

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

GHADA AMER *NEW WORKS*

OPENING RECEPTION: TUESDAY, JUNE 25 | 5–7 PM

ON VIEW: JUNE 25 – JULY 27, 2024

616 East Hyman Avenue, Aspen, CO



Ghada Amer, *The Red Portrait (bronze)*, 2021. Waterborne paint on lost wax cast bronze (black and white), 37 5/8 x 23 1/2 x 9 3/4 inches, 95.6 x 59.7 x 24.8 cm, Edition of 6 (#1/6)

ASPEN, CO – Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to return to Aspen, CO for the summer, continuing the gallery's longstanding engagement with Colorado town's vibrant art community. In the space on East Hyman Avenue, the gallery will present an exhibition of new work by Ghada Amer, opening at the end of June, followed by a presentation of work by Sanford Biggers, Svenja Deininger, and Claudia Wieser, opening at the end of July.

In a practice that spans painting, sculpture, ceramic, garden, and installation, Ghada Amer (b. 1963; Cairo, Egypt) pulls at the threads of cultural dualities—feminine and masculine, craft and art, figuration and abstraction, East and West—with sensitivity and specificity. Appropriating sexualized imagery—often sourced from pornographic magazines—Amer subverts the masculinist tropes that permeate them, reimagining women in moments of ecstasy, pleasure, and tenderness. For her first solo exhibition in Aspen, Amer brings together two of her recent, materially innovative bodies of work: the *Paravent Girls* and *QR CODES REVISITED*.

Beginning their lives as abandoned cardboard boxes found on the street, Amer's *Paravent Girls* take a rich material journey before arriving at their final bronze form. On the surface of the flattened boxes, the artist draws the faces of anonymized women, the excess ink from her deceptively simple line

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drawings trailing delicately down the corrugated texture of the surface of each box. Amer transfers these tender portraits to clay, redrawing each figures' features in relief in the soft, earthen material manipulated by hand before casting them in bronze.

The *Paravent Girls* bear the physical traces of Amer's materials and process. Although rendered in bronze, they retain the form and memory of the cardboard boxes from which they were made. The metaphorical potential of the work is evident from their titles: the *Paravent Girls* exemplify Amer's interest in notions of the gaze and the dynamics invested in the act of looking. The sculptures form paravents—screens used to separate a room, to differentiate between public and private spaces, to conceal, to withhold, to create a sense of mystery. Yet, Amer's figures—captured here in moments of intimacy and eroticism—are revealed, perpetually, to the viewer.

With *QR CODES REVISITED*, Amer reimagines a textile appliqué craft long associated with male tentmakers in Egypt. In the ancient tradition of *khayamiya*, richly colored appliqué panels are used to decorate the interiors of tents and pavilions for weddings and other celebrations. Amer reappropriates the craft, transforming it into abstract grids of monochromatic, geometric patterns, reminiscent of the ubiquitous form of QR codes. Within the seemingly-abstract surfaces, Amer embeds feminist texts—some English, some Arabic, all using stylized, abstracted characters.

Amer frequently incorporates language into her work, often borrowing pithy aphorisms from other feminist activists, artists, and writers. She takes a similar approach in this body of work, incorporating the famous quote by Egyptian feminist activist Nawal El Saadawi, "plastic surgery is a postmodern veil," as well as an excerpt by Simone de Beauvoir. Embedding these texts within her work, Amer once again refutes the objectification of women—deploying instead the voices of feminist writers to reclaim agency for women everywhere.

ABOUT GHADA AMER

Amer's work is in public collections around the world including The Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, NY; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; the Guggenheim Museum, Abu Dhabi; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; the Samsung Museum, Seoul; among others. She is regularly invited to prestigious group shows and biennials—such as the Whitney Biennial in 2000 and the Venice Biennales of 1999 (where she won the UNESCO Prize), 2005 and 2007. She was recognized with a mid-career retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York in 2008 and a larger, more extensive one at the MUCEM and across other venues in Marseille, France in 2022. Amer studied at the Villa Arson École Nationale Supérieure in Nice, France, at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA, and at the Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques in Paris. She lives and works in New York.

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