

BARK

Mona Marzouk

2 May – 2 July 2018

BARK is a new series of paintings by Mona Marzouk that aim to forge a connection between a formal minimalism, perception and recent notions in philosophy on virtual reality (VR) technology. BARK builds on a cumulative practice in which Marzouk has been investigating the history of objects and congruently speculating on their future. Her images become unlikely routes to a cultural investigation of the past and future melded into one.

Her work borrows from German philosopher Thomas Metzinger's recent work on human consciousness and physical experience. Metzinger argues that our daily perception of the world seems effortless, as a result of how the human brain produces a form of interface, a virtual reality to allow the experience of tactile objects, colors and duration. In this series, Marzouk uses the humble tree trunk to think about how humans envision their surroundings and the spectacular implications of this process as it relates to the subjective self.

The work plays with tropes of VR, as a flat, one dimensional image that produces the optical illusion of 3D. Optical illusion here becomes a way to make the effortless experience of reality more complicated, while also taking into consideration ecological concerns by making the tree trunk the main protagonist of the project.

The exhibition is comprised of precisely planned and immaculately executed acrylic on canvas paintings. In this series Marzouk makes her subtle brush work visible to the viewer as a slight shift from her signature hard-edge flat technique. Her sources stem from images that freely circulate on the internet and her paintings take on a hybrid quality in which objects are placed in a limbo of distorted familiarity.

Mona Marzouk is an artist based in Alexandria, Egypt. She graduated in 1996 from the Academy of Fine Arts in Düsseldorf, Germany. A painter and sculptor, her work has often taken the form of large site-specific murals sometimes incorporating animations. Her work has been featured at MOCA, Museum of Contemporary Art Yinchuan, China, 2017; NiMAC, Nicosia, Cyprus, 2017; Centre for Contemporary Art, Leipzig, Germany, 2016; EVA International – Ireland's Biennial, Limerick, 2014; 11th Havana Biennial, Cuba, 2012; Steirischer Herbst, Graz, 2011; the 7th Gwangju Biennial, South Korea, 2008; 1st Canary Islands Biennial, Spain, 2006. Marzouk's solo exhibitions include Trayvon, Gypsum Gallery, Cairo, 2014, The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Energy's Evil, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, UK, 2008 and The New World, Art in General, New York, 2006.

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