

MAGASIN 3

STOCKHOLM KONSTHALL

MONA HATOUM OCTOBER 9 – DECEMBER 19, 2004

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Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall was founded in 1987 and is one of Sweden's leading institutions for contemporary art. From the start Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall has become recognized for major exhibitions presenting works by international artists. Magasin 3 is also a collecting institution. The aim is to actively participate in contemporary culture by introducing and presenting artists and supporting artistic work. We see our exhibition program as a complement and a challenge to other institutions.

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MONA HATOUM

October 9 – December 19, 2004

English

MONA HATOUM

*1952, lives and works in London and Berlin

Mona Hatoum, one of the most distinguished artists of her generation, unites in her work an interest in aesthetics with themes that are political or social in character. The exhibition at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, produced in collaboration with Hamburger Kunsthalle and Kunstmuseum Bonn, is the most comprehensive presentation of Hatoum's work to date. The show includes around 60 artworks, as well as a large-scale new installation made specifically for Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall.

Mona Hatoum (British/Palestinian) was born of Palestinian parents in Beirut in 1952, but has been based in London since 1975 when the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon prevented her returning home from a visit to London. After studying at the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Slade School of Art, she rapidly made a name for herself in the 1980s with a series of acclaimed performance and video works. Her work focuses on conflicted subjects such as violence, oppression, and voyeurism, often in relation to the human body. *Measures of Distance* (1988) consists of a series of grainy still images of Hatoum's mother in the shower. Arabic text drawn from Hatoum's mother's letters from Beirut is written above the images. Over the recording of a conversation between Hatoum and her mother, we hear Hatoum's voice reading English translations of the letters. The work examines identity and sexuality against a background of social unrest, exile, and transplantation. In contrast to this installation, where the mother's body as an individual is presented, the viewer of *Testimony* (1995–2002) is confronted by a close-up of an unidentified scrotum.

In the early 90s, Hatoum turned to expansive installations and objects that elicit in the viewer contradictory feelings such as

fascination and fear, desire and disgust. The body is still present, even if it is now intimated or alluded to rather than portrayed, one example being *Umbilicus* (2003) where a chain of buttons coiled like an umbilical cord comes out from a stool. Other examples are works in which Hatoum weaves human hair, applies pubic hair to a chair, or uses her own blood on handmade paper. Her art is located on the border between reality and illusion, where recognizable everyday objects are distorted and transformed into unpleasant and sometimes physically dangerous objects. Rubber crutches, a carpet of pins, and electrified kitchen utensils are a few examples of Hatoum's unique body of work. Hatoum herself discusses the multifaceted nature of her work as follows:

"You first experience an artwork physically. I like the work to operate on both sensual and intellectual levels. Meanings, connotations, and associations come after the initial physical experience as your imagination, intellect, psyche are fired off by what you've seen."

Mona Hatoum has exhibited widely in Europe, USA, and Canada. In 1995, she was nominated for the Turner Prize for her exhibitions at Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris (1994) and at White Cube in London (1995). She was included in the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennial that same year. The Swedish public knows Hatoum as a IASPIS resident (2001 and 2002) and through an exhibition at Uppsala konstmuseum in the fall of 2003 that focused mainly on her video work and photography. Earlier this year, Hatoum became the first visual artist to receive Copenhagen University's Sonning Prize and this fall she will be awarded the Swiss Roswitha Haftmann Prize in Zurich.