



MONASH UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART  
MEDIA KIT

MUMMA

# HANY ARMANIOUS: THE GOLDEN THREAD

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE OF WORKS SHOWN AT THE 54TH VENICE BIENNALE 2011

1 FEBRUARY - 7 APRIL 2012

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



 **MONASH** University  
Museum of Art

Ground Floor, Building F  
Monash University, Caulfield Campus  
900 Dandenong Road  
Caulfield East VIC 3145 Australia

[www.monash.edu.au/muma](http://www.monash.edu.au/muma)  
Telephone +61 3 9905 4217  
[muma@monash.edu](mailto:muma@monash.edu)  
Tues–Fri 10am–5pm; Sat 12–5pm

Hany Armanious  
*Effigy of an effigy with mirage* 2010  
installation view, Australian Pavilion,  
54th Venice Biennale 2011  
photo: Mara Comin  
courtesy of the Australia Council for the Arts



## INTRODUCTION

Monash University Museum of Art is pleased to announce the Australian premiere of *Hany Armanious: The Golden Thread*, first presented in the Australian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011, alongside a suite of new works and artist's book developed for MUMA. The first major exhibition of Hany Armanious' work in Melbourne, *The Golden Thread* will open the Museum's 2012 exhibition program from 1 February.

Born in Egypt in 1962 and migrating with his family to Australia six years later, Sydney-based Armanious was the sole Australian representative at the Venice Biennale in 2011. *Hany Armanious: The Golden Thread* was developed by the Australia Council, with Doug Hall AM as Commissioner, and Anne Ellegood as Curator. Armanious' critically acclaimed exhibition at Venice – arguably the most prestigious visual arts event on the international calendar – builds upon a burgeoning critical reception that has grown around the artist's work internationally over the past decade.

Examining the relationship between readymade and figurative sculptural traditions, *The Golden Thread* presents cast sculptural forms that are simultaneously archaic and modern, formal and informal, uncanny and concrete. Hany Armanious creates works that reveal the energy, sensation and perversity embedded within inanimate things. His interest in bringing 'nothingness into being', and exploring the passage between the mythical and the mundane, are just some of the complex twists and inversions that abound in his sculptures.

Anne Ellegood, Senior Curator at Los Angeles' Hammer Museum, characterises Armanious' sculptural installations as 'sites for creative production where the primordial urge to attempt to understand the mysteries of the world through the making of objects is honoured'.<sup>1</sup>

Surprisingly, for an artist who exhibits widely internationally, and who is cited as a significant influence to a generation of contemporary artists, there

have been few opportunities to encounter Armanious' work in Melbourne. MUMA, with the support of the Australia Council, looks forward to presenting this major exhibition to Melbourne audiences.

Laura McLean-Ferris, *The Independent*:

'I enjoyed immensely the Australian contribution from Hany Armanious, whose sculptural casts of everyday items such as pinboards, plinths, Burger King crowns, and broken window blinds raise the prosaic into a moving aesthetic experience'.<sup>2</sup>

Sebastian Smee, *The Monthly*:

'...high art and all its associated intellectual glamour are placed here in the context of the most ordinary, the most expendable, the most ignored and despised objects. Cast in resin, everything is made equivalent, as if Australian egalitarianism had been transposed to the realm of aesthetics'.<sup>3</sup>

Roberta Smith, *New York Times*:

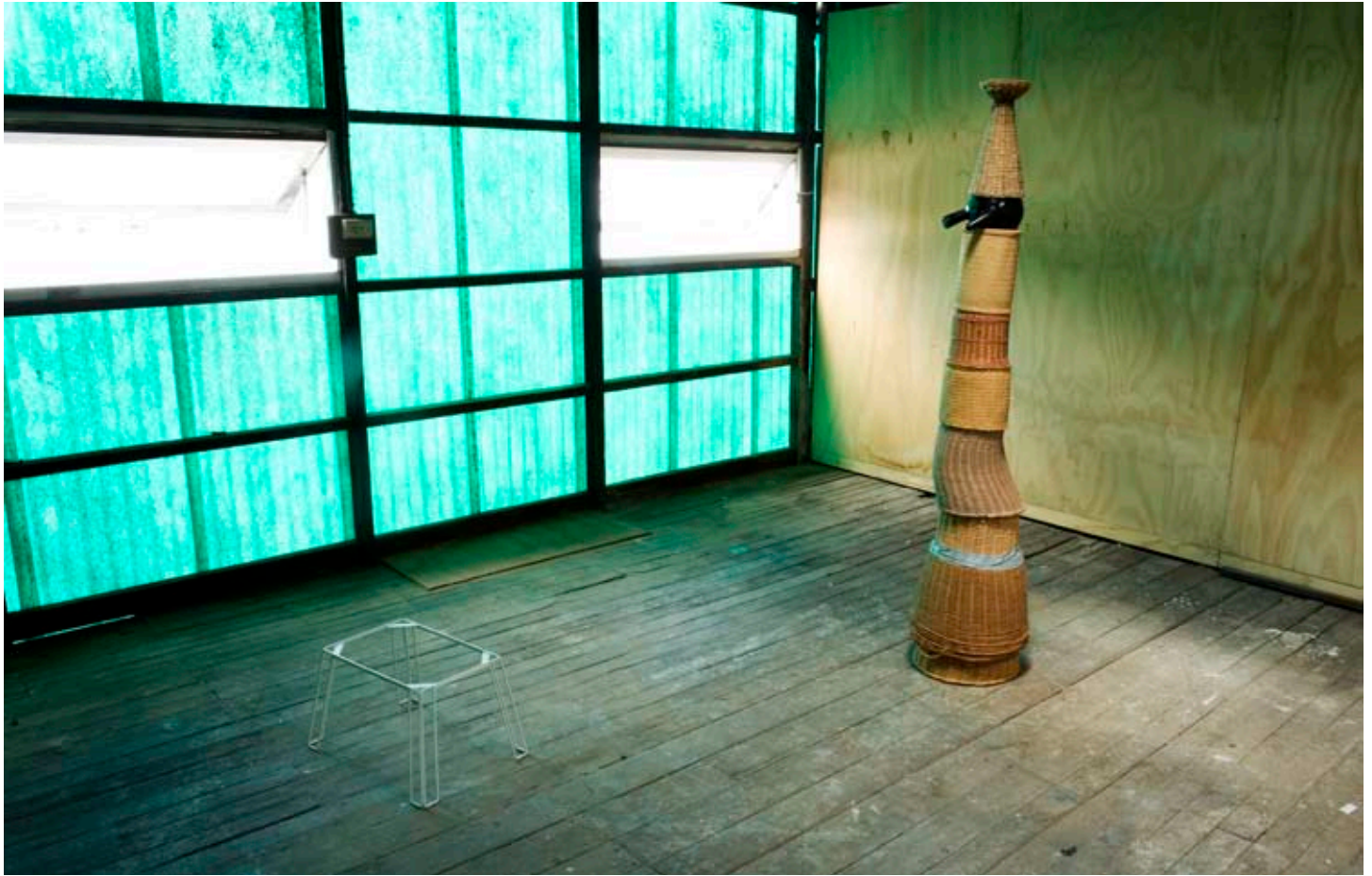
'the spare sculptures of the Egyptian-born, Sydney based artist Hany Armanious mix everyday objects and abstract forms and blur the line between found and made'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anne Ellegood, 'Stopping the World', in Stephanie Holt (ed.), *Hany Armanious: The Golden Thread*, Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney, 2011, p.27.

<sup>2</sup> Laura McLean-Ferris, '54th Venice Biennale: Tapping the light fantastic', *The Independent*, 7 June, 2011, [www.theindependent.co.uk](http://www.theindependent.co.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Sebastian Smee, 'Vanity Case: The 54th Venice Biennale', *The Monthly*, July 2011, [www.themonthly.com.au](http://www.themonthly.com.au).

<sup>4</sup> Roberta Smith, 'Artists Decorate Palazzos, and Vice Versa', *The New York Times*, 9 June, 2011, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)



## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Hany Armanious is one of Australia's leading contemporary artists, whose work is subject of considerable international attention. In 2011 he represented Australia at the 54th Venice Biennale.

Hany Armanious has exhibited regularly since the early 1990s in Sydney, Brisbane, New York, St Louis, Los Angeles, Wellington and Auckland.

Armanious' work has featured in significant group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including: *2010 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Before & After Science*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; *Lost and Found: An Archaeology of the Present*, TarraWarra Biennial, Melbourne, 2008; *Jesuvian Process*, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, 2008; *Nueva Dimension*, Hats Plus, London; *Artist Makes Video*, *Art Rage Survey 1994-1998*, Griffith University, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane; *Surface Wave*, Foxy Production, New York, all in 2007; *Adventures with form in space*, Balnaves Foundation Sculpture Project, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; *Uncanny Nature*, Australia Centre of Contemporary Art, Melbourne; *Before the Body - Matter*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne; and the Busan Biennale, Korea, all 2006.

Hany Armanious was a Moët & Chandon Fellow in 1996 and has been the recipient of the Australia Council studio in Los Angeles and New York, in 1993 and 2002.

Armanious is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Foxy Production, New York; Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland and Galleria Raucchi Santa Maria, Naples.

## CATALOGUE AND ARTIST'S BOOK

Artist's book: Hany Armanious has developed an artist's book *Prototypes* to

coincide with the MUMA premiere of *The Golden Thread*. A curious object in its own right, *Prototypes* is a compendium of the artist's key source images, and a series of propositions and insights into where and how we read sculpture.

Australian Pavilion Exhibition Catalogue: The Venice Biennale catalogue for *Hany Armanious: The Golden Thread* exhibition will be available; featuring essays by Anne Ellegood (curator), Michael Ned Holte, Alexander Dumbadze, Adam Jasper and an excerpt from a novel by Rachel Kushner.

Published by the Australia Council for the Arts on the occasion of the exhibition *Hany Armanious: The Golden Thread*, for the Australian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale, 4 June – 27 November 2011, it features extensive colour plates of all works presented in Venice alongside related work of recent years.

## EXHIBITION DATES

1 February - 7 April 2012

Opening function: Saturday 4 February 2012, 3.00 - 5.00pm

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

A series of artists talks, forums and workshops will be held to coincide with *Hany Armanious: The Golden Thread*.

See MUMA's website for details: [www.monash.edu.au/muma](http://www.monash.edu.au/muma).

## MEDIA

For all media enquiries please contact Rosemary Forde on 03 9905 4360 or [rosemary.forde@monash.edu](mailto:rosemary.forde@monash.edu).