida Kahlo.

In every artwork by Sanam Khatibi is emerging a literary force. Still lifes on panel, of a smaller size, derive their intimacy, sense of detail and picturesque power to 17th-century Baroque still lifes. The artist brings to each vanitas scene a wealth of visual material together.

[https://www.museabrugge.be/volumes/general/Persdossier\\_SK\\_EN\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.museabrugge.be/volumes/general/Persdossier_SK_EN_lowres.pdf)





*Lemon Drizzle*, Groeninge Museum, Bruges, 2021



*Lemon Drizzle*, Groeninge Museum, Bruges, 2021



*Lemon Drizzle*, Groeninge Museum, Bruges, 2021



2019  
16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul  
*The Seventh Continent*



2017  
rodolphe janssen, Brussels  
*Rivers in your mouth*



SELECTED  
WORKS





*Je serais douce*, 2023, volcanic stone and burnt wood, 550 x 200 cm







*Nothing has ever worked for me*, 2022, hand-woven wool, 221 x 247.5 cm





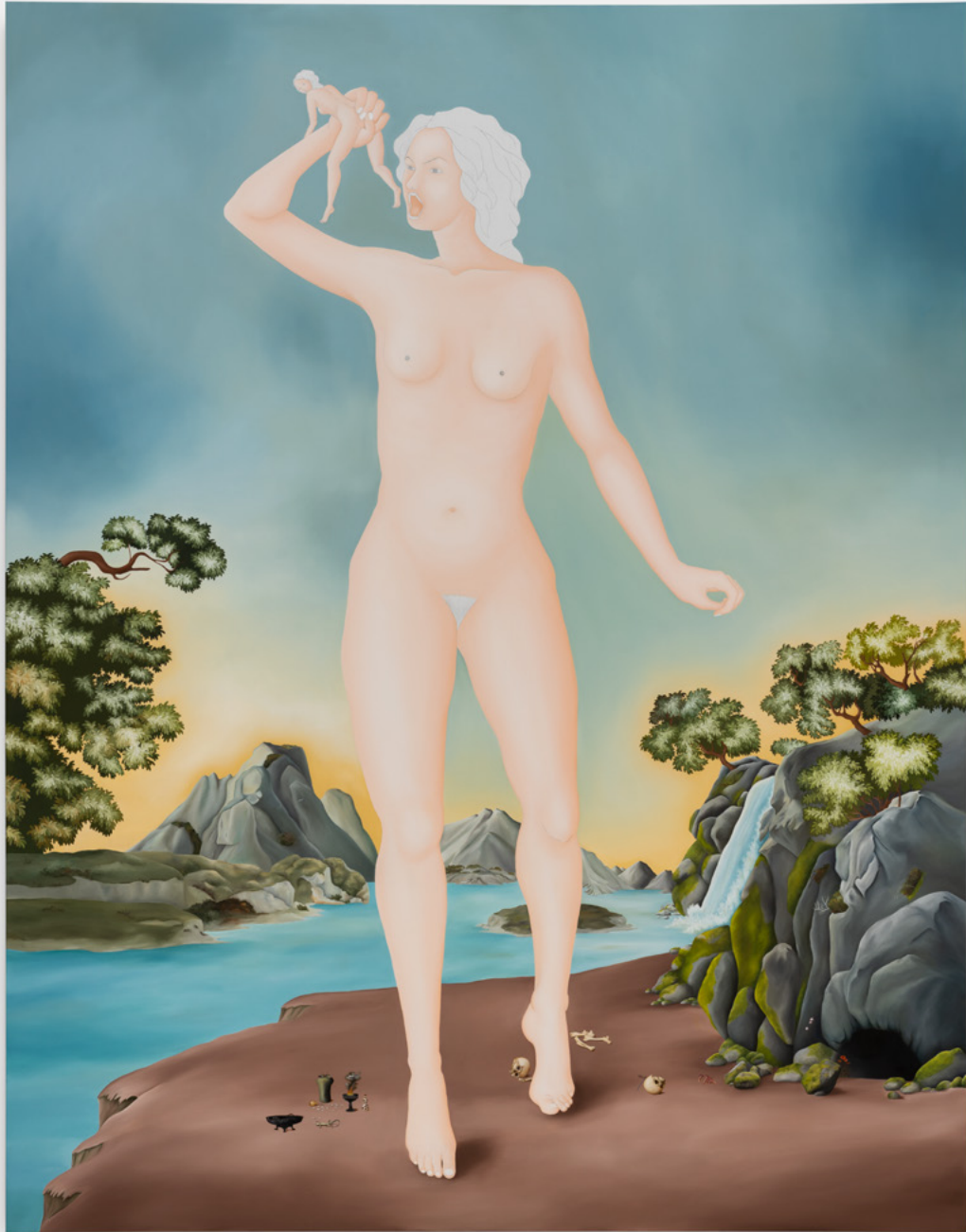
*In my dreams, I kill him every night*

2022

pencil and oil on canvas

235 x 185 cm





*Songs my mother thought me*

2022

pencil and oil on canvas

235 x 185 cm





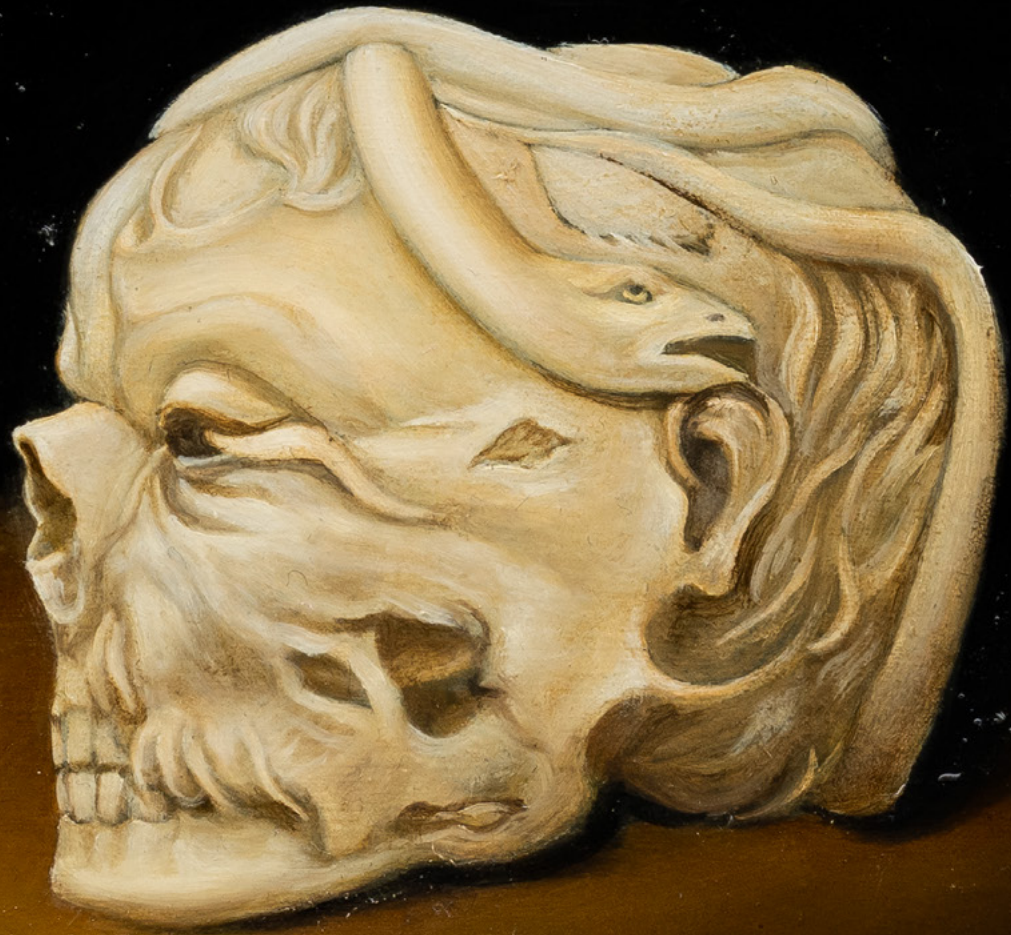
*Garden Scene (it is said they are each other)*, 2022, oil and pencil on canvas, 210 x 300 cm







*Dead flowers in a vase*, 2022, oil on panel, 23.9 x 31.4 cm





*Nothing will please me more*, 2022, oil on panel, 16 x 21 cm





*As if forgotten for centuries*, 2022, oil on panel, 16 x 21 cm





*Little Charlatans*, 2021, oil, pastel and pencil on panel , 24 x 31.6 cm







*Sonnets to Orpheus*, 2021, oil, pastel and pencil on panel, 24 x 31.6 cm





*Disfigured Objects* , 2021, oil, pastel and pencil on canvas , 24 x 31.6 cm





*Lemon Drizzle*, 2021, pencil and oil on canvas, 250 x 210 cm





*Please forgive me if I have been too blunt*, 2020, oil on panel , 16 x 21 cm







*Pharaoh's Dance*, 2020, oil on panel, 41 x 51 cm





*She can't pass a mirror without seducing it*, 2020, oil on panel, 21 x 31 cm





*Fantastic Beasts*, 2019, oil and pencil on canvas, 180 x 230 cm





*There are kisses for us all*, 2019, oil and pencil on canvas, 180 x 230 cm





*Sweet, murderous desire*, 2019, oil on panel, 21 x 31 cm





*Under the influence of poison*, 2018, oil and pencil on canvas, 180 x 230 cm





*Juicy Lucy*, 2016, oil and pencil on canvas, 160 x 200 cm





*With tenderness and longing*, 2016, oil and pencil on canvas, 160 x 200 cm







*A venison of loveliness*, 2016, oil and pencil on canvas, 160 x 200 cm



## Solo Exhibitions

2022

*In my dreams, I kill him every night*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

2021

*Lemon Drizzle*, Groeninge Museum, Bruges, Belgium

2020

*Cyanide*, rodolphe janssen, Brussels, Belgium

*Cruellest of the Seas*, Kunsthal Gent, Ghent, Belgium

2019

*An Hour Before the Devil Fell*, P.P.O.W, New York, USA

*De ta salive qui mord*, BPS22, Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut, Charleroi, Belgium

*The Murders of the Green River*, rodolphe janssen, Brussels, Belgium

2018

*Wild Mink, artlead Salon*, Brussels, Belgium

2017

*Rivers in your mouth*, rodolphe janssen, Brussels, Belgium

*With tenderness and longing*, Billboard Series: Art in Public Space, *Artlead*, Ghent, Belgium

*No church in the wild*, The Cabin LA, Los Angeles, USA

2016

*Le jardin décomposé*, Super Dakota, Brussels, Belgium

*The hollow in the ferns*, NICC, Brussels, Belgium

2015

*Ask me nicely*, trampoline, Antwerp, Belgium

2014

*Séduire ou crever de faim*, Island, Brussels, Belgium

## Group Exhibitions

2023

*Linhas Tortas*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

*BEACH*, Nino Mier Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

*The Cabin LA presents: A curated flashback*, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, USA

*Come a little closer*, DC Moore Gallery, New York, USA

*Je serais douce*, Le Voyage à Nantes, Nantes, France

2022

*Modern Love: or Love in the Age of Cold Intimacies*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece

*Finis Terrae*, Snijders&Rockoxhuis, Antwerp, Belgium

*Abrasive Paradise*, Kunsthal KAdE, Amersfoort, The Netherlands

*The Natural World: Part II*, Alexander Berggruen, New York, USA

2021

*Modern Love or Love in the Age of Cold Intimacies*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands

*One Way or Another 10 years Posture Editions*, S.M.A.K, Ghent, Belgium

*Paradise*, Kortrijk Triennial, Kortrijk, Belgium

*Beyond the Looking Glass*, UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles, USA

*Mirrored Infinities*, The Agprognostic Temple, Brussels, Belgium

*Chants of a Gargoyle*, Waldburger Wouters, Brussels, Belgium

2020

*The Shameful Kiss*, Kunstverein Dresden, Dresden, Germany

*Tears of Eros*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands

*Zonder kunstenaars geen kunst*, M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium

2019

*The Seventh Continent*, 16th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey

*Some Trees*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

*Salon de Peinture*, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA), Antwerp, Belgium

2018

*Nightfall*, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels, Belgium

*Terres de Femmes*, Praz-Delavallade, Paris, France

*Mademoiselle*, Centre Régional d'Art Contemporaine Occitane, Sète, France

*Op de grond, tussenin of aan de hemel*, Ten Bogaerde, Coxyde, Belgium

*100 Sculptures*, Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico

*SEED*, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, USA

*Dead Eden*, Lyles & King, New York, USA

*What are you staring at?*, Eduardo Secci, Florence, Italy

*Quel amour!?*, Musée d'Art Contemporain (MAC), Marseille, France

NICC 20 Years Jubilee, NICC, Antwerp, Belgium

*Weeping, Dreaming, Fucking, Laughing*, Wschód Gallery, Warsaw, Poland

2017

*Hecate*, Various Small Fires, Los Angeles, USA

*Dalonaz*, Royal, Brussels, Belgium

*Listening to The Form*, Panthera, Brussels, Belgium

2016

*Summer in the City*, Christine Konig Gallery, Vienna, Austria

*Biennial of Painting*, Museum of Deinze and the Leie region, Deinze, Belgium

*Balls & Glory*, rodolphe janssen, Brussels, Belgium

2015

*Louise 186*, Brussels Art Days, Brussels, Belgium

*Me, myself and I*, trampoline, Antwerp, Belgium

*Palourdes cuites*, Christopher Crescent, Brussels, Belgium

*Every day I'm...*, Harlan Levey, Brussels, Belgium

2014

*The Penthouse Art Event*, Harlan Levey Projects, Bloom Hotel, Brussels, Belgium

2013

Thalie Art Project, Brussels, Belgium

2012

*The Antagonist*, Waterside Contemporary, London, United Kingdom

#### Collections

Art Gallery of Ontario

Belfius Art Collection

Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection

BPS22, Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut

Centraal Museum Utrecht

Musée d'Ixelles

Province du Hainaut

The Rennie Collection

S.M.A.K.

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Wood  
DM

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