

GALLERIA CONTINUA / Le Moulin

MOATAZ NASR

Tectonic Shift

Opening : Saturday 22 of June
From June 23 to September 29, 2013

GALLERIA CONTINUA / Le Moulin is pleased to present *Tectonic Shift* by the Egyptian artist Moataz Nasr.

Moataz Nasr was born in Alexandria in 1961. Bearing witness to the complex cultural process currently under way in the Islamic world, his work sets out to overcome particularism and geographical boundaries, and to give voice to the concerns and problems of the whole African continent. His work focuses on Egypt – its traditions, people and colours. But his output is not exotic and far-off, but extremely close to our own concerns. In fact, Egypt stays just a background, a landscape inhabited by human beings rendered international by a common fragility.

The political and economical situation of his country is the subject of several pieces, such as *Fiat Nasr* (2002-2008). This car was the first one constructed in Egypt and for this reason became a symbol of the Golden age. However, in this installation, composed of 16 squares on which are printed wheels, only flat tyres are shown. With this image of abandonment, it seems that glory is just a memory. The *Khayameya* serie (2012), presenting abstract shapes of traditional textiles realized with matches, shows a social and political stagnation – today behind us – of his country.

Violence and conflicts are in the centre of Moataz Nasr's work. The embroidered wall hangings of the serie entitled *Propaganda* (2010) re-present the design and content of United States' propaganda leaflets, distributed over Iraq and its bordering nations prior to the beginning of the second Gulf War. These messages are transformed through Nasr's use of appliqué — a longstanding artistic practice in Egypt. The detailing of leatherwork with figurative appliqué and decorative stitching was considered as one of the highest cultural forms in ancient Egypt. *El Shaab* (The People, 2012) consists of 25 ceramic figurines representing the religious, gender, class, ethnic and generational diversity of Egypt's population. A separate scene shows highly seen on TV incident of the female protestor savagely beaten by the Egyptian military, her abaya ripped open, showing her blue bra. This detail allows the spectator to recognize an event that really took place.

In front of this troubled reality, the artist offers works with meditative and spiritual dimensions, like *The Key* (2011). Just as Nasr's work, the key - symbol of openness - gives an access to wisdom, to knowledge and to the understanding of others. For this reason, with *Towers of Love* (2011), the artist places Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam under the sign of Love, placing this word at the top of the towers that represent architecturally each of the religions.

In *Tabla* (2006), video of a master percussionist shown in front of a room full of tabla, the artist presents himself as a conductor guiding the mute instruments, maybe not aware yet of their potential. This work reminds us that the distinction between a guide and a dictator can be blurred: we have to stay suspicious when someone offers to guide the people.

GALLERIA CONTINUA / Le Moulin

46 rue de la Ferté Gaucher 77169 Boissy-le-Châtel – France

T +33(0)1 64 20 39 50, lemoulin@galleriacontinua.fr

www.galleriacontinua.com