

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

## Memory Gates: Kevork Mourad



*Memory Gates*, 2021, Acrylic on cotton, hand-cut, 290 × 700 × 400 cm | 114 × 275 × 157 in.

New York, NY – Leila Heller Gallery is delighted to announce the solo installation “Memory Gates” by Kevork Mourad at Miami Basel Meridians booth M5.

“Memory Gates” explores arches and doors as metaphors for memory, migration, and cultural continuity. Suspended in the exhibition space, the installation draws on Mourad’s memories of Aleppo, Syria, and blends elements of ancient Roman, Islamic, and Babylonian architecture to create a re-imagining of places around the world. Throughout the work, Mourad intertwined his native languages of Arabic and Armenian to create swirling calligraphic carvings in each archway, reversing the image in his mind printing everything in a mirror image. He also explores the traditional ways each language is written, with Arabic written from right to left, and Armenian from left to right, exploring the fluid exchange between the two languages and cultures.

Originally displayed at the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Art Gallery at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, Kevork Mourad’s immersive installation *Memory Gates* explores memories from his childhood in Syria while also attempting to create a piece to which all people can apply their memories, creating a shared feeling and experience for all visitors. This installation was created in collaboration with the College of the Holy Cross’s Arts Transcending Borders program which invites artists from across the

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globe to engage with students, faculty, and the Worcester community through workshops, exhibitions, and master classes. Through this program, students at the university signed up to assist Mourad in the process of creating this installation, creating a community of shared artistry and experience through a space of comfort. Mourad intended for visitors to feel welcomed and comforted by the notion of being able to project their own experiences onto the walls of his work.

The fabric material also recalls the Syrian Civil War, when cloth was hung over streets to shield civilians from snipers, transforming a tool of protection into a powerful symbol of resilience and memory. At the heart of the installation is a symbolic door, imagined as a precious heirloom passed down through generations which acts as a threshold between past and future. Mourad invites viewers to reflect on the importance of openness, cultural exchange, community involvement, and preserving memory through art.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kevork Mourad (b. 1970, Qamishli, Syria) is a Syrian-Armenian artist whose multidisciplinary practice merges painting, animation, installation, and live performance. After completing an MFA at the Yerevan Institute of Fine Art in 1996, he moved to New York City. Mourad's work is distinguished by his innovative approach to drawing, layering, and cutting visual planes. His exhibition history reflects an international practice, with solo exhibitions at the Rose Art Museum (Immortal City, 2017), Institut du Monde Arabe (Time Immemorial, 2019), and Cantor Art Gallery at the College of the Holy Cross (Memory Gates, 2020). His work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the Aga Khan Museum, North York, the Pergamon Museum, Berlin, the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, the World Bank Art Collection, Burj Khalifa, and the Spurlock Museum, Urbana.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment in New York City in 1982, Leila Heller Gallery has gained international recognition in fostering creative dialogue between Western and Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and Southeast Asian artists, and specializing in modern and contemporary masters. In 2015, the gallery expanded to Dubai, opening a 17,500 square foot space, the largest gallery in the Middle East. The gallery presents dynamic exhibition schedules in collaboration with world-renowned curators, often hosting panels and film screenings, as well as producing catalogues and books for each exhibition. Each year the gallery participates in major international art fairs and stages off-site projects. Gallery artists have consistently participated in international museum exhibitions and biennials, and are included in institutional collections such as The Metropolitan Museum, The Tate Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Brooklyn Museum, LACMA, MOCA LA, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the British Museum, Centre Pompidou, S.M.A.K. in Ghent, and the Sharjah Art Museum, among many others.