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Ismail Bahri, *Ligne (Line)*, 2011, video, silent, 1 minute.

PARIS

Ismail Bahri

JEU DE PAUME

1 place de la Concorde

June 13 - September 24

Ismail Bahri's first major museum exhibition features eight subtle yet epic video works.

Ligne (Line), 2011, opens the show. A drop of

water on a white man's forearm trembles to the subcutaneous rhythms of the body-cum-machine. Precariously hosting two tiny air bubbles, the drop dramatizes interdependence. In *Source*, 2017, a pair of hands hold a sheet of white paper. A tiny dot appears in its center, growing into an incandescent circle that consumes the page. Similarly durational, *Sondes (Probes)*, 2017, is also unexpectedly sculptural: Against terra-cotta tiles, an indeterminately gendered middle-aged white hand extends a welcome or a supplication. Sand trickles into the palm, building an hourglass-like mound. The hand adapts, seeking to maximize its harvest. Eventually, it is overcome: The hand gives up, releases the sand, and disappears.

While the aforementioned works pay homage to durational, task-based early video art, *Revers (Reversals)*, 2017, extends the Pictures generation's legacy. In its sequence of six short videos, a white male's hands repeatedly crumple and flatten pages ripped from glossy magazines, one at a time, until all images disappear. He is left with stained hands, a battered sheet, and pigmented dust deposits. In "Film," 2012, a series of seven videos, strips torn from newspapers unroll vertically, revealing one side as they hide the other. *Film*, *Revers*, and *Source* all enact erasure, calling on a ghosting strategy extending from pentimenti through Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953. In *Foyer*, 2016, and *Esquisse, pour E. Dekyndt (Sketch, for E. Dekyndt)*, 2017, his experiments with light open up a space for the formation of political community.

Bahri makes his generic, one-noun titles pointedly specific just as he casts his common materials—such as water, paper, and light—as the understated actors in radical events.

— *Sylvie Fortin*