

## Moufida Fedhila, a Political Art, Tunis 2012

By Aurélie Machghoul

To consider the city as a place of human interaction, conflicts and experimentation; this is the ground which feeds the artistic work of Moufida Fedhila which is returned to us in her performances combining video, audio, photos ... In Italy, in 2007, an area of Padua divided by a wall to separate communities gave birth to "**A wall for everyone**", in France the same year, from a sidewalk in Rennes arose the border "**Not in my back yard**" and in 2011 in Tunis "**Super-Tunisian**" invests Habib Bourguiba Avenue.

To by-pass references, study and analyze a political and social context in order to transcribe it metaphorically with simple actions, sometimes ironic and to explore the notion of confinement are guidelines in this multidisciplinary artist. Her academic background in philosophy, sociology and Fine Arts and diverse experiences in theater and films strongly marked her work.

In May 2011, four months after the fall of Ben Ali, Moufida Fedhila incarnated Super Tunisian, in reference to the iconic Superman. She paced Habib Bourguiba Avenue in Tunis dressed as Superhero. She promised to citizen-passersby to revolutionize their country thanks to her super powers. A Super Country ruled by a Super Hero resolving all the super problems ... A scathing parody full of humor of the demagogic political speeches that where then legion and are continuing to saturate the public sphere.

This performance entitled **St'art** was accompanied by the distribution of flyers printed with a bilingual electoral program that seemed important to transcribe.

Today, in order to challenge all non concrete proposals from political parties as well as the transitional government; proposals that do not meet the Tunisian people's will, Super-Tunisian is back to decide his own political future.

### **Super -Tunisian features:**

- A super-strength that enables him to overcome all the political forces and create a Super Country.
- A super-vision to anticipate the unseen attacks of obscure forces in every dead-end situation and to see around dictatorships.
- A super-speed that allows him to go beyond rental cars honking in the middle of the night (Propaganda ritual introduced by Ben Ali throughout his power, of cars honking in the streets following each of his speeches).
- A super-memory that allows him to remember the repression of a glorious past. To speak all kind of obscure languages and quickly assimilate those he has never learned.

Vote for Super Tunisian by choosing the blue card!

Since the post-revolutionary period liberated public space, Moufida Fedhila felt the need to value the art in the streets of Tunisia, to ask questions, even to provoke the average citizen. Her approach as art-tiviste was not possible under the totalitarian regime and she felt the need in the new political context, to stir the territory she was born in. Rapidly during the performance that lasted approximately 1:30, the debate arose with passersby who gathered around her. Some citizens espoused the concept and relayed the words of Super-Tunisian in the street, others rejected them. Leaflets and posters were then torn from passersby rushed ... Where they undercover police officer not accustomed with freedom of expression resulting from democracy or simply upset citizens? But isn't that what makes intrinsically art: to instill an emotional or intellectual reaction?

In keeping with the work of *St'art*, Moufida continued, until September 2011, her artistic approach, inspired the Super Hero, while making it evolve. She went to meet citizens, from Tunis to the city of Mahdia and she offered them to pose with the sign "Super Tunisian". In a second step, she offered them to wear the attributes of the superhero, in this case the cape. The series of pictures she made gave birth to "***Fuck Democracy. Miracle too***", exhibited at Aire Libre gallery at El Teatro in Tunis. The People, represented by every person who lived in the same country, were then represented. Those who constituted the Tunisian nation in all its diversity were proudly wearing the iconic Hero's red cape. Who cares about democracy, Moufida tells us, if we are all heroes, able to do miracles? But isn't civil society, in its plurality, the true heroic and political force, in a country in the process of rebuilding?

["Temporary Autonomous Zone" N°4, Tunis, 2012](#)