

Hamza Badran
One and a half

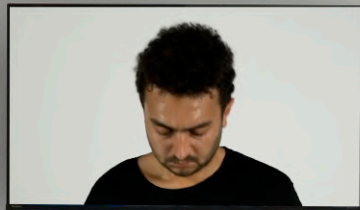
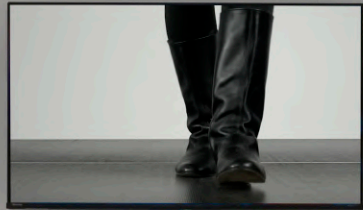
Fotografia e dintorni section
curated by Marta Papini
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Hall 25 Booth B22

ph. Alessio Belloni

Gian Marco Casini

GIAN MARCO
CASINI GALLERY
HAMZA BADRAN
Livorno
FOTOGRAFIA
E DINTORNI
B22





One and a half

text by Hamza Badran

One and a Half refers to a form of Dabke, a traditional Palestinian collective dance performed primarily at weddings. Growing up in my home village, my parents encouraged me to dance Dabke at every wedding as a way of connecting—with people, with children my age, and with elders. The dance brought together entire communities: participants joined hands and formed a wide circle of at least a hundred people. When the circle became full, another would form inside it, and sometimes more, expanding inward as needed. The Dabke celebration is open to everyone in the village. All are invited and welcomed by the hosting family. While formal invitation cards are sometimes sent to guests from outside the village, announcements are often made through the mosque loudspeakers—normally used for the call to prayer—ensuring that everyone knows when and where the celebration will take place.

“One and a Half” literally means one and a half steps. In this dance, performers step forward and then back, without leaving the circle, maintaining order and preserving the collective rhythm. In this work, I deliberately abandon three fundamental elements of Dabke: the collective body, the music, and the circular movement. Instead, I dance alone. I dance until exhaustion, listening to the sound of my feet tapping against the wooden floor. Through this bodily experience, I intend to explore my individual identity and my own relationship to Dabke—detached from its communal structure yet still shaped by its rhythm. I continue dancing as an artist negotiating presence, movement, and endurance through the body.



One and a half
2020

two channels FullHD, sound
1h 08' 22"
ed.: 3 + 2AP



The River Room

text by Hamza Badran

I have struggled to understand why Zionism is a topic for celebration in Switzerland. When I arrived in Basel in 2018 to attend the art school, I took a walk through the city and noticed a tourist gift store that I assumed had something to do with the city. The gift store was located under Stadtcasino Basel, where the first Zionist congress was held in 1897, ten Zionist congresses were held in the city to plan the colonization of Palestine, and that was until 1946, two years before 1948 Nakba.

When I went in the gift shop, I noticed a portrait of Theodor Herzl “The Father of Modern Zionism” covered in glass, as a memorization for a significant occasion and event. The man was a reason for jubilation. When I asked the young Swiss receptionist about Herzl’s portrait, she immediately asked me if I was from Israel. I said, I am from Palestine. She “Oh...” I did not know what that “Oh..” was supposed to mean.

At the Hotel Les Trois Rois in Basel, where Herzl stayed in 1901 during the fifth Zionist Congress, you find his well-preserved bedroom, that is even called after him: River Room Herzl.

Not only that, but on the hotel’s website is the following ceremonial text:

“The River Room Herzl impresses with the unique charm of its furnishings. To this day, this simple and fascinating room with a view of the Rhine provides inspiration and peace (approx. 22 m2).”

I also wanted to experience that “Charm, Inspiration and Peace”. I thought this might help me understand where Herzl’s five-star “bright” and “young” ideas came from, I so rented his room and slept in his well-preserved luxury bed. The hotel receptionist asked me what PSE was after checking my B temporary Swiss residence permit? I told him it was the Swiss shortcut for Palestine. He also “Oh...”

He asked if I knew who the room belonged to. I said, no, I don’t know. A very important man he said, I said nice! while combining it also with a ridiculous smile. The Herzl River room was the best hotel room I’ve ever had; it cost me about 735 Swiss francs for one night. With my name and ability to pay, they might have

thought I was a rich Arab who wanted to buy the hotel. Especially when I realized that the ruler of Qatar had once wanted to buy the hotel, and that the Times of Israel did not obviously like the idea. In any way, thanks to my production budget, I stayed there.

It was a very comfortable room, with a classic bathtub, and the best Swiss-quality perfumed hand soap, shampoo, hair conditioner, and a fancy herbal shower gel! I finally opened the door that leads to Herzl’s famous terrace, I have seen that terrace for the past six years from the other side of the Rhine where I almost daily have walks. Looking at what some call “Herzl’s inspiring view,” which is simply a view of Kly Basel, a small part of Basel city, that leads to Basel Land, and to the German border, the view looks at the red light district area, where I have lived, and the Kaserne area, a former Swiss military base, which was turned into a cultural hub. I also got myself some very inspiring ideas, I was conflicted between the psychological weight of sleeping in the bed and standing on the balcony of the man who planned to force both of my grandmothers out of their homes in 1948. I imagined calling my grandmother to ask her what she thinks, but the fact is, she doesn’t know who that guy was.

The bed was very comfortable; there was a sky finely painted on the ceiling of the room, you see it when lying in that clean, comfortable, soft double bed, it reminded me of my grandmother’s hug when I was a child. Another object on the room wall leading to Herzl’s famous balcony, with the view on Kly Basel, the “Open Minded” city, was a bronze portrait of Herzl, Dr. Theodor Herzl It says. I also, since I had the pleasure to be in that room, I wanted myself to be remembered as a significant character, I so made a portrait of myself, also out of bronze that says Hamza Badran, without the doctor title unfortunately, followed by 2024.

The room did not meet my high expectations in terms of dreaming, I also returned to the room late and drunk. In the morning, I was very disappointed that breakfast was not included in the room price; they charge 50 Swiss Francs for their “luxury” breakfast, but, at least, when checking out, they gave me a locally produced small jar of black cherry’s jam.

Gian Marco Casini



Untitled #2
(A portrait of the artist at "River Room Herzl" in Basel)
2024

photographic print on paper
21,4x33 cm
ed.: 3 + 2AP

Untitled #1
(A portrait of the artist at "River Room Herzl" in Basel)
2024

photographic print on paper
29,7x21 cm
ed.: 3 + 2AP



Basel's Pride
2024

bronze, wood
43x34x4 cm
ed.: 3 + 2AP



Gian Marco Casini