

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Wim Delvoye



*Maserati 450s*, 2015, Embossed Aluminium, 80 x 450 x 180 cm

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce artist Wim Delvoye's solo show '*Wim Delvoye*' opening on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Wim Delvoye is an attentive observer of his era, exploring the future to uncover upcoming trends, all the while keeping his view solidly anchored in the past and its traditions. Indeed, his art is often a combination of craftsmanship and the most sophisticated industrial manufacturing techniques.

With its 420 horsepower, the Maserati 450s was the most powerful sports car of its time and only ten copies were made between 1956 and 1958. The motifs used are drawn from the ornamental repertoire of Islamic arts and were placed on the cars by Iranian craftsmen. Elements of calligraphy—such as "*Isra and Mi'raj*", which describe two episodes of the life of the Prophet Muhammad—join geometric forms and flower style motifs on the chassis of the Maserati. The artist invites us to experience an encounter between the East and the West, and between technology and craftsmanship.

Wim is fascinated with the capitalist model and the market economy as they relate to artistic production. Wim seeks to explore how the bizarre and seemingling absurd interests of individuals can sometimes gain traction and evolve to become phenomenons that present gargantuan opportunities for economic investment. The artist's most recent series of bas relief works made in 2019 are referential of classicism in their mable materiality and infer an importance to the scenes they depict as a result. The series expresses Wim's interest in video games and their ubiquitous presence in today's society. The reliefs depict various game play stills from popular video games and capture the violence and dystopia at the heart of their appeal.

Are there objects purely for function and styles only to be used for the sacred? In his suitcase and shovel series', Wim seeks to bridge the gap between high and low culture by contrasting the everyday with the ornate. By doing so, he enquires into the very meaning of art itself; the matter of differential material importance.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

A neo-conceptual artist, Wim Delvoye appropriates and diverts art-historical styles and motifs to sublimate trivial yet rather unconventional objects, thereby cleverly combining philosophical ideas, a fresh use of materials and a love for craftsmanship.

Starting in the early 1980s, his early works sure did not go unnoticed: painting heraldic emblems on ironing boards and shovels, Delft patterns on gas canisters, and placing stained-glass windows in soccer goalposts, his works presented themselves as hybrids, playing with the opposition between high and low, between contemporary art and pop culture, combining both craft and concept and playing out seriousness against irony.

As of the 90s Delvoye radicalised the critical function of art, exploring the boundaries of commodity art, by tattooing live pigs and setting up his *Cloaca*-project: room-size built installations that simulate the human digestive system – this way thematising the uselessness of the artefact, and exploring the ambivalence of art and commerce

Constantly oscillating between antagonistic realms such as the sacred and the profane, or the local and the global, he sarcastically confronts the various myths that feed our contemporary society from religion, science, to capitalism.

With the body of Gothic works that evolved since the early 2000s Delvoye walks a thin line between exploring artistic styles of the past and monumentality – by highlighting the medieval Gothic, interpreting it with contemporary themes and industrial techniques, he is aiming to create a new form of contemporary architecture. The highly ornamental motifs and ornaments are not so much used as decorative quotations but as patterns of value and permanence in the modern era. His ever-growing Gothic Towers have been displayed during the 2009 Venice Biennial along the Canal Grande (Peggy Guggenheim Museum), Musée Rodin (Paris, 2010) Bozar (Brussels, 2010) and the Jing'An Sculpture Park in Shanghai (2012). Another twisted spiral version hung in the pyramid of the Louvre during Delvoye's solo-show in 2012 which showed his taste for the ornamental persists in his investigation of historic spaces, combining history with modernity.

Wim Delvoye's work has been on display at Documenta IX and the 1999 Venice Biennial.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East