

PRESS RELEASE

**Mona Osman**  
***Rhizome and the Dizziness of Freedom***

13 October 2019 – 16 February 2020



Collezione Maramotti presents *Rhizome and the Dizziness of Freedom*, the first solo exhibition in Italy by the young artist Mona Osman.

Osman, who grew up in Budapest, Nice, and London, and now lives in Bristol, will be showing a series of paintings made specifically for the collection's Pattern Room.

All of these new pieces were developed parallel to each other, and one can see the influences and echoes of a working process that unfolded in the same time and space: over the last year, in the artist's studio.

Introduced by a triptych of portraits on a wall outside the main room, the exhibition includes three large and two medium-scale paintings, all of which employ oil and mixed media on canvas.

Working from the idea of combining stories from the Bible with concepts from existentialism—and trying to raise questions rather than offer answers—Osman has conducted an intense philosophical and spiritual investigation, via painting, into the search for Self.

In the artist's view, the human ambition to arrive at some fixed, absolute understanding of one's own essence runs up against the impossibility of defining it, which leads to suffering and anguish. Two recurring themes can be seen in the works on view: the Tower of Babel, and what Osman calls "Absolute Self."

The Tower of Babel, a symbol of humanity's overweening ambition to touch the heavens and the divine punishment this incurs, becomes a paradigm for the impossibility of communication between individuals and the loneliness that results, the lack of an "other" in which to recognize ourselves.

The Absolute Self represents the ideal, monolithic version of Self that we try to define and strive towards, without ever managing to reach it. Reality and experience inevitably elude our control, bringing unexpected revelations and unpredictable changes. Like Camus's Sisyphus, happy with his punishment because he has acknowledged his limitations and embraced his fate, human beings must accept their undefinable condition and find fulfillment in a more open, permeable realm of existence, letting go of their desire for clarity and perpetual advancement.

Osman has painted and drawn since childhood, using her art to investigate human perceptions and tensions that are often linked to a state of anxiety.

Drawing on experiences rooted in her personal history, the artist constructs crowded scenes and narratives that explore universal questions about existence and relational dynamics between individuals.

Her paintings, which operate on different levels of depth and vision, swarm with people, patterns, and elements that do not belong to any specific place or time.

The viewer's eyes jump from detail to detail, probing the surface of the work through its varied rhythms, unexpected associations and sudden revelations.

Osman's pictorial language is characterized by thick brushstrokes and bold colors; it also relies on resin and collage, which are used to construct an intricate surface that freely incorporates stylistic traits redolent of artists like Klimt, Ensor and Mondrian, but without apparent premeditation or explicit allusion.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an artist's book, in sketchbook form.

Opening by invitation only: 12 October 2019 at 6.00pm, with the artist present.

The exhibition can be visited, free of charge, during the opening hours of the permanent collection.

13 October 2019, 2.30 – 6.30pm

17 October 2019 – 16 February 2020

Thursdays and Fridays, 2.30 – 6.30pm

Saturdays and Sundays, 10.30am – 6.30pm

Closed: 1 November, 25-26 December, 1 and 6 January

**Info**

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**Biographical notes**

Mona Osman lives and works in Bristol.

She was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1992, absorbing a cultural background from her parents that blends Hungarian Judaism with Sudanese Islam. After a childhood spent in Budapest, she moved to Nice and then to London, where she got her BA in Fine Arts at Goldsmiths University and her MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art.

Her work has been exhibited at: Saatchi Gallery, London (2018); Royal College of Art, London (2017); Art Busan, Busan, Korea (2017); C&C Gallery, London (2016, 2015, 2014, 2012); GX Gallery, London (2014); May Clerckwell Gallery, London (2013); The Crypt Gallery, London (2012); Cubitt Gallery, London (2011); Lewisham College, London (2011); Yom Haatzmaut, Tel Aviv (2009); Cékl'art, Budapest (2009, 2008).