

Galleria Continua Les Moulins

46 rue de la Ferté Gaucher 77169

Open: noon-7pm Wed-Sun

[Visit](#)

Moataz Nasr: Avalanche

Sat 21 May 2016 to Sun 25 Sep 2016

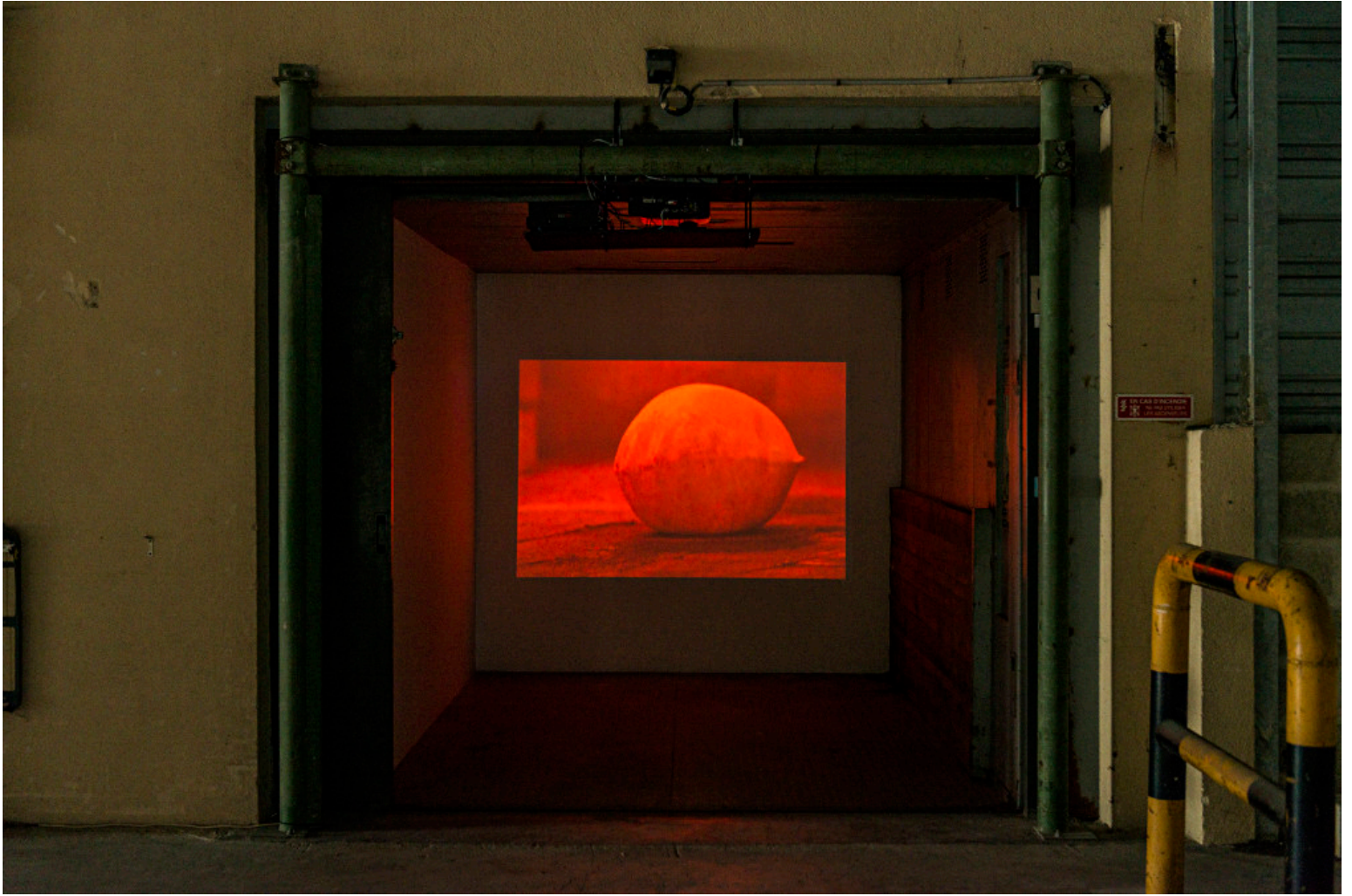
exhibition

Galleria Continua/Les Moulins presents a solo exhibition by the Egyptian artist Moataz Nasr in the location of Sainte Marie.









Avalanche presents both iconic works and new productions. As the curator and writer Simon Njami affirms, “discovering his work I re-encountered something very familiar which is part of the perpetual movement of the universal history of art”.

In the exhibition two pivotal themes of the artist’s career intertwine: on one side a strong attachment to the Middle East and to his city, Cairo, with its own social and cultural dynamics; on the other, his personal path as man and artist and the internalization of encounters and experiences.

Witness of the complex cultural transformation the Islamic world is going through, Nasr makes his geographical identity a pretext for going beyond political frontiers and coaxes us into a dialogue with history. This happens with *The Hammer* (2014), which reflects upon the difficult relationship between media and society and in *Petro Beads* (2015). In this work Nasr is pointing to the strong involvement and influence of petrol and gas money in shaping and feeding the struggles in the Middle East between the different conflicted Islamic groups. On the other hand choosing the orange colour brings immediately to the mind both the orange clothes of the USA prisoners at Guantanamo and the innocent victims who were assassinated in front of the camera by ISIS while the whole world was watching.

The work *Fiat Nasr* (2002) is a near- autobiography of the artist. Fiat Nasr was the first vehicle to be built in Egypt and is the symbol of the golden age of the nation's industry; at the same time Nasr means "victory" which by chance corresponds to his name.

The installation is a sort of puzzle made of sixteen cubes on whose faces have been put pictures of perforated, flat tires of six Fiat Nasr. This ironic and ludicrous spectacle (inviting the spectator to reassemble the images) recalls the artist's carefree childhood, which coincided with a flourishing moment for the Egyptian economy. The subjective and autobiographic element is combined with the story of a collective condition, anthropologically relevant and contextually configured.

The video *At Death's Door* (2009) is a meditation on the present and at the same time a callback to the world of origins, a confrontation between the transcendent yearning of Sufism and the frustrations of every day life. A pita, a flat and empty bread, breathes in a crepuscular light, vibrating like a symbolic heart that has no desire to stop, "the pita represents life two times: the first in a direct translation is nourishment, the second is a vital organ. The twilight is there as a menace, a suspended time that swings toward one moment or another, in the darkness and oblivion, the nothingness. (...)" "life is a fragile and trivial thing, that comes and goes. A gift whose mysteries we haven't finished exploring" (S. Njami)

Extremely attentive to the present, Nasr tends to consider culture a fluid element which renovates itself and transforms accordingly when meeting with the other.

A significant moment of his personal and artistic journey has been his encounter with Sufism, marked by the study of the philosophy of the Sufi Ibn Arabi (1165-1240). Nasr dedicates to him an eponymous work in exhibition, a large neon sign which gives life to his words, displaying them in green, the colour of wealth, death, and Islam.

In *Arabesque (Lost Heritage)* and *The Love* every match conspires to create a complicated and intensely vibrant image. The traditional decorative patterns are both a symbol of perfect balance and also a reminder of the potential for destruction. The artist creates thereby a friction between the material and the shape of the work.

Moataz Nasr was born in 1961 in Alexandria (Egypt) and he works and lives in Cairo.

After studying economics, he decided to change direction and rented a studio in Old Cairo. Self-taught, he earned early recognition at a local level before entering the international scene in 2001 by winning the Grand Prix of the VIII International Cairo Biennale. He has taken part in the most important international exhibitions, among which the Venice, Seoul, Sao Paulo, and Bogotà Biennales as well as representation in prestigious contemporary museums.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY OAK TAYLOR-SMITH. Courtesy: GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano / Beijing / Les Moulins / Habana