

raul mourão | empty head

Raul Mourão's solo show at Nara Roesler New York will run from April 27 to June 19, 2021

exhibition **apr 27 – jun 19, 2021**



Nara Roesler is pleased to announce Raul Mourão's first solo exhibition in its New York gallery. The presentation brings a selection of recent works that synthesize and connect his formal investigations to a political critique of contemporary issues.

In the last decades, Mourão has been looking at the plasticity of safety structures found in urban areas such as gates, protection bars, and other structures built to divide territories, based on the dichotomy between security and threat. By creating corten steel, large-format sculptures that swing when activated by the audience, Mourão bestows dynamism to his work through movement.

Raul Mourão. *WWW*, 2020.
Carbon steel with synthetic
resin and bottle cup. 46,5 x 120
x 60 cm / 18.3 x 47.2 x 23.6
in. Courtesy of the artist and
Galeria Nara Roesler

In New York, Nara Roesler presents three new sculptures which are part of Mourão's *Rebel* series. These recent works distance themselves from the architectural character of Mourão's early sculptures, which make

reference to marquees and arches, among other architectural elements. According to the artist, the recent works are closer to a machinic grammar that brings in more weight, uses more material, and generates greater visual shuffling, as well as a more intimidating tone.

Mourão argues that the works are more than kinetic sculptures, posing them as interactive objects whose dynamism depends on the audience's touch and interaction. For Mourão, public engagement with the sculptures is a metaphor for his own engagement with society. He believes that the sculptures' movements might instigate a consideration about the bewilderment we experience when facing a constantly changing reality, that is accelerated and saturated with information. The sculptures' weight, while making use of gravity as a physical force invite the audience to ponder about movement and fixity, weight and lightness, violence and care, and ultimately life and death.

The New Brazilian Flag, a work that resignifies the Brazilian flag, is also part of the exhibition and was created during the 2018 Rio de Janeiro carnival. At the festivity, Mourão displayed the country's flag without its central starry blue circle, which represents the federations and holds the inscription 'order and progress.' The work was first installed at Arcos da Lapa, one of Rio de Janeiro's postcards, a traditional bohemian neighborhood, and the scenario of several artistic and political events. In the following years, the artist unfolded the same motif into different compositions and arrangements, which updated the work vis-à-vis the pandemic context and how Brazil is dealing with the crisis.

In the video *Bang Bang* (2017), a sequence of glass bottles and metal sculptures are destroyed by a firearm in a training facility. The work's careful production invites us to think of violence, be it in a broad institutional sense or more specifically, connected to the systematic attack on arts and culture in Brazil. Mourão's visual constructions seek to breed reflections on the art system and society as a whole. They also pose poignant criticism twinned with new ways of imagining the yet-to-come.

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