



Manou

“Diversity Not Fascism”

An Installation by Contemporary Artist Manou Marzban

Brochure

Diversity Not Fascism



The German WW II Helmet

Fluid in design and functional in form.

The *Stahlhelm* (Steel Helm) helmet was developed by German scientists in 1915 to provide optimal protection for the head and neck.

A protective device that was used in two world wars by Germany and the Axis powers. Worn by millions of soldiers and civilian volunteers alike.

Its iconic and distinctive 'coal scuttle' shape instantly recognizable, even in various renditions.

An Iconic Symbol

However, it is seen today in its historic context. As relics of a dark, deadly and murderous regime.

Intolerant of individuality or diversity. A symbol of hate and destruction.

Decades after the second world war, the world is again struggling with extremism, intolerance and hatred. We are seeing such symbols of hate from the past come back to haunt us. To remind us of our darkest hours.

But the world has changed. It has never been more colorful and diverse. It is more able to withstand any attempts to push back the clocks. The future is diverse. The future is colourful.



The World is Not Black and White

Contemporary artist **Manou** has created a fascinating and very topical installation featuring 18 authentic German WW II helmets.

The artist had one objective in mind during the creation process - to remove the feeling of fear when reviewing the helmets, and replacing it with one of hope. To make something dark colourful.



The World is Colourful

The world we live in today is brimming with diverse people and cultures. And it will continue to grow in such a manner no matter how some people try to cling onto prejudice and fading ideologies.

Each one of these authentic helmets has been reborn. Morphing from dark symbols of hate to colourful objects of art reflecting the real world we live in today.



An 18 Helmet Installation

“My brother and I grew up reading and watching movies on WW II as kids. When we discuss the state of the world today, we are horrified how it mirrors the early 20th century. Nationalism, far-right politics, polarizing leaderships are as relevant today as they were in the 1930’s.”

Artist Manou Marzban



A Message of Optimism

“I think there are many people like me who admired the form, design and functionality of the German helmet but looking at it would disgust and repulse them. I imagined the horrors it evoked in people that were victims of the Third Reich. Yet, it is part of history, we cannot ignore it.

Today, fascism is showing its ugly head again. So what better way to extinguish the flames of hatred but with bright colours? Rainbow colours? And some appropriate graffiti? I harnessed the negative vibes emitting from these helmets to transform them into something new, something fresh and optimistic, something reflective of the diverse world we live in today,” continues Manou.





“The aim was never to erase or distract from the historical context that is attached to these helmets. Rather, it was to reinforce the message that the dangers of fascism still exists. And that these dangers can be overcome through belief in diversity and tolerance as the cornerstones of civil societies” he adds.

Historical Context

The helmets were procured through historical artifact auctions, and represent various German armed and civilian forces.

By re-creating 18 distinctive helmets, and presenting them together, as an installation, it is certain to convey the diversity message with impact.

“These helmets are quite intense. And when you put them in a group – like in a regimental way – it is even more intense. You still feel the historical context but you also feel that time has moved on, that change is inevitable, the message is loud and clear!” comments Manou.



Individually Unique



Each helmet is individually hand crafted. The helmets were painted using bright acrylics, mostly in the rainbow colors. Florescent and glow in the dark paints were used on some of the helmets. Some have street art and graffiti sketched on them. A layer of resin completes the individually signed and numbered pieces. The 18 helmets all come with identical custom made iron stands (with the signature 'M' base). Individually, or collectively, they form a colourful and powerful image.

Powerful in Numbers



Emblems of the Past

“We used Army, Luftschutz German Fire Protection and Third Reich Police Helmets. All bought from auctions. Some were in good condition others were dented and well worn. What will captivate people is the fact they are real,” concludes Manou.





The 18 helmet installation is best displayed in a grid formation between 3.5m x 3.5m. Spacing between helmets should be 30-35cm.

Each helmet comes on a 'M' stand. These stands have a 20cm x 22cm footprint. The stands are 63cm high. With helmets, they are approximately 66cm.



A Must Tell

The message of tolerance, diversity and peace is an essential one. History has a tendency to repeat itself. How we, as people, react to this tendency is solely based on what, if anything, we have learnt from history.

The 'Diversity Not Fascism' project is a strong reminder of this fact. Never again means never again!

Diversity Instead of

The 18 helmet installation is
available for exposition in 2017

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About the Artist

Born in Geneva, artist Manou Marzban is an emerging Iranian contemporary artist based in France. Educated in the UK and the US, by the late 00s, Manou had started to create unique pieces that were getting attention in Europe with private collectors. Manou's abstract works, called 'Streaks', gained instant recognition for their bright use of acrylics.

Manou's art is infused with symbols from popular culture and references to history. His paintings combine the use of bright colors with broad strokes (usually delivered with a spatula). Manou's work exude energy and provocation. His pieces, which include painted ping pong tables, TVs, furniture, car-parts and other items, combine a myriad of images to reflect the artists strong opinions on history, politics and popular culture.

Manou's work has been featured on the front page of the Art & Culture section of the Huffington Post ("Engaging and intriguing Manou's work are never too sad or too serious"), PBS ("His enthusiasm is contagious"), France's RTL and Le Monde ("The Persian Banksy"). He has had expositions throughout Europe including events in Berlin, Paris, Monaco, Geneva and Stockholm. His next event is planned for autumn 2017 in London. For more info: go to www.manouart.com, Instagram: [manou.art](https://www.instagram.com/manou.art), FB: [Manouart](https://www.facebook.com/Manouart), Youtube: [Manou Artbeat](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCManouArtbeat)



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