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# Alex Ayed *Totano*

Salle Jean-François Taddei

Exhibition from June 26 to  
october 11 2026

Press preview and opening  
one June 26.

Frac   
des Pays de la Loire  
Site de Carquefou  
La Fleuriaye,  
24 bis boulevard Ampère  
44470 Carquefou

A promise binds the one who makes it to the unknown. By linking the present to an uncertain future, it becomes a form of foundation. To promise is to take responsibility for what does not yet exist.

The exhibition *Totano*, presented at the Frac des Pays de la Loire, originates in a gesture—a handshake. A pact without contract, committing all that the future holds in terms of uncertainty and trust.

It was during a crossing of the Mediterranean that an encounter with a Sicilian fisherman led to an informal agreement. What began as a simple transaction evolved into a negotiation, and the exchange gradually shifted toward a mutual understanding, without guarantees or clearly defined terms. The promise had to endure, and so it transformed.

By attending to the connections forged along the way, to the informal economies negotiated between shores, the artist turns encounter into an act of creation. The exhibition unfolds not as the illustration of an anecdote, but as the extension of a process in which the work takes shape through currents and contingencies.

*Totano* brings together a series of works that carry both the memory of this agreement and the intention to honor it. They appear here as presences—companions imbued with memory and anticipation—bearing the traces of a commitment to be upheld, much like ex-votos entrusted to the sea to ward off chance or to give thanks to the unknown.

Curated by Claire Staebler



## Alex Ayed

Born in 1989, Alex Ayed is a visual artist whose practice unfolds through itinerancy. Often rooted in an observed phenomenon, a chance encounter, or an unforeseen event, his work develops as a narrative poised between reality and fiction. From this inquiry emerge situations and poetic assemblages at the intersection of found objects, storytelling, and gesture. He lives and works at sea.

A graduate of the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2015, his work has recently been presented in solo exhibitions at Fondation Louis Vuitton (Paris, 2023); Balice Hertling (Paris, 2023, 2021, 2018); The Intermission (Athens, 2022); Kunstverein Freiburg (Freiburg, 2022); Renaissance Society (with Lydia Ourahmane) (Chicago, 2021); ZERO... (Milan, 2020); B7L9 Art Station (Tunis, 2019); and the Institute of Arab and Islamic Art (New York, 2018).

His recent group exhibitions have taken place at major international institutions, including Astrup Fearnley Museet (Oslo, 2024); Julia Stoschek Foundation (Düsseldorf, 2024); Public Art Abu Dhabi Biennial (Abu Dhabi, 2024); Biennale Gherdëina 9 (Ortisei, 2024); Reiffers Art Initiatives Prize at Acacias Art Center (Paris, 2024); Tag Art Museum (Qingdao, 2024); Frac Île-de-France (Paris, 2024); Biennale Internationale Saint-Paul de Vence (2023); MAMbo (Bologna, 2022); the New Museum Triennial (New York, 2021); and WIELS (Brussels, 2020).



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