

Samo Shalaby



Samo Shalaby is Dubai and London based Egyptian-Palestinian visual artist. Having been exposed to a diverse array of artistic expressions while growing up in Cairo and Dubai, and further refining his practice at Central Saint Martins, London, Shalaby's creative journey has been shaped by a myriad of influences. His exploration of art spans various disciplines including painting, photography, stage design, costume design, and jewelry, each contributing to a unique blend of theatricality and drama that characterizes his work.

Drawing from a wide spectrum of artistic styles, from antiquity to surrealism and grotesque, Shalaby strives to infuse his creations with a contemporary sensibility that reflects his personal perspectives. At the core of his practice lies a fascination with the intersection of identity, culture, and couture, often expressed through dichotomous narratives that challenge conventional notions of beauty and elegance, unveiling stories that lurk beneath masked facades. By blending elements from different eras and cultures, Shalaby aims to create new worlds that are familiar yet so far away. From future and past, otherworldly and vast. Whether on camera or canvas, symbolism, and storytelling are crucial elements for conjuring his work to life.

Born and raised in Arabic culture, Shalaby's thoughts and art clearly reflect the Arab cultures. To Shalaby, culture is a beautiful maximalist approach, which always influences himself and his art practice. Mixing things that don't initially make sense, from eras and styles to colors and costumes. The culture allowed him to be brave and to be impulsive throughout his artistic journey, and that too much doesn't really exist in his mind. His art, however, does not always reflect on where he came from, but rather depicts the

LEE & BAE

worlds he would like to create and to inhabit.

Shalaby's art tells simple to complicated stories, depending on where the audiences look. Narrative building and symbolism are integral to why he creates art. To scream in whispers of paint. Everything is meticulously thought through to build context and curiosity. The message, whatever it may be, is always packaged in crowds of excess, allowing the audiences to decipher meaning to them personally over time. To depict this, Shalaby's practice tends to merge hyper-surrealism with dream worlds. Past and Present. Where dichotomies collide and reflect on one another, revealing messages behind symbolism and allegories. Characters serve as truth-bearers, like chess pieces, each telling a different tale and bringing forth unique energies with a gravity of their own. As for Shalaby, this is a personal exploration process, which is also a form of therapy to himself.

LEE & BAE

Samo Shalaby (b.1999, Cairo, Egypt)

■ Education

2021 BA Graphic Communication Design, Upper Second Class honors,
Central Saint Martins, London, United Kingdom

■ Selected Solo Exhibition

2024 Observatory Mansions, LEE & BAE, Busan, Korea
KIAF Seoul 2024, COEX, Seoul, Korea

■ Selected Group Exhibition

2024 Notes from Another Shore, Durbar Hall, Kochi, India
The Golden Ratio, Soho Revue, London, United Kingdom
What Lies Beneath, Marignana Arte, Venice, Italy
2023 Beyond Emerging Artists - Abu Dhabi Art 2023, Manarat Al Saadiyat,
Abu Dhabi, UAE
2022 Aphrodite to Mars, Daniel Benjamin Gallery, London, United Kingdom
Scream of The Butterfly, Davies Gilder Gallery, Guildford, United Kingdom
2021 Ahlam, Spilled Milk Gallery, Amman, Jordan
Existence is Elsewhere, The Cake Room Project, London, United Kingdom
Identity Speaks, The Buffalo Project, New York, USA
Central Saint Martins Graduate Showcase, London, United Kingdom

■ Artist Residencies

2024 Tabari Art Space x La Serena, Forte Dei Marmi, Italy
2024 Something Curated x Palm Heights, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands