

12 Aug 2019

5 QUESTIONS

This Artist Channels the Vicious Sounds of War in Paint

The eight-year Iran-Iraq war had a profound effect on Ali Banisadr's childhood, and the sounds and vibrations stayed with him long after. He talks about the paintings that have sprung from this experience, which silently form rhythms and, for the artist, a sense of calm. Words by Rajesh Punj

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez



Hold the Fort

Sound is not something people tend to connect with painting. The countless museum canvases that celebrate modern and contemporary icons are, for the majority, silent symbols of their artist's original actions. Yet Tehran-born, New York-based artist Ali Banisadr explains his works as coming from vibrations that are embedded in his mind. Less violent than the tremors that tormented his adolescence, the noises that come to him now are more consoling, symphonic even. His paintings—currently showing at Het Noordbrabants Museum, in Hertogenbosch, Holland—are, as he explains them, born of the animated insides of his mind, that seem ready

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez



Installation view by Joep Jacobs

Can you explain the nature of this show? Given the choice of works, are we looking at a retrospective here in Holland?

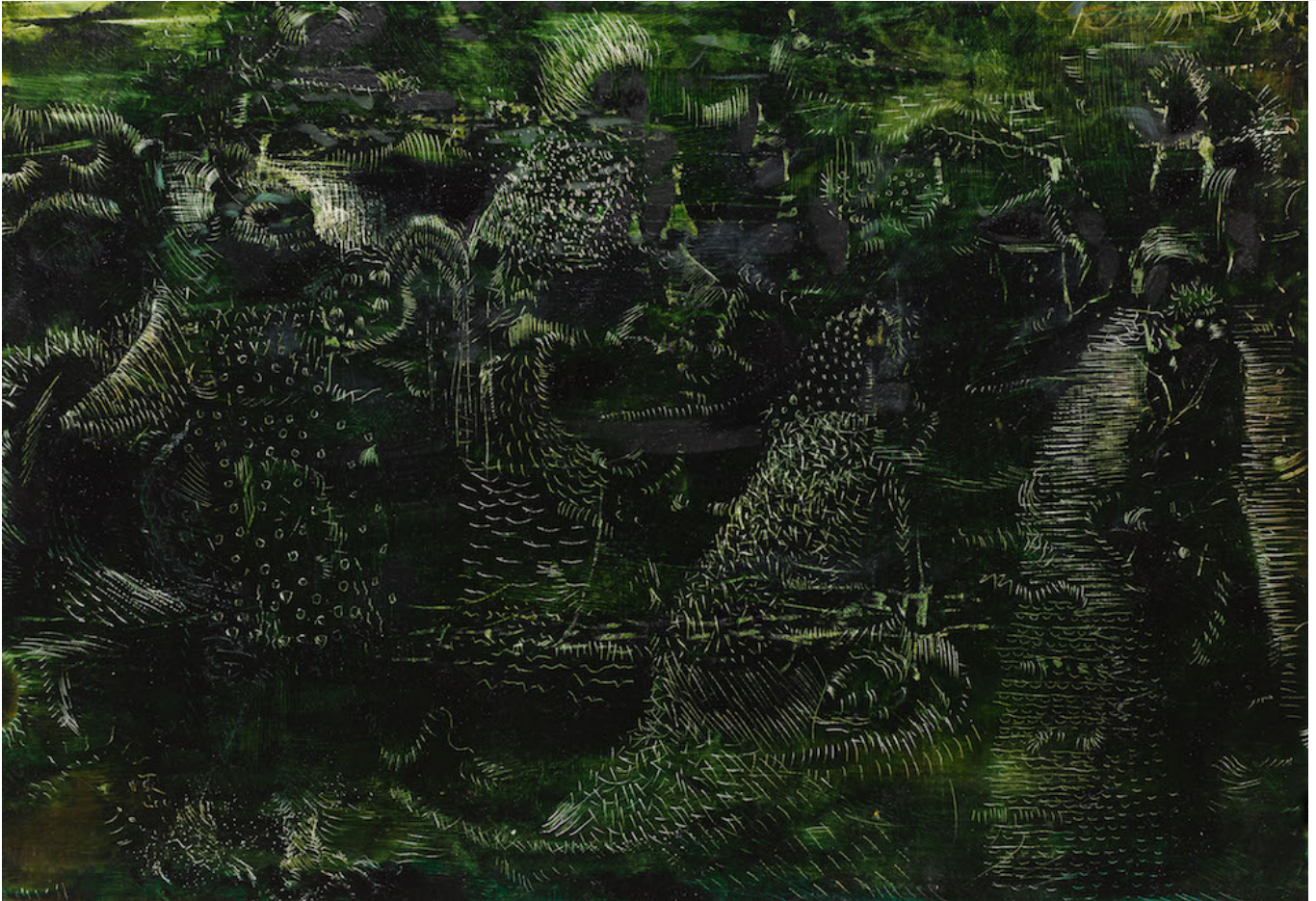
This exhibition is my first museum retrospective in Europe. It brings together a decade's worth of paintings and drawings from 2008 until now. It's been great for me to have this chance to reunite with some of the older paintings that I haven't seen since they left the studio. The catalogue that accompanies the show includes an essay by the art historian Robert Hobbs.

“To have the chance to be in the city where Bosch painted centuries before, and to visit his original studio, was an honour”

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez



The Wretched of the Earth

I want to understand the location of the exhibition. It might initially seem to be a mismatch, but the more one comes to understand your work, the greater the synergy is with the institution and its remarkable collection. How important was that to you when we can see traces of Hieronymus Bosch, Peter Snayers and Sebastian Vrancx in your work?

The location was important for me because of its history—I made a visit to the fantastic Bosch exhibition a few years ago now, and was immediately taken by the museum, and the quality of its collection, and also found the city to be a very special place. So I was delighted to hear that the museum was interested in doing a show, and it only felt natural to exhibit there. To have the chance to be in the city where Bosch painted centuries before, and to visit his original studio, was an honour. Also having the show in Holland where a lot of my favourite painters come from was another plus, from Bosch to Rembrandt to Willem de Kooning.

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez



Bandit

In the accompanying exhibition video you talk about the invasive sounds of war from your adolescence in Iran, and about how noise has become the nucleus of what concerns you now. Are the sounds violent or much more visceral, as reflected in the

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez

ELEPHANT

[MENU](#)

was to retreat into my own world to try to make sense of my surroundings. At the time with my having to take refuge in the makeshift shelters, the isolation drew attention to the sound—of the vibrations rather than the visual experience. Such viciousness tormented me for years after, but not necessarily in a violent way. Since those memories were based on sound, they were, as you observe, more visceral. So when the noises manifest themselves in the work it's more of a guiding force that enables me to draw everything together, becoming almost orchestral. And the sounds don't solely reflect a particular time or place—they inform a combination of many experiences.



Homo Deus

If sound is your spark, how do you deal with it becoming entirely silent in your paintings?

I seek a silence that is achieved by having a flow of air through the paintings without

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez

ELEPHANT

[MENU](#)

rhythm, the sound becomes quiet and is contained within itself.

“When the noises manifest themselves in the work it’s more of a guiding force that enables me to draw everything together, becoming almost orchestral”

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez



The Fall of Icarus

Does beauty belong in your work, or are these scenes more brutal?

As with anything in the world, you have to see both sides of the coin in order to get the full picture. Beauty and brutality often need to exist together, and I want to see them side-by-side. I always think about that quote from the actor Bruce Lee where he talks about emptying your mind, and being formless and shapeless like water. Having said, “Water can flow or it can crash, be water my friend.”

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez

ELEPHANT

MENU

Until 25 August at The Het Noordbrabants Museum, Den Bosch

VISIT WEBSITE

Liked this post? Share it on social!



READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

MORE TO READ



5 QUESTIONS

5 Questions with Boris Rebetez

Swiss Artist Boris Rebetez has a broad practise, working with drawing, installation, photography and sculpture to form new spaces – both physical and imagined. His first London solo exhibition Columnist...

[READ MORE](#)

READ NEXT:

[5 Questions with Boris Rebetez](#)



5 QUESTIONS

Zoe Williams Unpicks the Dark Side of Desire

The British artist explores fantasy through a feminist lens, blurring the line between pleasure and disgust.

[READ MORE](#)

READ NEXT:



[5 Questions with Boris Rebetez](#)



5 QUESTIONS

Charlotte Garnett's Wearable Anxiety-Soothers

The visual artist who recently had a studio at Lee Alexander McQueen's Sarabande Foundation creates wearable objects which are designed to be fiddled with.

[READ MORE](#)

READ NEXT:



[5 Questions with Boris Rebetez](#)



5 QUESTIONS

5 Questions with Brie Moreno

"I'm constantly surrounded by comic artists and illustrators who all are striving to do similar things as myself, which is comforting." Brie Moreno's drawings are at once strange and inviting,...

[READ MORE](#)

Keep in the loop

Enter email

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

Get our weekly newsletter straight to your inbox

READ NEXT:



[5 Questions with Boris Rebetez](#)

HUNGRY FOR MORE?



5 QUESTIONS

5 Questions with Bob & Roberta Smith

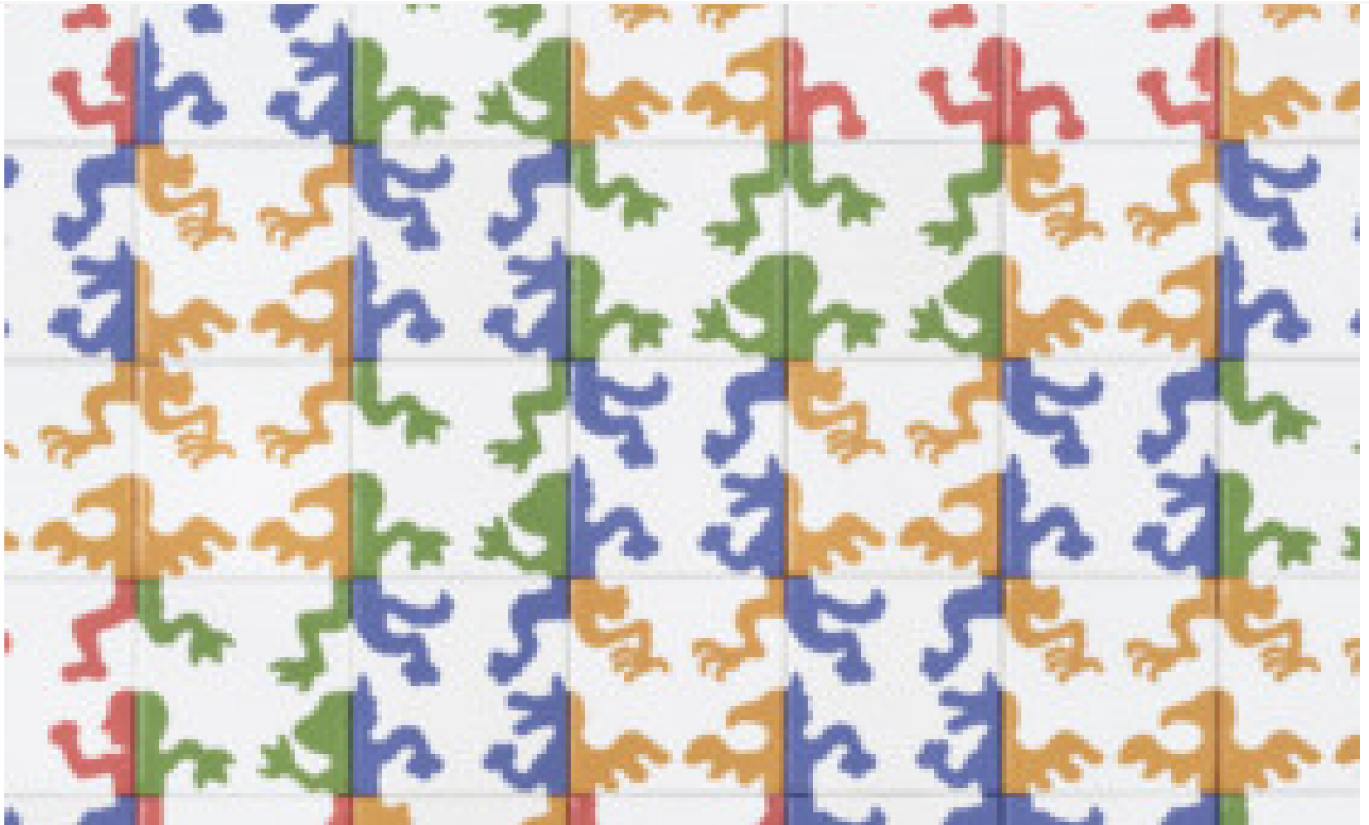
READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez

ELEPHANT

MENU



5 QUESTIONS

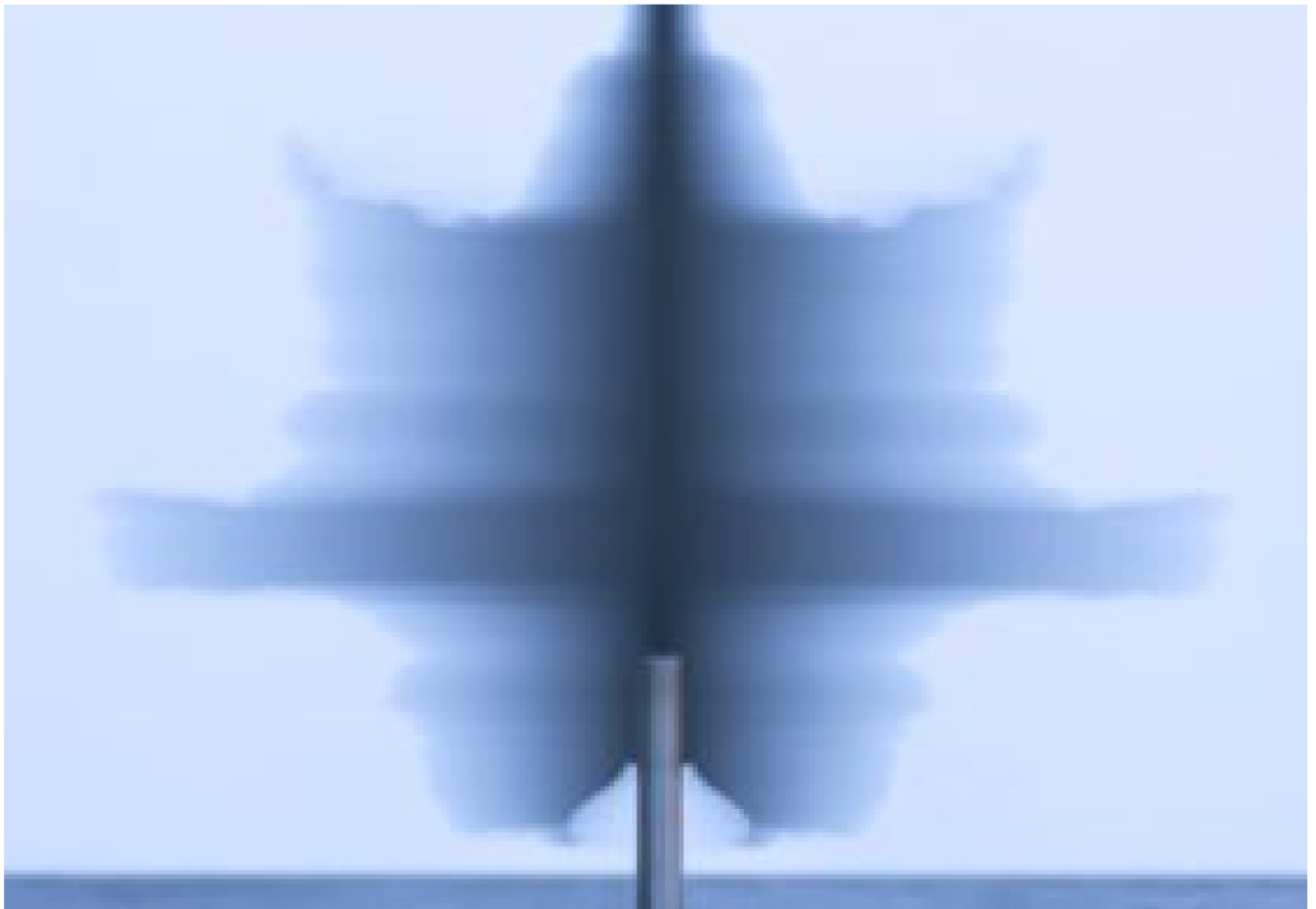
5 Questions with Kim Beom



READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez



5 QUESTIONS

5 Questions with Christian Andersson

READ NEXT:

5 Questions with Boris Rebetez





5 QUESTIONS

5 Questions with Martine Syms



READ NEXT:

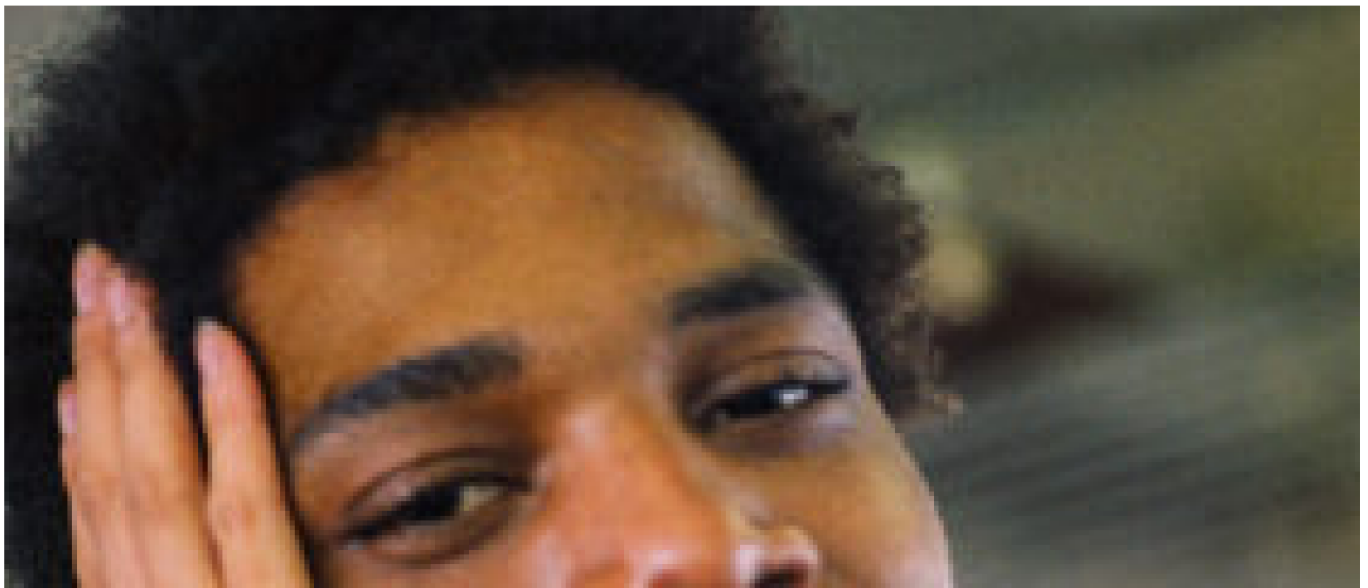


5 Questions with Boris Rebetez



5 QUESTIONS

5 Questions with Sinta Tantra



READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez

5 QUESTIONS

The Artist Who Travelled the World with Basquiat



OUT NOW - Issue 39 - How Art Became Edible

In this issue we meet six artists who revel in the visual OTT potential of food, push it to its disgusting extremes, and highlight our ravenous, careless appetite to consume at all costs.

€14.00

READ NEXT:



5 Questions with Boris Rebetez