

SHAHRYAR NASHAT

Los Angeles, art, Shahryar Nashat

Shahryar Nashat interviewed by Maurizio Cattelan and Marta Papini
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Swiss artist Shahryar Nashat is part of the recent diaspora of young artists finding an inspiration and a new public in Los Angeles — pushing California's light and space art toward intimate, cosmetic, and technological abstraction.

Maurizio Cattelan and Marta Papini: *How long have you been living in LA?*

Shahryar Nashat: Three years.

MC and MP: *Is there a red zone in the city — a place you wouldn't visit unless forced to?*

SN: No. I like to discover.

MC and MP: *What do you think is missing in art?*

SN: People who genuinely care about art.

MC and MP: *What's the most fundamental aspect of an artwork, from your point of view?*

SN: To be critical, humorous, and self-deprecating at the same time.

MC and MP: *Do you think art can be a way to overcome fear and face the unknown?*

SN: For the artist, certainly. For the audience, I don't think so.

MC and MP: *Are we in a condition of constant fear or constant indifference?*

SN: Yes, and it's quite disillusioning.

MC and MP: *Do you think that art can play the role of a forerunner?*

SN: Always has, always will.

MC and MP: *If the avant-garde is not in museums or galleries, where is it today?*

SN: In the zeroes and the ones.

MC and MP: *Is mediocrity a deadly sin for an artist?*

SN: Definitely.

MC and MP: *Is art about entertainment?*

SN: For mediocre artists, maybe.

MC and MP: *What is the worst compliment you've received for your work?*

SN: Someone told me that he was really interested in contemporary artists from the Middle East.

MC and MP: *The best criticism?*

SN: Being compared to a legendary dead artist.

MC and MP: *Are you still able to waste your time?*

SN: It's the only way to make work.

MC and MP: *What did you learn from the hardest period in your life?*

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SN: Don't expect anything.

MC and MP: *Have you already made your masterpiece?*

SN: I feel another one coming on.

MC and MP: *Do you ever think about the audience's reactions when you're planning a new work?*

SN: I'm my toughest audience.

MC and MP: *Can you imagine a world without art?*

SN: Of course.

MC and MP: *How do you think your career will end?*

SN: With death.

MC and MP: *How would you like your life to end?*

SN: I often think about it, and I cannot decide.

END

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