

MOATAZ NASR

The Maze (The people want the fall of the regime), 2011

Labyrinth drawn on grass

Diameter: 27m

Presented by GALLERIA CONTINUA,
San Gimignano/Beijing/Le Moulin



Born in 1961 in Alexandria. Lives and works in Cairo.

Moataz Nasr seeks inspiration from his rich Egyptian heritage, from ancient or very recent sources, from Sufism to the Arab Spring, unreservedly. The message of his works, always open to universal themes, calls for boundaries to be surpassed and contributes to intercultural dialogue.

On 11 February 2011, the artist was preparing an exhibition in his gallery in Italy, when he learned that Hosni Mubarak had quit. Moataz Nasr was moved by the news. The hopes raised by the Arab Spring had suddenly been tainted by a certain climate of unease, related to the uncertainty that accompanies any revolution. In order to convey this ambivalent feeling, Moataz Nasr created *The Maze*, which encapsulates the people's protest and pays homage to their struggle. The interlacing elements that make up the maze deploy the revolutionaries' slogan: «The people want the fall of the regime». Arabic readers can progressively read this phrase, repeated several times - like a psalmody - in Kufic, one of the oldest Arabic calligraphies, often used in architectural settings.

The Maze can be adapted to suit the place of exhibition. As part of FIAC, it juxtaposes the volumes and forms of the Tuileries Garden, and may evoke a French garden and adopt the octagonal shape of the neighbouring basin. The octagon is also a motif that is often used in Arabic architecture. It symbolises purity and sacredness, and confers a certain solemnity to the work. As a formal consequence or as intended by the artist, this octagon does not contain an entrance or an exit.

Visitors can either look down on it from above in order to more easily comprehend the slogan, or they can walk within it, getting lost among the words. Through the intermediary of this playful and immersive form, Moataz Nasr expresses the current situation: the regime has fallen, the people's wish has eventuated, but the outcome of the revolution is still unknown. The way that this work may be seen in the future will doubtless depend on how the events unfold.

Elia Biezunski, Anne Lehut, Manolis Karterakis, Adrien Serien
Students of the Ecole du Louvre