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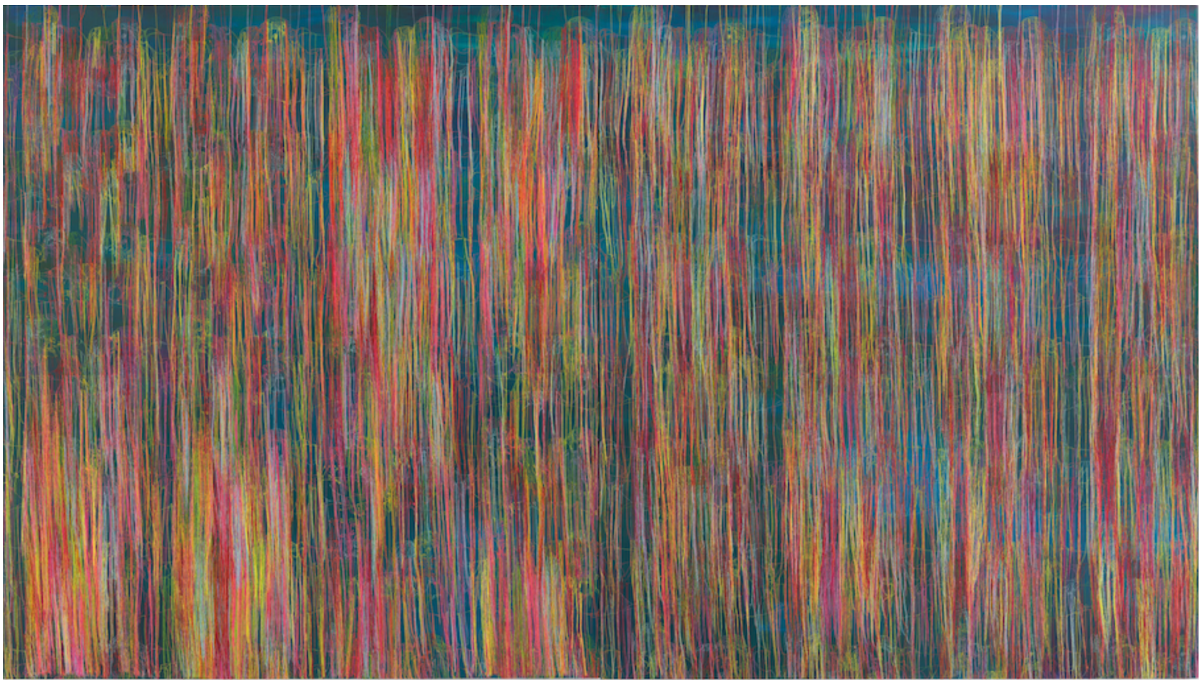

Ghada Amer, Black Nympheas, 2021
Photo: Christopher Burke Studios

GHADA AMER, BETWEEN THREADS, FORMS AND DESIRE

By Bonart Staff
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Ghada Amer's (Cairo, 1963) work has been moving for decades in a territory where art, gender, desire and identity meet and come into conflict. Trained between Egypt, France and the United States, the artist has built her own language from materials and techniques traditionally linked to the feminine universe, especially embroidery, to question the categories and hierarchies that have historically determined what could be considered art and what was relegated to the realm of craftsmanship or domestic work.

Thread occupies a central place in his production. Amer incorporates embroidery onto pictorial surfaces in an operation that does not simply consist of transferring an artisanal technique to the field of contemporary art, but of altering the very rules of painting. The threads cross, hide and overflow the images, generating a constant tension between what is shown and what remains partially hidden. The painting thus ceases to be a stable surface to become a space of layers, transparencies and fragments.



Ghada Amer, *Blue Passion*, 2024
Photo: Bruno Daureo

This investigation into the limits of painting now extends to sculpture in *Ghada Amer. Sculpture Since 1991*, an exhibition curated by Clara Garau and David Barro that Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma presents from September 18, 2026 to January 31, 2027. The project covers more than three decades of the artist's production through embroidered paintings, bronze sculptures and ceramics, and emphasizes a sculptural dimension that has been present in her practice since the nineties.

The exhibition brings together some of his most significant pieces alongside recent works and incorporates new ceramic works made between 2025 and 2026 with Miquel Tomàs in the workshop of the Mallorcan ceramist Pere Coll, in Pòrtol. In these pieces, Amer takes painting beyond its traditional support and turns color, form and the very process of creation into essential elements. The material ceases to be simply the place where the image appears and becomes an active part of the thought of the work.

This transition between painting and sculpture is particularly visible in the *Thoughts* , pieces in which forms seem to appear and disappear in the midst of a changing matter. They are volumes that evoke the development of thought, with forms that unfold, fold and gradually advance towards abstraction. Sculpture thus becomes an extension of the act of painting

and, at the same time, a space for experimentation where figure and abstraction cease to be opposing categories.



Ghada Amer, *Desert Road With A Red Line*, 2019
Photo: Lepkowski Studios Berlin

The exhibition also includes three outdoor fountains specifically designed for the terrace of Es Baluard Museu: *Fuente negra*, *Fuente verde y roja* and *Fuente blanca*. Made in collaboration with Miquel Tomàs in Pere Coll's workshop, these works establish a dialogue between *Thoughts*, the form and movement of water. The liquid element appears associated with life and memory, but also with a personal experience of the artist linked to Mallorca and the memories of his childhood. In this context, the figure of the father, who loved fountains, becomes a presence evoked through sculptures that incorporate the movement of water as part of their poetic dimension.

The relationship between personal memory and cultural context is, in fact, a constant in Amer's work. Born in Egypt and trained professionally between Europe and the United States, her practice addresses tensions between different cultural traditions without reducing them to a simple opposition between East and West. Gender, religion, identity and representation appear intertwined in a work that questions both the stereotypes constructed from the Western gaze and the social structures that condition the representation and experience of women.

At Es Baluard, this tension between showing and hiding also determines the exhibition route. The installation incorporates screens that protect and contain the images, but which at the

same time force the visitor to approach them to discover them. The gaze ceases to be immediate and becomes an experience of approach, intuition and discovery. What seems hidden does not disappear, but demands another way of looking.