

Press Review
Art Basel, Ingrid Luquet-Gad, January 2025

Art | Basel

How Nadjib Ben Ali captures the emotions of soccer

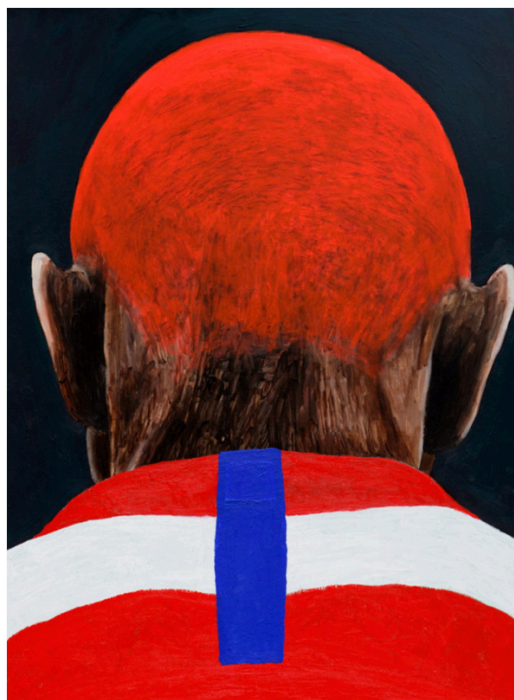
The young French artist pictures the game's intensity through his signature bold colors

Few things bring people together like football and television. Nadjib Ben Ali, born in Paris in 1994 and a 2019 graduate of the École Supérieure d'Art et Design de Saint-Étienne, paints both, placing himself at the crossroads between timeless human emotions and their 21st-century, mediated reproduction.

The artist takes screenshots of soccer matches on his laptop or smartphone, building up a library of images. He then uses a singular technique to transcribe the shimmering aspect of these screenshots: Hot glue sticks wrapped in synthetic fabric are dipped in acrylic pigments to create paint pencils. This process culminates in his trademark touch, which resembles strokes of fluorescent felt-tip pen in pink, yellow, purple, or green.



Nadjib Ben Ali, CCTVision, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and The Pill.



Nadjib Ben Ali, WELCOME TO CHOUINEVILLE, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and The Pill.

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Nadjib Ben Ali. © The Cabin LA

In large, immersive-format images that engulf the viewer, Ben Ali translates the epic choreography of a soccer match or isolates a poignant detail, such as a tense neck or a face buried in hands. The artist pays the same attention to branding such as flocked jerseys or branded sneakers, which sometimes swallow up the figure.

His non-hierarchical painting recalls the rock icons of Nina Childress, the evanescent portraits of Marlene Dumas, and the geometric abstractions of Sarah Morris. In Ben Ali's work, everything is accentuated because everything has to be transmittable. From dramatic gestures to fluorescent colorimetry, there is a mad dash for visibility. Yet this hyper-visibility never completely stifles a palpable sense of humanity: the artist hints at it with iridescent clues.

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Nadjib Ben Ali, CATARACTATTACK, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and The Pill.

Credits and captions

Nadjib Ben Ali is represented by ***The Pill*** (Istanbul, Paris).

'No Party'

The Pill, Paris

From January 30 to March 15, 2025

Ingrid Luquet-Gad is an art critic and PhD candidate based in Paris. She teaches art philosophy at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.