

BOTTLE NECK

29.02.2024 – 26.05.2024

GALLERIA CONTINUA / DUBAI is delighted to present Moataz Nasr's highly anticipated solo exhibition *Bottle Neck*, featuring both iconic and new productions by the Egyptian artist. The exhibition will take place from 29 February to 26 May 2024 at the esteemed Burj Al Arab Jumeirah in Dubai.

Moataz Nasr's works explore the intersection of tradition and globalization, questioning the impact of political and economic development within their context. His art seeks to encourage dialogue and overcome cultural and geographical boundaries by using artistic practice as a tool and language. Nasr's work brings together different languages to explore the contradictions of globalization, past and present, East and West, and the impact of political and economic choices on people.

The exhibition title *Bottle Neck* is a metaphorical expression that signifies a restriction that slows things down, whether it's real or virtual. Nasr uses this title to reflect on the overload of information, news, and events that we experience daily, which creates a significant blockage in our societies and ultimately affects our lives. The works on display aim to highlight this situation and its consequences, sparking a critical reflection on our current reality.

One of the exhibition's centerpieces is a structure called *Barzakh* reminiscent of the first shelters that humans built to protect themselves. The work is made with wooden shovels that resemble those used to put bread in public ovens and the paddles of ancient

and contemporary migrant boats. These elements represent the fundamental things we need as human beings poetically and metaphorically : bread, knowledge, and courage to provide ourselves with shelter. The title explores the theme of migration, a topic that has become increasingly relevant worldwide.

In *Mac Gate*, Nasr explores the Western world's influence on the Middle East, specifically the impact of consumerism on traditional culture. *Contradictions* combines an unmistakable sign of the Western consumerist world, Coca-Cola, with the ancient and artisanal technique of carpet weaving. The result is a thought-provoking commentary on the cultural exchange between different societies.

Another work, *Shattered Glass*, is a bas-relief that unites the Maghreb states to the Middle East, emphasizing the shared history and similar culture based on the same religion. However, the relief is made of shattered glass, showing how everything is cracking and changing, revealing a reality that is not exactly that of a cohesive community with a common religion. The work encourages a reflection on the complexity of cultural and religious identities.

Even in the abstract work *Untitled*, Nasr reflects on conflicts, geopolitical changes, and borders through signs and colors, inspired by geography and history. The work invites the viewer to explore their own interpretation of the piece and the themes it evokes.

The exhibition's final work, *Scarab II*, re-proposes the symbol of the scarab, which was synonymous with resurrection in ancient Egypt, drawn with matches, signifying that the country's immobile traditionalism can ignite at any moment. The work reflects Nasr's 40 years of experience as an artist in the international art community, starting from his own context to open up to the world and spark a critical conversation.

Bottle Neck is a thought-provoking exhibition that invites the viewer to reflect on crucial issues such as migration, globalization, and cultural exchange. Nasr's works encourage dialogue and critical reflection on the current state of our society, making it an unmissable event for art enthusiasts and critical thinkers alike.

About the artist :

Moataz Nasr (Alexandria, Egypt, 1961) is today one of the most interesting figures to emerge from the context of contemporary Egyptian art.

Nasr gained local recognition marked by many awards before breaking into the International art scene in 2001, notably winning the Grand Prix at the 8th International Cairo Biennial.

Since then, he has participated in large international exhibitions like the Venice, Seoul, Sao Paulo, and Bogota Biennials. Today he is considered one of the greatest representatives of pan-Arab contemporary art.

In 2017, he was selected to represent Egypt during the 57th Venice Biennale.

Among the most recent solo shows are, in 2019 *The Liminal Space*, in Castel del Monte, Andria, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, and *Paradise Lost* in Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, curated by Simon Njami. In 2021 Moataz Nasr won the *AVIFF-Art Film Festival* Cannes Award with the original film *The Mountain*.

Preferably using very simple expressive tools Nasr always develops in his works a refined combination of political or social demands, references to traditional materials from the Arab world and sudden poetic openings full of emotion.

About the gallery :

Founded in 1990 in San Gimignano, Italy, GALLERIA CONTINUA has expanded its locations to Beijing, Les Moulins, Havana, São Paulo, Rome, Paris, and Dubai. Remaining faithful to the spirit of perpetual evolution, and committed to engaging the widest possible audiences in

contemporary art, GALLERIA CONTINUA has built a strong identity through its bonds and experiences, thriving away from the conventional urban centres, in completely unexpected yet timeless locations. The gallery inaugurated its permanent space in Dubai, in Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, in November 2021.

Galleria Continua / Dubai

Burj Al Arab Jumeirah - Dubai - UAE

Open every day

11.00 am - 1.00 pm | 2.00 pm - 8.00 pm

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Access to Burj Al Arab is by registration only. Register your interest here: galleriacontinua.com/reservation-dubai

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