

David Kordansky Gallery Los Angeles is pleased to present Happier Than Ever, an exhibition of new work by Shahryar Nashat, on view from September 17 through October 22, 2022. An opening reception will take place Saturday, September 17 from 6 to 8 PM.

The exhibition, the artist's second presentation with the gallery, will feature floor- and wall-based sculptures, including a selection of works from his newest series, Lover.JPEG, as well as a major video installation.

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Text by Kristian Vistrup Madsen

The lover is a horizon taken the shape of a single individual. His portrait hangs on the wall as a picture of the inside of a ribcage; hollow, but heart-shaped. There is another kind of cruelty to the lover because he is out there for the thrill of it; to see what he might harvest for himself of emotion and drama and other people's bodily fluids. He is different from a boyfriend in that way. Like cutting flowers from a field or beachcombing, the lover takes with him what is beautiful as much for it to not be *there*—the small power that there is in such a robbery—as because he wants it for himself.

But the lover's economy is an extractive one. A staggered breath, a lapse in consciousness, a brief delirium, how a throat convulses and gags, muscles twitch, and sweat protrudes—these are the small deaths he seeks to collect. We see them in Shahryar Nashat's video, flashing extracts. Like flowers and seashells, they have aesthetic qualities, sure, but imagine being able to capture their energy as we do waves or wind or rainwater that drips down through metal link chains into gaping troughs; imagine being able to *live* on this material.

In Nashat's exhibition, pale, viscous urethane slinks down thin, straight spines from a great height. It works as a kind of trap for the thick liquid. In another work, what was gathered of

blood, sweat, and tears in the square plastic containers has already been distilled into pigment, the lover's bounty in primary colors. These are the physical manifestations of a love that is not about who you might *become* (together, as in the idea of the boyfriend), but what you might *take away*. The fiberglass floor sculptures are remnants of a reclining body or its imprint, an attempt to fasten and maintain. It is the boniest the series has ever gotten. Of course, behind such selfish impulses is a sense that certain kinds of nurture won't be provided, and so the lover must provide for himself. Such is nature, after all, the lover thinks.

The lovers' subjects hang from the ceiling like the dripping corpses of cattle in a slaughterhouse, or paintings on the walls of museums, or Jesus, at the end, on the cross. But what of an artist's own blood always colors the work; what flesh does the lover—inadvertently or not—have in the game? From his portrait, it might look like he is hollow, but a great marble column suggests that there is a core, after all, helplessly blunt and immovable. What is really on view here is the lover and the lover's creation. It is not the subject who has given himself up to these works, but in his efforts to resuscitate a shed skin, the lover himself. The boyfriend who sleeps next to you does not labor to know *how* you sleep (the position of your hand, folded on top of your torso). It is the lover who collects such information because it is the lover who lost, and so created for himself a horizon in the shape of your remnants.

Shahryar Nashat (b. 1975, Geneva) has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at institutions including The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2020); SMK—Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark (2019); Swiss Institute, New York (2019); Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2017); Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany (2016); Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2016); Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2015); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014); Kunstverein Nürnberg, Germany (2010); and Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, Switzerland (2009). Recent and notable group exhibitions include Honestly Speaking: The Word, the Body and the Internet, Auckland Art

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Gallery, New Zealand (2020); Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); 20th Biennale of Sydney (2016); Le Grand Balcon, La Biennale de Montréal, Canada (2016); 8th Berlin Biennale (2014); and ILLUMInations, 54th Venice Biennale, Italy (2011). His work is in the permanent collections of museums worldwide, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland; Art Institute of Chicago; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Nashat lives and works in Los Angeles.