

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Akram Zaatari
Father and Son

Private view: Saturday 20 April, 12–6pm
Exhibition dates: 23 April–13 July 2024

Thomas Dane Gallery
Via Francesco Crispi, 69
Napoli

Thomas Dane Gallery is pleased to announce *Father and Son*, a solo exhibition of Akram Zaatari, opening in April 2024. The exhibition will be Zaatari's third with the gallery and the artist's first major solo exhibition in Italy.

Akram Zaatari (b. 1966, Saida) has played a critical role in developing the formal, intellectual and institutional infrastructure of Beirut's contemporary art scene. He has produced more than fifty films and videos, a dozen books and countless installations of photographic material, all sharing an interest in writing histories and the search for records and objects, keeping track of their changing hands, the retrieval of narratives and missing links that have been hidden, misplaced, lost, found, buried or excavated. The act of digging itself has become emblematic of his practice while acting to restore connections lost over time, or due to war and displacement. Zaatari has dedicated a large volume of his work to the research and study of photographic practices in the Arab world and has made uncompromising contributions to the wider discourse on preservation and archival practice.

Rooted in this research practice, Zaatari's exhibition in Naples retraces the element of restitution in the artist's work, expressed mainly through text, documents and photographs that revisit descriptions and recreate objects or ties that once existed but are now lost. The exhibition features works across many media from the last two decades, beginning with his two-hour-long video, *Ain el Mir* (2002), in which the artist looks for a buried letter that never reached its destination. It spans through to Zaatari's most recent body of work, *Father and Son* (2024), in which the sarcophagi of two Phoenician Kings (father and son), separated since antiquity, are reunited. The project is accompanied by a series of new works on paper that look at the Mediterranean as a locus of exchange, extraction and movement across millennia.

Amongst these works *Archeology* (2017), *Photographic Currency* (2019) and *Venus of Beirut*, (2022), and a new work, *Ibrahim and the Cat, For Inji Efflatoun* (2024), all engage in the process of recreating objects that have either vanished or were never produced. The brass relief *Ibrahim and the Cat* – made with artisans in Naples – gives new form to a forgotten photograph taken by the father of Egyptian artist Inji Efflatoun for the purpose of making a painting that was never produced.

Zaatari's idea of 'giving life to things that do not exist in the present' also applies to the recreation of a stone monolith used to seal King Tabnit's tomb, which was completely destroyed when his sarcophagus was extracted in 1887. *All that Refuses to Vanish* (2022) was made from drawings and notes left by Ottoman statesman and painter Osman Hamdi during his excavation of the Sidon Necropolis.

Akram Zaatari lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon. Recent exhibitions include: *Against Photography. An Annotated History of the Arab Image Foundation*, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah,

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UAE (2019); *The Script*, New Art Exchange, Nottingham, England (2018); *The Fold*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati OH (2018); *Letter to a Refusing Pilot*, Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden (2018); *Against Photography. An Annotated History of the Arab Image Foundation*, MACBA, Barcelona, Spain (2017); travelling to: K21, Düsseldorf, Germany (2018); Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea (2018); *Double Take: Akram Zaatari and the Arab Image Foundation*, National Portrait Gallery, London, England (2017); *This Day at Ten*, Kunsthau Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland (2016); *Unfolding*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2015); *Akram Zaatari: The End of Time*, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada (2014); Lebanese Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2013); *Projects 100: Akram Zaatari*, Museum of Modern Art, New York NY, (2013); *This Day at Ten / Aujourd'hui à 10*, Magasin Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble, France (2013); *Tomorrow Everything Will be Alright*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge MA (2012); *The Uneasy Subject*, MUAC, Mexico City, Mexico (2012); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León, Spain (2011).

Additionally, Zaatari's work has been part of Sharjah Biennial 14, Sharjah, UAE (2018); the 12th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey (2011); The Yokohama Triennale, Yokohama, Japan (2014); the 55th and 52nd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2013 and 2007); dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Germany (2012); 27th São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil (2006); the 6th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea (2006); and the 15th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia (2006).

Zaatari's work is included in the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Louis Vuitton, Paris, France; Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol, England; Tate Modern, London, England; MCA Chicago, Chicago IL; Guggenheim Museum, New York NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York NY; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles CA and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis MN.

The *Father and Son* project is also the artist's doctoral project in Arts at ENSAPC and the Cy University, France, under the direction of François Pernot, Alejandra Riera and Bénédicte Savoy. It has been supported in part by:

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Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Friday 11am–1:30pm & 2:30pm–7pm, Saturday 12pm–6pm, or by appointment

Admission: Free

Nearest station: Piazza Amedeo

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