

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

MOATAZ NASR AT THE 57th VENICE BIENNALE

The Mountain
The Egyptian Pavilion
Giardini del Castello
Venice

May 13 – November 26, 2017

Press Preview: May 10 – 12

Open to the public Saturday, May 13



The Mountain, 2017. Video Still. Photo. Courtesy Moataz Nasr ©

Moataz Nasr invites visitors to overcome their fears in *THE MOUNTAIN* at the Egyptian Pavilion during the 57th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia. In an immersive film installation, Nasr explores the forces that fear perpetuates through the storytelling of a mythical small village in Egypt. With *THE MOUNTAIN*, the Egyptian Pavilion in the Giardini di Castello has been transformed and the villagers' experience are brought to light amidst a multi-sensory experience including a large-scale film projection that shares a story of village stifled by a threat with the cannot see.

Showing complex cultural processes currently underway in the Middle Eastern region, Moataz Nasr's work surpasses idiosyncrasies and geographical limits and voices the worries and afflictions of the African continent. The feeling of belonging to a specific geopolitical and cultural context and the need to maintain a link with his homeland are key elements of the artist's life and work.

In *THE MOUNTAIN*, Nasr allows for a deeply transformative element to unfold and offers a seminal teaching about humanity and the human condition. While the story is metaphoric, this

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

village could potentially be any place throughout the world from Asia and Africa, to the Middle East, the Americas and Europe. In this way, the shared human element is brought to the fore as we all can recognise a growing sense of fear in our everyday communities. What Nasr is suggesting through this work is that we need to confront fear with the most powerful tools we were given: our humanity and our ability to create beauty.

About the Artist:

Moataz Nasr was born in 1961 in Alexandria (Egypt). He lives and works in Cairo. After studying economics, he decided to change direction and take a studio in Old Cairo. This self-taught artist gained local recognition marked by many prizes before breaking into the international art scene in 2001, notably winning the Grand Prix at the 8th International Cairo Biennial. Since, he has participated in large international gatherings like the Venice, Seoul, Sao Paulo, Bogotá biennials and exhibited in prestigious contemporary art venues. Today he is considered one of the greatest representatives of pan-Arab contemporary art.

Art and life are inseparable for him. His childhood memories, frustrations and the society in which he is evolving seem to fuel his paintings, sculptures, videos and installations. His work concerns Egypt with its traditions, people, colours, without ever slipping into the exoticism or creating distance. It appears, on the contrary, close to everyone's preoccupations. In fact, Egypt is just a background, a territory inhabited by human beings whose fragility is universal, as are indifference, powerlessness and solitude, weaknesses inherent in human nature.

About the Gallery:

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practice of established artists.

Press Inquiries:

For more information and images, please contact Jolaine Frizzell, Leila Heller Gallery, jolaine@leilahellergallery.com