

## Wael Darwish



**Brave New World, 2008**  
Exhibited at the 11th International  
Cairo Biennial 2008  
Image Courtesy of the Artist

Wael Darwish is an artist somewhat agitated, by the physicality of his context as well the narratives that have come to contain the world that contains him. An installation artist at heart who has made bold forays into the video and mixed-media worlds, Darwish's work is always intrepid, always dynamic, and always probing beyond surfaces of reality through texture, dimension, and the physicality of the works themselves.

Increasingly concerned with the shifting perceptions and state of continuous social change unfolding in his homeland, Egypt, Darwish's recent works have included those that prod the very fabric of a culture evolving. In *Brave New World*, inspired by globalization and the global market economy, he fuses stories from East and West, dismantling them and then reassembling them again in a form more fitting to the world of today – a world where the hunt of the fox is for political prowess, economic gains, and the manipulations of a system that has eerie resemblance, indeed, to that of Brave New World.

Darwish is an artist clearly affected. In his video work *Purging*, he looks at the layers of cleansing and the dimensions of purity, surmising through his examination of the physicality of rituals of cleansing that the cleanse lies at the very core of the being, in a space where “the shadow of black”, he calls it, is found. This is an artist, shall we say, plagued by consciousness, and bombarded by the matrix of a world whose infinite mosaics comprise equal tiles of that so-called shadow of black.

In a practice that places as much on the technicality of the work as it does the conceptual, Darwish is an artist continually evolving. It seems appropriate hence that the essence of metamorphosis lies at the crux of his work, and from this place of increasing concern about the state of his nation changing, what he will transmute into remains to be seen.

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