

# ABBAS ZAHEDI: EXITING



Abbas Zahedi, *Nouzový východ*, 2021.

Customised exit sign, steel chains and eye bolts. 40×40×10 cm

**Belmacz** (London, UK), is a space devoted to artists and their practice. Through conversation and experimentation, the gallery follows polyphonic, utterly de-centred, curatorial approach.

For **June Art Fair** (12 – 18 June 2023), Belmacz will spotlight **Abbas Zahedi** (b.1984, UK). A pathbreaking artist, Zahedi's practice is resoundingly touching. Through an inter-disciplinary blend of contemporary philosophy, poetics and social dynamics, Zahedi explores how personal and collective histories interweave; holding ajar the socio-politics that so often define modes of being today. And, in this way, he scripts moments for togetherness.

Predominantly working across sound and sculpture, as well as with site and context specific gestures, Zahedi's artworks speak beyond themselves. Deeply generous and socially motivated, His projects have been described as "truly transformative" (The Art Newspaper, 2022). Indeed by "connecting the works' disparate strands" (Artforum, 2022), Zahedi's works evoke questions that "transcend specific coordinates" (Mousse Magazine, 2023), allowing us to consider new routes ahead.

**Belmacz's presentation** at June Art Fair will consist of a number of customised exit signs; small sculptural gestures that constitute one of Zahedi's ongoing spatial series. Initially developed for his solo exhibition at South London Gallery (2020), this ongoing series co-opts the internationally known signifier for emergency escape routes, transforming these otherwise mundane objects into emotive expressions; expressions at once alluding to loss and mourning, and at the same time processes of de-embodiment so pertinent to the 'logic of the White Cube.'

Furthering Zahedi's critical interest in the effect of socio-political systems on bodies, each of these *Exit Signs* explore how processes of exiting have become wholly biopolitical. That is, with their subtle modifications, each of Zahedi's *Exit Signs* point towards how rigid systems differentiate between differently particular bodies in differently particular ways. In turn, they speak to ideas of human agency, loss, and the transformations bodies make in order to become 'proper' fixtures within a one-dimension world-system.

**Abbas Zahedi** (b. 1984, London, UK), studied medicine at University College London, before completing his MA in Contemporary Photography: Practices and Philosophies at Central Saint Martins in 2019. Zahedi blends contemporary philosophy, poetics, and social dynamics with performative and new-media modes. With an emphasis on how personal and collective histories interweave, Zahedi makes connections whenever possible with people involved in the particular situations upon which he focuses.

**Selected exhibitions** include (\*solo): *Holding a Heart in Artifice*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK (2023)\*; *Divided Selves*, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, UK (2023); *Horror in the Modernist Block*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2022–23); *Signs and Lemons*, Belmacz, London, UK (2022)\*; *Waiting With {Sonic Support}*, Frieze Art Fair London, London, UK (2022)\*; *LOADING LOADING (the inertia of practice)*, CAPC, contemporary art museum of Bordeaux, France (2022–23)\*; *Metatopia 10013*, Anonymous Gallery, New York (2022)\*; *The London Open 2022*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2022)\*; *Beuys Open Source*, Belmacz, London, UK (2021–2022); *Testament*, Goldsmiths CCA, London, UK (2022); *Temporary Compositions*, Gallery 31 Somerset House, London, UK (2021); *Yarmonics 2021*, Great Yarmouth, UK (2021); *D.E. VALUATION*, Mécènes du Sud, Montpellier, France (2021); *11 & 1*, Belmacz, London, UK (2021)\*; *Governmental Fires*, FUTURA, Prague (2021); *In Hindsight...*, Bladr, Copenhagen, Denmark (2020); *Ouranophobia SW3*, Chelsea Sorting Office, London, UK (2020)\*; *How To Make A How From A Why?*, Fire Station, South London Gallery, London, UK (2020)\*; *B*, Belmacz, London, UK (2019); *Degree Show*, Central Saint Martins, London, UK (2019); *The Age of New Babylon*, Lethaby Gallery, London, UK (2018); *Diaspora Pavilion*, (ICF), Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton, UK (2018); *appetite*, Apiary Studios, London, UK (2018); *Diaspora Pavilion*, (ICF), Palazzo Pisani a Santa Marina, Venice, Italy (2017); *rb&hArts*, Royal Brompton Hospital, London, UK (2008).

**Selected interventions, projects and performances** include: *CRISIS*, Bold Tendencies, London, UK (2023); *Sonic Signals*, Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK (2022–2023); *Age of Many Posts*, Barbican, London (2022); Frieze Artist Award commission, London, (2022); *Sonic Support Group*, with Neurofringe (2020–ongoing); *Radio Amnion*, Technical University of Munich (2021); *Becontree Forever*, Create London (2021); *Brick Lane Foundation*, Whitechapel Gallery (2021); *A Case of Med(dling)ation*, Performance Exchange at Belmacz (2021); *To The Sour Sowers*, The Mosaic Rooms, London (2021); *The Urgency of The Arts Assembly*, Royal College of Art (2021); *Soul Refresher*, Brent Biennial, London Borough of Culture (2020); *Long Table: Lament*, South London Gallery (2020); *AMRA*, Spike Island, Bristol (2019); *Rose & STEMM*, Guest Projects, London (2019); Outset Grant Ceremony, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019); *The Boulevard*, Tate Britain, London (2018); *Studio Jum'ah*, Tate Exchange, London (2018); *#FakeBooze*, Diaspora Pavilion, Venice (2017).

Zahedi has been the recipient of numerous awards including: the Frieze Artist Award (2022); the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Awards for Artists (2021); the Serpentine Galleries' Support Structures for Support Structures (2021); Artangel, Thinking Time (2020); Jerwood Arts Bursary (2019); Aziz Foundation Academic Scholarship (2018); and Khadijah Saye Memorial Fund Scholarship (2017).

Zahedi is an associate lecturer at the Royal College of Art (London), as well as teaching at universities across the UK and abroad.

Belmacz is a contemporary art gallery and showroom based in central London.

Founded by Julia Muggenburg in 2000, the gallery is devoted to collaboration, be this by supporting artists to grow their practices or by nurturing conversations. Through renowned solo and group exhibitions, as well as through expansive publishing and commissioning projects, Belmacz strives to contextualise these collaborations in a wholly un-centred manner.

Belmacz's showroom, is a design space displaying a selection of Muggenburg's heterogeneous jewellery. Embracing numerous points of reference, these individual jewels translate into physical form the innate power found in exacting juxtaposition.

Alluding to both Muggenburg's founding vision for the gallery as well as her expansive design practice, 'Belmacz' is a composite name. Combining the male adjective 'bel' (from the French for beautiful), 'maximum,' and 'cz' (from the Slavic alphabet), the space's title is a further allusion to the ground-breaking jeweller Suzanne Belperron.