

Ali Kazma

*Portfolio 2023*

## About

Born in 1971 in Istanbul, Turkey, Ali Kazma is a lens-based media artist living and working in Istanbul and Paris.

He has a master of arts degree from the New School in New York City.

Questioning social organisation and the value of human activity, he highlights the relationship between the visible and the invisible aspects of reality by looking closely at the management of labour, time, bodies, gestures, space and processes. Kazma's attentive eye collects specific activities in a broad range of economic, industrial, scientific, medical, social and artistic spheres.

He has an interest in spaces of social significance, places of production, in industries and handicraft, as well as in the details of machinery and ritualistic, repetitive daily tasks.

The artist, who represented Turkey at the 55th Venice Biennale - Pavilion of Turkey in 2013, had a comprehensive solo exhibition at Jeu de Paume, Paris in 2017. Ali Kazma's other solo exhibitions include Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (2023), Albergo Diurno Venezia (Milan, 2018), MUNTREF (Buenos Aires, 2018), Arter (Istanbul, 2015), CAPRI (Düsseldorf, 2015), Hirshhorn Museum (Washington, 2010) and Platform Garanti (Istanbul, 2004).

Group exhibitions and biennials include 6th Kuandu Biennale (Taipei, 2018), 7th Moscow International Biennale of Contemporary Art (Moscow, 2017), MAXXI (Rome, 2016), Musée d'Art Contemporaine de Lyon (Lyon, 2013), 30th Sao Paulo Biennial (Sao Paulo, 2012), Istanbul Biennial (Istanbul, 2001, 2007, 2011) Muzeum Sztuki Lodz (Lodz, 2012), Istanbul Modern (Istanbul, 2011), Museum Kunstpalast (Düsseldorf, 2010) and New Museum (New York, 2010). He has received the UNESCO Prize for Promotion of the Arts in 2001 and the Nam June Paik Award in 2010. The artist's works have been included in a number of institutional collections such as CNAP (Paris), Istanbul Modern, MEP (Paris), MONA (Tasmania), Sztuki Museum (Lodz), Tate Modern (London), TBA21 (Vienna), Foundation Louis Vuitton Collection (Paris) and VKV Foundation Collection (Istanbul).

[Click here](#) for a video portrait of the artist by Jeu de Paume Magazine.



*Clerk, 2011, Single screen HD Video (loop), 3:09 min.  
Watch Clerk [here](#). Password: alikazma*



On set. Tattoo, 2013, HD video, 7:48 minutes



Hands working with dexterity, gently and carefully – the precise gestures of the clock master as he dismantles a four-glass 19th-century brass clock. The film reveals the knowledge and skill of this old artisan as, through his magnifying glass, he scrutinizes and manipulates with determination different parts of the clock. The subject of this video, *Clock Master* (2006), is the work of Recep Gorgen, a Turkish artisan in Istanbul. The film is a study of how he repairs and ‘revives’ the clock. The video camera, which is very close to the subject, also captures the ambient sounds in the workshop. No other sounds interfere with the image: image and sound cohere. The clock strikes at the beginning of the film, resonating dumbly. Towards the end, when the clock master checks that it is functioning correctly following the repair, the sound of the clock rings out, sharply and clearly.

The sound seems to echo the shine of the sparkling clean brass. The attention to detail in this film, the clock master’s gestures, hands, posture and intense concentration all signify his knowledge of how the mechanism works. He puts the clock together again from memory without a drawing or any form of written instructions. His method is revealed to the artist and, as this experience unfolds over a period of fifteen minutes, the viewer is absorbed into the video work as if they had become an intimate part of this same experience. The narrative of the film, the way the film is edited, puts the spectator in the same position of observation as the artist. *Clock Master* can be seen as a metaphor for the very medium used to produce the artwork: video or film. The medium where sound and image together produce a ‘temporal object’. In fact the subject of the work is literally that of time itself, or more specifically an instrument that measures time. This refers to the radical shift in our society by which technology has completely modified our relationship to time causing such old mechanisms to become obsolescent or antiquities. The experience of the spectator during which the image is perceived in present time even though it is the recording of past actions is typical of all films, however *Clock Master* emphasises this aspect in a singular way. The act of viewing (by the viewer) and that of observation and recording (by the artist) are linked through perception. Artworks, as objects produced by artistic intention, have gained their autonomy ever since their displacement into the exhibition space has been acknowledged as an active part of their making.

So part of the artist’s intention in the making of the work is linked to the object’s function in an exhibition space. This resonance, in the case of time-based works like film and video, has an important role to play in how the visitor experiences the time and space relationship. Because the use of video is so common in contemporary media today, it is completely integrated as a documentary medium and viewers are familiar with this visual language.

Ali Kazma’s approach aims at creating critical distance in viewers’ minds, enhancing the capacity of art to visually and mentally question reality, to develop and share different realms of reflection. Curious and observant, Kazma mainly works with lens-based media, as he investigates situations, places and structures relating to man’s control of his environment and his capacity for transforming the world. His video works raises fundamental questions relating to human activity in economic, industrial, scientific, medical, social and artistic spheres. Each video outlines a different facet of his on-going study of change in our contemporary world.



*Clock Master* (Obstructions series), 2006, single channel video (loop), 15 min.  
Watch *Clock Master* [here](#). Password: analixforeveralikazma



Ali Kazma has made over sixty videos in all. This body of work is comprised of many independent video works, but also two series entitled *Obstructions* and *Resistance* that he has developed since 2005 and in which the body is central. In the former, it is portrayed as an active part of a production process, be it industrial or artistic. In the latter, the artist endeavours to “render visible the endless possibility, the endless potential harboured within the body as a bearer and creator of meaning and to open up discussions of its new aesthetic and intellectual possibilities”.<sup>1</sup> To date, the *Obstructions* series is composed of eighteen videos of variable duration (between five and seventeen minutes) made over a period of ten years from 2005 to 2015. *Clock Master* described above is the third video in this series that explores subjects chosen by the artist as examples of processes that ‘block out’, or fight against the natural evolution of life, the degradation of matter, the inevitable and continual change due to time that leads to demolition or disintegration.

Kazma portrays singular and concrete attempts to produce, restore and maintain life as the utmost and foremost goal of human nature. Even though the presence of the human body may not be central to all the forms of manufacture that Kazma covers, the human effort involved in the conception, control and displacement of forms is clearly the main aspect shown in the *Obstructions* series.

*Brain Surgeon* (2006), also part of the *Obstructions* series, shows an operation on the brain of a middle-aged female patient with Parkinson’s disease by a surgeon called Ali Zirh. This video shows in a very detailed way different stages of the operation. The fourteen-minute film is about knowledge and precision in the medical field. This project is ongoing, since Kazma continues to shoot similar operations and thereby follows advancing technology in this specific medical practice. It is particularly interesting to see the tools and techniques used during the operation, and one can note how mechanical this intervention is even though it also uses very sophisticated technology. For example, the patient’s head is bolted into a metallic frame in order to keep it in place during the operation, almost like a form of medieval torture. The patient is conscious and she is asked to respond to the surgeon’s demands so as to check her physical aptitudes during the operation. The work is also about suffering, healing, surgical risk and prolongation of life through medical care.

It is in these early works that Ali Kazma shows his endless curiosity and his desire to share the unknown parts of our everyday world with the viewer. The films are edited in such a way that contextual shots and detailed shots alternate, conveying the intense investigations made by the artist. Each piece is the result of what the artist describes as “giving form to what he has found out” through the process of filming the subject. Just as Walker Evans said about his photographic work: “I don’t think the essence of photography has the hand in it so much. The essence is done very quietly with a flash of the mind, and with a machine. I think too that photography is editing, editing after the taking. After knowing what to take you have to do the editing. The secret of photography is, the camera takes on the character and the personality of the handler. The mind works on the machine – through it, rather.”<sup>2</sup>

Ali Kazma started the *Resistance* series in 2012. Of the thirteen works in this series made in 2013, *Anatomy* is the most striking example of how central, literally and metaphorically, the human body is to the artist’s work. A group of students clad in white lab coats can be seen peering over a table in an empty, light, clinical room.



*Anatomy* (*Resistance Series*), 2013, single channel video, 4 min.

Watch *Anatomy* [here](#). Password: analixforeveralikazma

In the presence of their professor, who can be identified since he is dressed differently and who speaks Turkish, which is the only hint of culture and geographic location,<sup>3</sup> they are actually studying the muscles and tendons of the arm of a dead man lying face up (but covered to conceal his identity), arms stretched out at right angles. The film accentuates the didactic aspect of the scene, showing wide shots of the situation: the role of the professor and the active presence of a small group of pupils, together with close detailed shots, showing the texture of the skin, muscles, tendons, the dried blood in the fingernails, the inert hand, etc. When the lesson is over, the corpse is slowly wrapped up. First, the thick layer of skin is wrapped over the muscles of the arm, the arms are tucked away close to the torso and the black plastic cover that the body lies in is zipped closed. The wooden planks for the arms lie empty at 36 right angles to the closed black bag like a reminiscence of a crucifixion.

Throughout this four-minute film notions of scale and representation are made very clear. Small-scale three-dimensional models, with removable organs, bones and muscles, represent the human body. Their function is purely educational, as is that of the full-scale real human body freed, by the absence of life, from nearly all moral constraints, except that of identity. As in all of Ali Kazma's work, he excludes emotion in his way of filming and even more so in the editing.

The viewer's emotions may, however, be triggered by the factual information in this work. The artwork thus invites the visitor to consider the representation of the human body from a historical and cultural perspective, introducing relativity and distance to the subject matter. Between two extremities – presence and absence – the fundamental question here is the role of education, understanding, culture and knowledge in the apprehension and, furthermore, the philosophy of life and death. "Our relationship with the world", emphasises Ali Kazma, "is established through the body and this relationship is authentic and singular for each of us. Based on this notion, this series searches whether the body can become a site of resistance that each and every one of us can constitute within ourselves against totalitarian thought and oppressive ideology."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ali Kazma, video interview about his solo exhibition, *Timemaker*, Istanbul, ARTER, 2015 (<http://www.arter.org.tr/W3/?iExhibitionId=57>).

<sup>2</sup> Leslie Katz, "Interview with Walker Evans", *Art in America*, March–April 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Ali Kazma gives short, generic titles to his works. For example, up till now, he has never specified a place name in a title. Specific visual or audible details signify the location in which the works are made. The viewers may refer to their own knowledge of the social, geographic, historical and political contexts that may be interpreted through these details.

<sup>4</sup> Ali Kazma, video interview about his solo exhibition *Timemaker*, op. cit.

Each specific project, identified quite intuitively, is a study of a particular place, a place that may be empty, or a place where people interact or perform their principal activities. Like an archaeologist, the artist shifts from one place to another, from one subject to another, uncovering and unfolding the hidden parts of everyday situations and places or activities.

The whole body of Kazma's work progresses in a relentless process of exploration to which each work adds scope and depth. The chronological order in which he makes his films adds no specific meaning to the work as a whole. Articulating creativity, invention, restoration and conservation, the documentary strategy at play in Kazma's work has to do with the making of a subjective, audio-visual archive. Twenty years of steady and intense work have laid the foundations for this repository. The artist stresses the need to reveal change and differences through his work. He claims that the political stance of his artwork lies in the assertion that diversity, complexity, variation and singularity are all essential aspects of the richness of our contemporary world. While technology advances, industrial activity has overtaken the world due to its economic power, producing a shift in the spatial and temporal aspects of people's daily lives in most parts of the world. This evolution is a complex phenomenon that has been significant for the industrial revolutions of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Kazma's work reflects these changes as the subject matter moves from forms of manual practice, such as *Calligraphy* (2013), *Taxidermist* (2010) and *Tattoo* (2013), for example, to industrial production, with metal smelting in *Rolling Mills* (2007), glass blowing in *Crystal* (2015), a fully automated car factory with *Automobile Factory* (2012) and the modern industrial production of denim jeans with *Jean Factory* (2008). The two latter works in particular highlight questions linked to globalisation. Ali Kazma questions the inherent notion of progress as the driving force in scientific research and economic development. The works pinpoint how the human desire to control matter, be it living or inert, is equally linked to the desire for perfection and power. The mastering of modern techniques, the total automation of mass production in industry and the use of the human body as the ultimate model for robots (*Robot*, 2013) are just some of the motifs present in Kazma's work.



*Tattoo*, (Resistance series) , 2013, single channel HD video (loop), 7:48 .  
Watch *Tattoo* [here](#). Password: alikazma





*Calligraphy, 2013, Single channel HD Video (loop), 5:45 min. Watch Calligraphy [here](#). Password: alikazma*

He also explores ways in which space, memory and time interact. For example, *Absence* (2011), a two-channel video shown as an endless loop, was shot in a NATO base in the Netherlands that was abandoned in the early 1990s, at end of the Cold War. *Past* (2012) shows excavations in progress at the archaeological site of Bibracte in France. *Home* (2014) is about the domestic environment of Fusun Onur, an artist living in Istanbul. In each one of these films the viewer identifies objects that represent the past. The objects constitute their environment and illustrate experiences that have come to an end.

In some works of the *Resistance* series the rapport between the body and architecture is quite explicit: <sup>5</sup> “Ali Kazma seeks the counterpart of the metaphor that spatialises the body as a coffin, cage or prison of the mind and the spirit in architecture and spatial organisation. Although he almost never shows the body itself in these works, his camera targets the sites that recall the control, discipline and restriction of the body.”<sup>6</sup> *Prison* (2013) was shot in a prison in Sakarya, Turkey. The framed official portrait of Atatürk, the first president of the Turkish republic, and the framed presentation of the Turkish national anthem hung on the wall opposite the entrance are the most obvious clues as to where this place is situated geographically. The film is almost silent, as silent as the snow falling on the building. The artist circumscribes the place and slowly introduces the viewer to the structure of the building, the pink colour of the walls, the barbed wire and the white sky over the inner yard.

Washing lines, tied to the bars of the cell windows, cross over 38 from one wall of the yard to the other. From inside, behind the grids over the windows, one can see the barbed wire and the snowflakes in the gentle luminescence of the city lights. The scene is very graphic, almost picturesque. The camera loves slowly through the empty spaces: corridors, what appears to be a sewing and knitting workshop, a classroom, a ceremonial room. The vivid colours of these more intimate spaces contrast with the soft beige and pink of the prison corridors. Mural paintings, black slippers, white sneakers in the corridor by the doors of the cells, neon lights, the Turkish flag and clinical acoustic signals are all signs of enclosure. Finally, the viewer is confronted with the notion of surveillance as Kazma chooses to show the video monitors in the control room on which one can see individuals moving around.

He shows us emptiness – apart from a few personal objects belonging to the occupants that signify their presence. It is interesting to note how, in Kazma’s latest works, architectural forms have a strong presence and are shown in the context of their environments. As this notion of territory is embedded in the works, they produce critical discourse on geopolitics and the industrial exploitation of society. This is the case in the work *Safe* (2015), which is about the global seed vault situated on one of the Svalbard Islands near Greenland in a zone administered by Norway. This amazingly simple form of concrete architecture protrudes out of the snow-covered mountain. The image shows the immaculate environment, as well as the inner walls and pipes and the shelves on which many metallic boxes are stacked.

Their labels give a small insight into the purpose of the artist’s work, the function of the building and the choice of the location. Here, with the naturally frozen environment, hundreds of thousands of species of seeds are preserved from extinction. Just as *Cryonics* (2013), in which the artist ventures into the premises used for the preservation of human bodies, *Safe* leads the viewer to question the active role of humanity in the rapid evolution of ‘nature’. The video is aesthetically very present, but it’s meaning is closer to a statement against Romanticism than a rich emotional experience claiming itself as part of this heritage. It is important to note that Kazma does not glorify the past at all. Moreover, the conceptual aspect of his work lies in the conception of video installations as devices showing perpetual change that mark time in the photographic sense. This becomes very clear in one of his most recent works, *Mine* (2017). The film was shot in an abandoned saltpetre (nitrate) mine in the Atacama Desert. The mine, like many others in the region, closed down in the late 1930s. However, the precise location of this film is the Chacabuco mine, which in the early 1970s became a vile concentration camp for the Pinochet regime where workers, lawyers, artists and writers were imprisoned. This hostile environment is now in ruins. Kazma shows the remains as if this site was a three-dimensional palimpsest.<sup>7</sup> Although it seems impossible to actually read the history of the place through what is left, this video clearly indicates that Kazma records the strict circumstances present at the time of shooting and that in the editing he maintains the essential factual and documentary content highlighting the quintessence of the site.

Another recent work, *North* (2017), portrays another deserted mine situated in a region of extreme conditions. Contrasting with *Mine*, *North* shows the Pyramiden Coal Mine situated in Spitsbergen, Svalbard, close to where *Safe* was shot some two years earlier. This abandoned mine represents the region's relatively recent complex political history, marked by Soviet culture for over fifty years (between 1936 and 1991). The architecture of the mine buildings and the historical artefacts left there are testimonies of the strong ideological presence of this working environment. Again colour, texture and contrast produce an atmosphere that is closer to desolation than nostalgia. However, the omnipresence of solitude in the wide empty spaces comes across as a vital component of these recent works.<sup>8</sup>

The final stage of making the work takes place in the exhibition space itself. Perception is conditioned by the space that the work is shown in and also, to a large extent, by the interaction of the other works that the artist chooses to show in proximity, highlighting yet again the underlying notion whereby the artist's oeuvre is based on the multiplication of works, in the composition of an archive that is perpetually growing. The interaction of the works makes the variation of colour, form and rhythm very evident to the viewer, thus enhancing their aesthetic qualities. Not only is this composition within the exhibition space of utmost importance to the artist, but also, as previously described, each visual study or artwork represents a kind of archetype: the subjects are motifs linked to individual and collective memory.

The use of video is particularly interesting in this respect as it is a medium that provides, within a given time and space, an opportunity for the viewer to recall their own personal or subjective knowledge about the topics covered by the works. The artist endeavours to leave as much liberty as possible to the viewers, allowing them to move around freely in open spaces occupied by the projections and/or the screens that make up his installations. However, Kazma has the profound belief that his work also has a strong informative quality. It registers a state of the world and records specific moments in the timescale of our contemporary world. The 'extracts of life' produced through filming circumscribed locations or situations result from his intense visual research on subjects that are of personal interest to him, but which also have historical, social and political potential. The range and the variation of subjects he chooses to work on are invaluable to the artist.

In this respect, his outlook is close to that of the writer, poet and ethnologist Michel Leiris who, in his text *Le sacré dans la vie quotidienne*, tried to define, using the written word, those intimate and personal values of life that make certain experiences so precious and memorable: "For it may well be that, in the succinct explanation of what he calls his sacred, the author of *L'Âge d'homme* [The Age of Man] coincidentally succeeds in encountering our sacred – mine, yours; in eliciting in the reader a similar curiosity, an equivalent desire to probe their own experience, in order to define the colour of their sacred. Few texts, it seems to me, have the power to convoke the reader's participation so effectively; and, in so doing, bring literature and life together within us, with such a powerful degree of intensity."<sup>9</sup>



*North*, 2017, HD video 2- channel, synchronised with sound, 5:10 min.

<sup>5</sup> *Prison* (2013), *School* (2013), *Home* (2014), *L'Atelier Sarkis* (2015) and *Safe* (2015), for example.

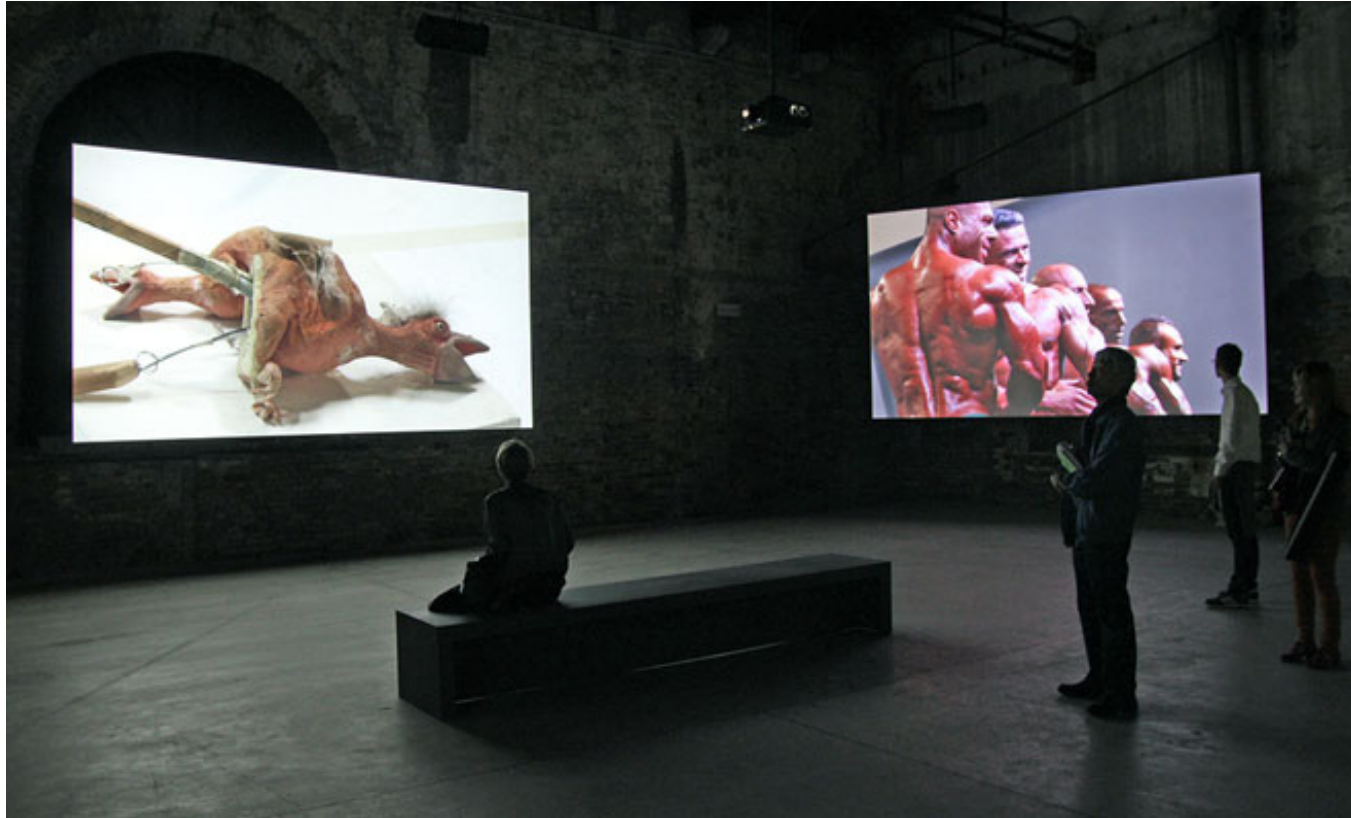
<sup>6</sup> Emre Baykal, "Resistance", in Ali Kazma. *Resistance*, Istanbul, İKSV / Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly this place is still gated, locked and guarded.

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that the artist always works alone in the process of the shooting and editing, with an amazing economy of means using equipment that he can manage by himself in all circumstances.

<sup>9</sup> Lionel Menasche, preface to Michel Leiris, *Le Sacré dans la vie quotidienne* (Paris: Allia, 2016, p. 11).





*Resistance, 2013, multi-channel video installation, exhibition view Pavilion of Turkey, la Biennale di Venezia (2013), commissioned by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, photo: Haupt & Binder*

## North, 2017

2- channel HD video, synchronised, colour, sound, 5.10 min.

The diptych *North* takes the viewer to Spitzbergen in Norway. With his camera, Kazma explores a deserted mine, operated by the Soviets from 1930 to 1980. Time has crystallized in the buildings belonging to this former Soviet workers' colony – as time simply seems to disappear in Kazma's work. Or maybe historical time dissolves into unmeasurable time: the accumulation of dust on floors or the changing of the seasons.

Watch North [here](#). Password: analixforeveralikazma



*North, 2017, 2- channel HD video, synchronised, colour, sound, 5.10 min, exhibition view Winterreise at AKINCI (2019), photo: Wytske van Keulen*

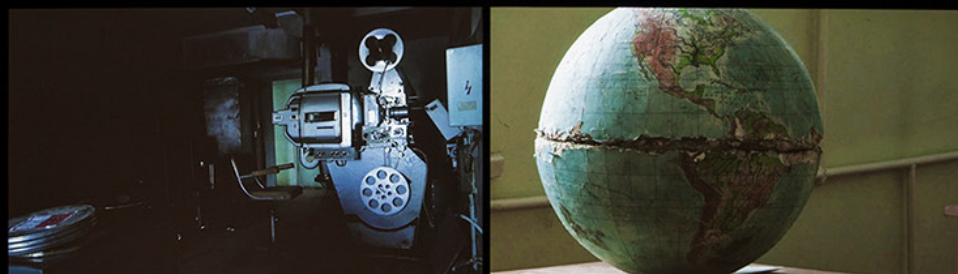


*North, 2017, 2- channel HD video, synchronised, colour, sound, 5.10 min. exhibition view Winterreise at AKINCI (2019), photo: Wytske van Keulen*





*North, 2017, 2- channel HD video, synchronised, colour, sound, 5.10 min. exhibition view Winterreise at AKINCI (2019), photo: Wytske van Keulen*



*North, 2017, 2- channel HD video, synchronised, colour, sound, 5.10 min. exhibition view Winterreise at AKINCI (2019), photo: Wytske van Keulen*





Mine, 2017, Single channel HD video. Watch Mine [here](#). Password: analixforeveralikazma





*Mine, 2017, Single channel HD video*



*Mine, 2017, Single channel HD video*



## House of Letters, 2017

2-channel HD video film, colour, sound, 4.49 min.

Ali Kazma loves books. In homage to this affection, he conducted for three years an intensive photographic investigation of the universes of the books that resulted in the publication of *RECTO-VERSO*.<sup>1</sup> This artist book included a text by Alberto Manguel, one of the greatest book historians of our times. Ali Kazma now also devoted a video to books, thorough Alberto Manguel's fantastic library –more than 40.000 books that was, until 2015, treasured in a house in the South of France.

*House of Letters* is a vibrant reflection on literature and culture, books and writers, photography and time, loss and refuge, twilight and daylight... One of its first sentences says: "I, who had always thought of Paradise in form and image as a library." It brings immediately the viewer in the realm of lost paradise. And the loss is indeed a major feeling that immerses us. Even without knowing the details of Manguel's move out of France, we get an extremely strong feeling of fragility and threat. We get locked up in a poignant oxymoron between the power of the words and their elusiveness.

*House of Letters* is the first synchronized diptych video by Ali Kazma. It is not by chance. The artist requires at least two images for his message: the phallus (the pistil) of a flower and the legs of a girl, next, a Vanity: Eros and Thanatos. And then, books... Alice in Wonderland and Moby Dick; Doris Lessing and Through the Looking Glass, Yung and Edgar Allan Poe, Dickens and Kipling, Victor Hugo and Borges, Don Juan and Don Quixote. Alternately, images of the house and of these indispensable companions of books: the lamp that remains on all night, the songs of the birds, the idyllic garden, ancient manuscripts and photographs. The night falls and the crickets start to sing.

Whether bewildered or staggered, we have only one wish: look again, while this sentence by Manguel seems to be floating in the air: "There is a line of poetry, a sentence in a fable, a word in an essay, by which my existence is justified".

This video work is a treasure, but an endangered one and thus an unsettling one, because as stated by William Marx "the discourse of literature about the world, human beings, gods... is a power, undeniably, but a fragile one, the most fragile to deny."<sup>2</sup> *House of letters* is not a 'safe home' (title of Kazma's latest solo exhibition) because there is actually no such thing as a safe home. Rather, it is a home of desire.

Watch *House of Letters* [here](#). Password: analixforeveralikazma

Text by Barbara Polla

<sup>1</sup> Kazma, A., Manguel, A., *RECTO VERSO*. Éditions Take5, Geneve, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> William Marx, *Diacritik*, "Le Grand Entretien: William Marx, «La littérature est l'ennemie préférée»", *Diacritik.com*, 29/01/2016.

Free translation in English by BP.





*House of Letters, 2015 (Resistance series), 2-channel HD videofilm, synchronised, colour, sound, 4:49 min. exhibition view Where the Fuck is My Sock at AKINCI (2017)*



*House of Letters, 2015 (Resistance series), 2- channel HD videofilm, synchronised, colour, sound, 4:49 min. exhibition view Where the Fuck is My Sock at AKINCI (2017)*





*Safe, 2016, video still, courtesy AKINCI. Watch safe [here](#). Password: alikazma*



## Safe, solo exhibition at AKINCI, 2017

AKINCI presented six of Ali Kzma's films, amongst which the appraised video works *Home* and *Clerk* and a selection from his *Resistance series*, including *Tattoo* – first exhibited at the Turkish Pavilion during the 55th Venice Biennale. We were especially excited to première Kzma's new film *Safe*, depicting the Global Seed Vault situated in the Svalbard Islands, which is designed to serve as a back-up repository for seeds in case of local or global man-made and/or natural catastrophe. The suspense in *Safe* is so dense it is close to physically stifling. Indeed, to look at Kzma's films is to become fixated in a gaze that feels, almost compulsory, like touching with your eyes. This physical sensation is consequential of Kzma's close apprehension of the human body and its activity. Through his framing and montage he captures both the physical and philosophical dimension of the condition humaine; in labour, economy, production, social organisation, and time.

*“Without being documentaries, or naturalistic reports, Ali Kzma's films involve a violent relation to reality. The political dimension is never openly brought in, but it can be deduced from the choice and exposition of the images. By preferring close-ups and finished gestures, fragmented, staccato spaces—instead of developing broad, meditative shots—(...) he lends his images, as they run past us, a vibrating density and a heightened power.”*

- Mo Gourmelon, 2009

*Clerk, 2011, single screen HD video (loop), 3:09 min.  
exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017)  
photo: Wytske van Keulen*





*Home, Calligraphy, Tattoo and Crystal, exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytse van Keulen. Watch Crystal [here](#). Password: alikazma*

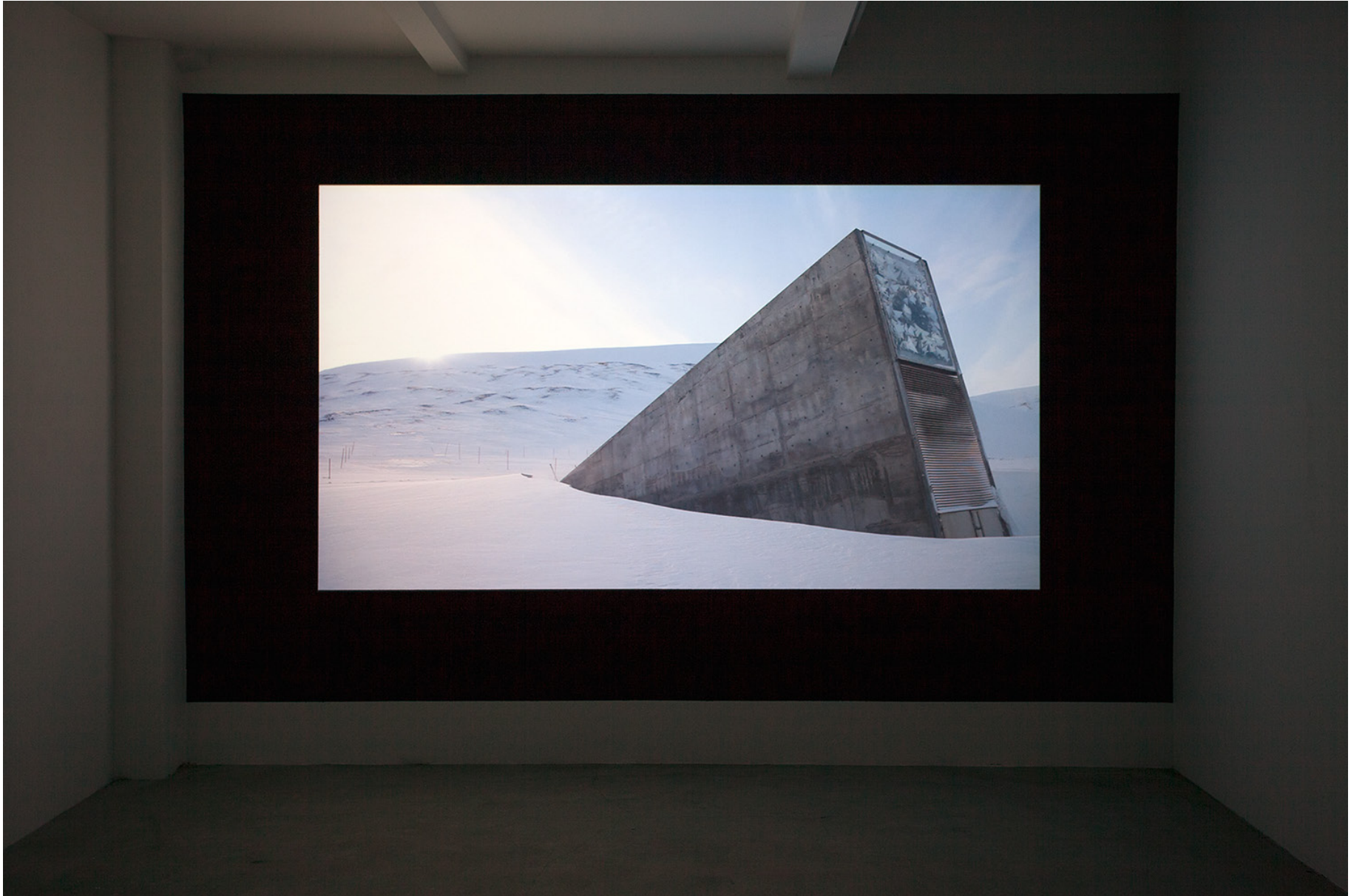


*Home, Calligraphy, Tattoo, exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytske van Keulen*





*Home*, 2015, HD video, 4:51 min. exhibition view *Safe* at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytse van Keulen. Watch *Home* [here](#). Password: *alihazma*



*Safe, 2016, HD video, 3:18 min. exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytse van Keulen*





*Exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytske van Keulen*





*Home, 2015, HD video, 4:51 min. exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytske van Keulen*



*Safe, 2016, HD video, 3:18 min. exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytse van Keulen*





*Safe, 2016, HD video, 3:18 min. exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytske van Keulen*





*Safe, 2016, HD video, 3:18 min. exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytske van Keulen*



*Safe, 2016, HD video, 3:18 min. exhibition view Safe at AKINCI (2017), photo: Wytske van Keulen*

## Exhibitions (selection)

Manutenfions.1, 2024

L'arc – scène nationale Le Creusot, France

Science/Fiction — Une non-histoire des Plantes, 2024

MEP, Paris, France

Orhan Pamuk | The Consolation of Things, 2024, curated by Melanie Vietmeier and Matthias Mühling

Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, München, Germany

Regenerative Futures, 2024, curated by Nathalie Guiot and Yann Chateigné Tytelman

Fondation Thalie, Brussels, Belgium

Vertigo | Video Scenarios of Rapid Changes | The mutations of society in video art, 2024, curated by Urs Stahel

MAST, Bologna, Italy

The Mardin Biennial, 2024, curated by Ali Akay

Mardin, Turkey

UTOPIA. Keep on Moving, 2024, curated by Diana Wechsler

Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany

A House of Ink, 2023

Francesca Minini, Milan, Italy

Notes for Tomorrow, 2023

Travelling exhibition

Ficciones reales (4th edition BienalSur), 2023

Centro Cultural Kirchner, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Sarkis: ENDLESS, 2023, curated by Emre Baykal

Arter, Istanbul, Turkey

Multiple-Perspective, 2022, curated by Firat Arapoğlu

Yarat Contemporary Art Centre, AZ

Villa Sauber, 2022, curated by Guillaume de Sardes,



Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, MC

Flour Mill in the exhibition *From Flour to Art*, 2022, curated by Maryam Hassan Al Thani  
Art Mill Museum 2030, Qatar Museums, Doha, QA

Precaution, 2021, curated by Emre Baykal,  
Arter, Istanbul, TR

Pour la galerie - Mode et portrait, 2021  
Musée d'art et d'histoire, Genève, CH

Internationale, 2021 (solo show)  
Ali Kazma at Kiraathane Istanbul Literature House, Istanbul, TR

Extracted Foreign Bodies, 2020  
Les Moulins de Paillard, FR

Souterrain, 2018  
Jeu de Paume, Concorde, Paris, FR

206 Rooms of Silence: Etudes on Prinkipo Greek Orphanage, 2018  
Galata Greek School, Istanbul, TR

Safe (2015), 2018  
Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, RU

School Square Galatasaray, 2018  
Pera Museum, Istanbul, TR

Underground Places, 2018  
MUNTREF, Buenos Aires, AR  
(in collaboration with Jeu de Paume)

Reconstructing Eden, 2018, curated by Barbara Polla and Paul Ardenne  
ArtMill, Szentendre, HU

Where the Sun Rises, (Screening *Safe*), 2018  
Swiss Institute, New York, VS

*Are we human? The Design of the Species: 2 seconds, 2 days, 2 years, 200 years, 200.000 years*, 2018  
Lewis Centre for the Arts, Princeton University, VS

*We Only Come Out At Night* (screening: Play), 2019  
WOW, Amsterdam, NL

*Art et Presse*, 2019  
Château de Penthes, Pregny-Chambésy, FR

*Resistance*, 2013, curated by Emre Baykal  
55th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, IT