



WADSWORTH ATHENEUM
MUSEUM OF ART

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Challenging Material, Evocative Forms Characterize Sculpture by Nevine Mahmoud in MATRIX 188 at Wadsworth Atheneum

Hartford, Conn. (January 25, 2022)—Glass, stone, and resin compose sculptural works by Nevine Mahmoud that simultaneously evoke the human body, inanimate objects, and organic forms. They are at once natural and manufactured; alive and disembodied; inviting and disturbing. The nine works in the exhibition are arranged across the gallery space by the artist, who is deeply engaged in exhibition design, to propel visual associations and conversations between the works. *Nevine Mahmoud / MATRIX 188* is on view at the Wadsworth February 3–May 1, 2022.

“Mahmoud’s seductive, alluring forms spark curiosity as they continually shapeshift before your eyes,” said Patricia Hickson, the Wadsworth’s Emily Hall Tremain Curator of Contemporary Art. “From animal to vegetal to mechanical, the fluid connotations of her sculptures connect a surreal sensibility with feminist fearlessness.”

Mahmoud works with rigorous materials, including hard stone, a traditionally male-dominated craft due to the intense physicality of manipulating the medium, and more recently, glass—both cast and hand blown. Fueled by the artist’s interest in unusual material combinations, vibrantly-colored glass objects with slick, shiny finishes contrast with the matte surfaces and muted tones of marble.

Throughout the exhibition, Mahmoud rejects the traditional, white display pedestal as a mode of display. Instead, the artist designs specific alternatives including metal hardware that harnesses objects to the wall, a plastic patio chair that presents a set of nearly-three-foot-wide red lips, and hard-edged, plywood steps.

In addition to tactile surfaces, Mahmoud's sculptural installations offer an exploration of nature and the body. At once sensual, ambiguous, and menacing, they evoke lips, breasts, and buttocks as much as fruit, flowers, mechanisms, and toys.

In a 2018 interview with *Art of Choice*, Mahmoud stated: "I think it is my way of inscribing a kind of authorship into the works. I am a female artist, I identify that way and have been identified by culture as such. I think women artists are under-represented and historically overshadowed by male artists. So, I want to write the female form, from my perspective, continually into the history of sculpture. Many have done this before me, and I intend to join forces."

Mahmoud has noted specific influences in this feminist art history, including Louise Bourgeois (French American, 1911–2010), Alina Szapocznikow (Polish, 1926–1973), and Kiki Smith (American, born Germany, 1954), who have also worked with the fragmented female form. Smith's *Daisy Chain* (1992) is currently on view at the Wadsworth alongside Harriet Goodhue Hosmer's (American, 1830–1908) marble sculpture *Zenobia in Chains* (1859), two floors up from the MATRIX gallery—an opportunity for visitors to explore connections between these and Mahmoud's works.

About the Artist

Nevine Mahmoud (born 1988 in London, England) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. She received her BA from Goldsmiths, University of London and MFA from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Mahmoud's first institutional solo exhibition is currently on view at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery. Other recent exhibitions include *Rosa in mano*, a three-person exhibition at the Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro in Milan; *The Artist is Present*, curated by Maurizio Cattelan, at the Yuz Museum in Shanghai; *Dreamers Awake: Women Artists After Surrealism* at White Cube, London; *Romancing the Mirror* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, FL; *Holly Coulis, Nevine Mahmoud & Christina Ramberg*, Simon Lee Gallery, Hong Kong; *The Poet, the Critic and the Missing* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and *MADMOISELLE* at the Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain Occitanie in Sète.

Related Programs

Artist Talk with Nevine Mahmoud

Thursday, February 3; 5pm exhibition preview; 6pm artist talk – In museum

Join Nevine Mahmoud in her MATRIX exhibition to learn more about her approach to finding fluidity, playfulness, and sensual qualities through hard materials. This free event is open to a limited audience with required advance registration via thewadsworth.org.

Curator Talk with Patricia Hickson

Sunday, March 13; 1pm – In museum

Curator Patricia Hickson gives an inside look at Mahmoud's purposeful choice of rigorous materials and exploration of organic forms with lively and menacing results. Free and open to the public. Meet in front of the Museum Shop.

MATRIX Past and Present | Nevine Mahmoud and Pipilotti Rist in Conversation

Thursday, April 28; 7pm – Virtual Program

Nevine Mahmoud and Pipilotti Rist (MATRIX 136 in 1998) discuss ideas of aesthetics, play, and eroticism. Free virtual program. Visit thewadsworth.org to register.

Exhibition and Program Support

MATRIX 188 is generously supported by The Saunders Foundation and the Wadsworth Atheneum's Contemporary Coalition.

Sustaining support for the Wadsworth Atheneum provided by the Greater Hartford Arts Council's United Arts Campaign, and the Department of Economic and Community Development.

About MATRIX

Inaugurated in 1975, MATRIX is the Wadsworth's groundbreaking contemporary art exhibition series featuring works by artists from around the world. Many MATRIX artists, such as Christo, Sol LeWitt, Gerhard Richter, Cindy Sherman, Andy Warhol, and Carrie Mae Weems, are now considered seminal figures in contemporary art.

About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Founded in 1842 with a vision for infusing art into the American experience, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is home to a collection of nearly 50,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years and encompassing European art from antiquity through contemporary as well as American art from the 1600s to today. The Wadsworth Atheneum's five connected buildings—representing architectural styles including Gothic Revival, modern International Style, and 1960s Brutalism—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Conn.

Current hours are noon–5pm Thursday–Sunday. Berkins on Main café hours are noon–4pm Thursday–Sunday. The library is currently closed to the public. Visitors are required to wear a face mask/covering while inside the museum. Admission: \$5–15; discounts for members, students, and seniors. Free admission for Hartford residents with Wadsworth Welcome registration. Free “happy hour” admission 4–5pm. Advance ticket registration via thewadsworth.org is encouraged, not required. Phone: (860) 278- 2670; website: thewadsworth.org.

Images (left to right): *Triple Swell*, 2020. Azzuro Aquamarina marble, glass and acrylic. Courtesy of the artist and Soft Opening, London. Photo: Daniel Terna; *Wax Lips seated*, 2021. Polyester resin, plastic, plastic chair, and steel hardware. Courtesy of the artist and M+B, Los Angeles. Photo: Ed Mumford; *Toy/Intruder*, 2020. Hand-blown glass and polyester resin. Courtesy of the artist and Soft Opening, London. Photo: Paul Salveson

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