

Institut du monde arabe presents Le Theoreme de Nefertiti

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Institut du monde arabe presents Le Theoreme de Nefertiti (Tea with Nefertiti) The journey of an art work: the making of an icon on April 23–September 8, 2013.



J&K, Horus and Anubis in Islamic Cairo, 2006. Photo (pigment print on paper), 75 x 112 cm. Courtesy of the artists.

Le Théorème de Néfertiti (Tea with Nefertiti) explores the visual and literary mechanisms by which artworks come to acquire a range of meanings and functions that can embody a number of diverse, and at times conflicting, narratives. Through employing the Nefertiti bust as a metaphorical thread, and by interrogating the contested history of Egyptian Museum collections from the 19th century onwards, the

exhibition is concerned with the critique of museology, the staging of the artwork and the writing of art- historical narrative as a means of forming and informing cultural otherness.

The exhibition is organized along three thematic chapters that reflect on the process of appropriation, de-contextualization and re-semanticisation that an artwork undergoes as it travels through time and place. The “Artist” section highlights the artist’s formalistic departures and contributions as evidenced through the artworks on display. The “Museum” section examines the institutionalization of art interrogating how the context in which an artwork is presented bestows on it new meanings and functions. The “Public” section maps out the unpredictable evolution of art as it expands beyond the atelier and the museum and gets coerced into the writing of problematic meta-narratives.

Le Théorème de Néfertiti (Tea with Nefertiti) is constructed around a series of juxtapositions and groupings of historic, modern and contemporary artworks and documents. This is intended as a gesture towards breaking away from more familiar museum classifications that have been conventionally based on geography, periods and style. It proposes alternative paradigms for art-historical construction that transcend the confines of geo-temporal linearity. These constructs are conceived as pointers to an ongoing process of cultural transfer, of appropriation and negotiation that exists beyond the parameters of a much-contested historiography.

The artists featured in the exhibition are Ghada Amer, Armand (b. Armenak Arzrouni), Mohamad-Said Baalbaki, Taha Belal, Adam Broomberg & Oliver Chanarin, Honoré Daumier, Thomas Demand, Maurice Denis, Rudolf Ernst, Mamduh Muhamad Fathallah, Francis Frith, Georg Frey, Alberto Giacometti, Gilbert & George, Georges Henein, Candida Höfer, Iman Issa, J & K (Janne Schäfer & Kristine Agergaard), Emily Jacir, Ida Kar, William Kentridge, Paul Klee, Susanne Kriemann,

Little Warsaw (Bálint Havas and András Gálik), Maha Maamoun, Luigi Mayer, Lee Miller, Amedeo Modigliani, Mahmoud Moukhtar, Vik Muniz, Youssef Nabil, Xenia Nikolskaya, Amy Nimr, Lorraine O'Grady, Grayson Perry, David Roberts, Georges Sabbagh, Nida Sinnokrot, Thomas Struth, David G. Tretyakoff, Kees van Dongen, Van Leo (b. Alexander Boyadjian), Ai Weiwei, Ramses Younan, Ala Younis, and Bassem Yousri.

The exhibition also includes a number of artworks that are conventionally labeled as Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic by artists whose names are now unknown.

The exhibition will be on view at IMA from April 23 till September 8. It was on view at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha from November 17, 2012 till March 31, 2013. It will travel to IVAM in Valencia from October 30, 2013 till February 7, 2014 followed by BOZAR, Brussels in the spring/summer of 2014. A bilingual (French/Arabic) catalogue is published by IMA and SKIRA. An English/Arabic version of the catalogue is available through Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha.

An academic symposium will take place on June 26 and 27 based on the themes of the exhibition at the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA), Paris.

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