

MONIRA AL QADIRI

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BEASTS

KÖNIG GALERIE | CHAPEL
9 SEPTEMBER – 8 NOVEMBER 2026

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present a new exhibition by Monira Al Qadiri in the Chapel of St. Agnes. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BEASTS marks the artist's third exhibition with the gallery.

With this exhibition, Al Qadiri ventures into new territory by turning her attention to ancient Egypt, a subject that has long fascinated her. The works on view were first presented in 2024 at Bozar in Brussels.

What connects this recent body of work to her earlier practice is its exploration of the fragile relationships and complex power dynamics between humans, animals, and nature. Al Qadiri combines these themes with contemporary technology, striking visual aesthetics, subtle humor, and layered metaphor.

The exhibition brings together sculptures, video installations, and a virtual reality work, weaving together Egyptian mythology and contemporary technologies. Visitors embark on a journey in time to ancient Egypt while encountering a series of questions: Who is human, and who is animal? Where do the boundaries lie? Which hierarchies shape our ways of thinking and acting? And how were such categories understood in ancient Egypt, where animals were revered as divine beings?

At the entrance to the Chapel, visitors are welcomed by AUTOMATON (2024), two glossy black ready-made figures representing the Egyptian deities Khnum and Anubis. Khnum is the creator god associated with the biological origin of humankind, while Anubis, the god of mummification and the funerary cult, guides the mortal body into the afterlife. Within these sculptures, the human, the animal, and the divine converge. The two figures complement one another and, silently rotating, engage in a silent dialogue.

The exhibition's video installation, BOOK OF THE DEAD (2024), also features Egyptian deities. Based on 3D scans of statues in Luxor, the works bring these ancient figures to life. The characters recite passages from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead", a collection of spells and instructions that were placed in tombs to guide the deceased through the afterlife.

In the virtual reality installation AARU: AFTER LAMENT (2024), the first time Al Qadiri's worked in virtual reality, viewers are immersed in a golden, sunlit wheat field, echoed by the gilded wheat stalks lining the gallery walls. In ancient Egyptian belief, paradise was imagined as an infinite, harmonious version of the Nile Delta. Wheat and barley, as staple crops, symbolized eternal life, while working the fields represented the ideal form of existence after death. The flood that ultimately disrupts this harmony may be read as a reference to the contemporary climate crisis.

Al Qadiri invites viewers to reflect on the profound interconnectedness that characterized ancient Egyptian conceptions of nature, animals, cultivated land, human labor, and the Earth's ecosystems.

KÖNIG GALERIE

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OPENING TIMES
Tuesday – Sunday 11 am – 6 pm
and by appointment

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