

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## Y LIVER in NY

Thursday 10 September from 7 - 9pm  
560 Broadway Suite 604 New York

MARHAMI BOOKATZ + KURDI is pleased to introduce its inaugural exhibition, Y LIVER in NY. While Y Liver, the Paris-based art duo comprised of David Liver and Rugiada Cadoni, has won notoriety throughout Europe for its unorthodox performance pieces and idiosyncratic exhibitions, it has yet to debut before an American audience—until now.

Conceived in Sardinia in 1999, Y Liver represents a symbiotic partnership between David and Rugiada, where the “Y” conveys the idea of androgyny and, by extension, the coexistence of contrasting modes of creativity. It was David’s personal experiences—namely his French-Jewish upbringing and the subsequent and haunting loss of his cultural identity—which served as a departure point for what would become the pair’s ever-evolving artistic venture. Y Liver has shepherded the couple from their first encounter in Northern Italy and their itinerant time in the Mediterranean region to their studious years at art school in Milan, and, finally, to their decision to settle in Paris, where they create their artwork out of their flat/studio. While she is neither Jewish nor French, Rugiada, as David’s dialectic partner, is heavily invested in his vision, in an arrangement that the two consider similar in spirit to that of Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin.

Highlights of Y Liver’s 10-year partnership include “Keep a Kippa” from the 2003 Prague Biennale—during which the couple manned the fair’s entrance vestibule, distributing 5,000 kippot (Jewish skullcaps) to incoming visitors—to “15.37,41” (named after the biblical commandment to wear tallit or a Jewish shawl), a 2007 collaboration between David and Antonio Marras, the creative director of Kenzo, the high-end fashion label, where the two men inscribed their names on three tallit at a private performance at Marras’ atelier in Paris. More recently, in October of 2008, David presented a solo show, JUDE, at Bimal Projects in Berlin, whose gallery is located inside the former headquarters of the Gestapo. In characteristic Y Liver fashion, the Berlin show shockingly began with David tagging the gallery’s front window with a massive Star of David. Next month, Y Liver will revisit the nocturnal Parisian art fest, Nuit Blanche, where the couple is slated to perform an extended spoken word performance.

In an effort to familiarize the New York art world with the duo’s history of conceptual, Jewish-themed works, Y LIVER in NY draws from a range of media—including video, live performance, wall texts, pamphlets and drawings—and provides an entrée to the artists’ oeuvre. As in most of Y Liver’s work, the show’s themes center around issues of identity and what it means to be a Jew. For David in particular, Jewish cultural identity is not a static thing—rather, it’s constantly evolving and adapting to a given context. Several pieces were commissioned exclusively for this stateside show.

In addition to its guerilla-style artwork—from interacting with strangers to graffiti—Y Liver is also well known for its manipulation and subversion of languages, undoubtedly inspired by ancient religious scriptures and other hand-written texts. For the New York show, David endeavored to try his hand at what he deems, “Basic Rock ‘N Roll English,” exhibited in the form of four vinyl wall texts dispersed throughout the space and intentionally conceived in a crude and elementary style of English, save for one in French. The texts evoke the naïveté of a foreigner or even a child. When you walk into the show, for example, you will be greeted with this cryptic salutation: “Ok! Maybe (I Mean I know) it seem pretentious but don’t you think that to pretend something, it’s at least the beginning of a story?”

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Also taking up the theme of language, “Dein Jude” (2008) is a soundless, text-only video piece: White subtitles of an imaginary conversation between a Jew, a Christian and someone pretending to be God flash against a black background. This fictional conversation was inspired by “Yo! I killed your God,” a concept album by American musician, Marc Ribot. “The Ashkenazi Love Prologue” (2006), on the other hand, is an image-based video divided into two parts. In the first, (which was shot in Paris in black-and-white), a Jewish man (played by David) runs in the street while holding his kippot, while in the second (shot in Berlin in color), a young woman (played by Rugiada) rides in a car.

Among other works featured in the show is a triptych of drawings, including the centerpiece “Brillo” (2009), a Jewish riff on the iconic Warhol sculpture. The other two drawings, collectively titled “When” (2009), are both self-portraits of David at the age of thirteen.

### ABOUT MARHAMI BOOKATZ + KURDI

MARHAMI BOOKATZ + KURDI is the brainchild of partners, Fa'iz Marhami, Karen Bookatz and Noël Kurdi—who are, respectively, Palestinian, Jewish and Saudi Arabian—and is intended to serve as an artistic platform for progressive ideas about identity, culture, and politics. The gallery is of the ‘pop-up’ variety, meandering its way around the multifarious neighborhoods of New York City—evocative of the nomadic identities of Middle Eastern peoples. MBK will exclusively showcase Arab, Israeli, Islamic, Jewish and Persian-themed contemporary artwork.

For press inquiries, please contact:

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Post-opening visits, by appointment only.

(I MEAN I KNOW)  
OK! ~~MAYBE~~ IT SEEM PRETENTIOUS  
BUT DON'T YOU THINK THAT  
TO PRETEND SOMETHING, IT'S  
AT LEAST THE BEGINNING  
OF A STORY?

**AND YOU, DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE A JEW?**





BRILLO, INK on chromolux- 32,5 x25 cm, 2009



WHEN I WAS 13  
I HAD THE CHEWING GUM  
HAIR CUT.  
AND IT WAS NOT THE WORST....



When I was 13  
I wear my  
MEDITERRANIAN BACKS  
JUST BELOW MY NOSE.  
IT WAS NOT THE WORST...