

Press Release

Hamid Zénati: *Two Steps at a Time* at Nottingham Contemporary

Saturday 25 May – Sunday 8 September 2024



The artist never stretched his works on stretcher bars. He preferred to spontaneously lay them out in his surroundings or to stage them in photographs as performative sculptures, here in Indonesia in the 1990s. © Hamid Zénati Estate. Photo: Hamid Zénati

Nottingham Contemporary is pleased to present the second-ever institutional exhibition featuring Algerian-German artist Hamid Zénati (b.1944, Algeria; d.2022, Germany).

Celebrating Zénati's nearly 60-year career, the exhibition presents to UK audiences for the first time an artist who is still largely unknown, casting him as an inventive, free thinker and artist of his time, whose work continues to inspire today.

A self-taught artist, Zénati nurtured an inherent obsessive creative impulse which saw him experiment across a variety of media and surface, from found objects, textiles, walls and ceramics to photography, fashion and wearable sculpture, in his signature 'all over' style.

His intense use of colour and cosmology of pattern created a unique, free and anarchic abstract visual language which disordered hierarchies between fine art, applied arts, crafts and design.

A chameleonic artist, performer and interlocutor of cultures and disciplines, Zénati's work merges cross cultural references and allusions from geometric abstraction, indigenous Amazigh signs and

motifs, to Indonesian ornamental design and Sahrawi traditional garments, sourcing inspiration from postcolonial texts, advertising slogans, to organic forms found in nature.

For more information about Hamid Zénati and other exhibitions at Nottingham Contemporary, please [visit our website](#).

Notes to Editors:

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Exhibition Credits:

Curators

The exhibition is curated by Salma Tuqan with support from Katie Simpson and Niall Farrelly.

About Hamid Zénati

Hamid Zénati was an Algerian artist born in Constantine in 1944. He grew up in Algiers before moving to Munich in the mid 1960s to study German and French translation at the Institute of Languages and Interpreters. From 1971 to 1973 he studied photography at the former Bayerische Staatslehranstalt für Photographie, returning shortly after Algiers to work as a translator. It was here he began his career as a self-taught artist, developing a unique creative style and formal language inspired by a range of influences, from modernist art movements of the twentieth century, French classic and postcolonial texts, his travels around the world and nature. His artistic practice ranged from painting, textiles, interior and fashion design, to photography. Zénati passed away in Germany in 2022, the year before his first ever institutional show at Haus der Kunst, Munich.

About Nottingham Contemporary

[Nottingham Contemporary](#) is one of the leading centres of contemporary art in Europe. Since opening in 2009, we have welcomed over 2 million visitors – with free admission for all – to our highly ambitious programme that has featured hundreds of artists and cultural practitioners from across the globe.

Our programme champions international art and artists who invite us to imagine the world in new ways, and empower different perspectives into the most pressing cultural, social, and political questions of today. We support artists at different stages of their careers – from first-time solo shows in the UK to surveys of renowned or overlooked figures – and regularly present significant thematic exhibitions and major artist-curated projects. Nottingham Contemporary was shortlisted

for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019. Nottingham Contemporary is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and regularly funded by Nottingham City Council and through our partnerships with the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University.

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