

press release

16-11-2021, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands

## Petrit Halilaj presents his first exhibition in the Netherlands in the Fries Museum

The Fries Museum will present Petrit Halilaj's first solo exhibition in the Netherlands between 16 April 2022 and 5 March 2023. With a practice spanning installations, drawings and videos, Halilaj (1986, Kostërrc, Kosovo) often uses his own biography as a point of departure to investigate cultural identity, nationality, and heritage. His work recurrently includes birds and other animals as metaphors for transformation; moth costumes and bird-like sculptures, for example, have frequently appeared in his large-scale installations. *Ru* (2017) and *Shkrepëtimi* (2018), two of his most renowned monumental projects, can be experienced in Leeuwarden from the spring of 2022 onward. At the Fries Museum, Halilaj interweaves reality and imagination in installations that shed light on the role of art and cultural heritage within a community.



RU, installation view at New Museum, New York, 2017, courtesy the artist, ChertLüdde, Berlin; kamel mennour, London/Paris.

Halilaj's body of work is closely connected to Kosovo's recent history and the political and cultural tensions in the region. His work stems from intimate, personal experiences, but at the same time touches on broader social aspects, reflecting on freedom and identity, on the (re)valuation of private and public stories and LGBTQI+ recognition. His latest project revisits 38 childhood drawings that he made at the refugee camp Kukës II (Albania) during the Kosovo War (1998–99), when he was thirteen years old. The exhibition is currently on view at Tate St Ives (UK) until 16 January 2022.

### **Germany, Kosovo and Italy**

Petrit Halilaj lives and works between Germany, Kosovo and Italy. His work has previously been shown in solo exhibitions at Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid; New Museum, New York City; the Fondazione Merz, Turin; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Hangar Bicocca, Milan; the Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne; the Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn; WIELS, Brussels. Halilaj was the first artist to represent Kosovo at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. Since 2020 he has worked as a Studio Professor at l'École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France.

*Petrit Halilaj will be on show in the Fries Museum, Friesland, the Netherlands from 16 April 2022 to 5 March 2023.*

[www.friesmuseum.nl/en/petrithalilaj](http://www.friesmuseum.nl/en/petrithalilaj)