GIANNI MANHATTAN

SILENT CHOIR

VALENTIN NOUJAÏM

CURATED BY ODESSA WARREN

giannimanhattan.com
WASSERGASSE 14
1030 VIENNA. AUSTRIA

Opening
September 11-13, 2026

Exhibition
September 15–October 17, 2026
Tue–Fri 12–6pm
Sat 12-4pm

GIANNI MANHATTAN presents *Silent Choir*, a solo exhibition by Valentin Noujaïm. Working through sculpture and installation, the artist introduces the first part of a new body of work inspired by the story of St John and the Cave of the Apocalypse.

In the first century, the apostle John was banished to the island of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian for preaching Christianity. There, he withdrew into the silence and darkness of a cave overlooking the sea, where he received a vision of the world's end. Seven angels appeared to him, each sounding a trumpet, and announced impending catastrophe. The account of St John's prophetic experience became the Book of Revelation in the Bible.

The gallery space is darkened, lit only at its entrance. Its silent, solemn atmosphere evokes that of St John's cave and his isolation within it. Seven trumpets fill the room, recalling the seven angels of the apocalypse. Each is fitted with a mute, forming Noujaïm's silent choir. The hum of white noise is heard in the space, like the dead sound of a feed cut mid-transmission, underscoring the trumpets' muteness. Their surfaces are engraved with a range of motifs, among them drawings made by the artist's brother as a child during the war in Lebanon. A television recalls the domestic sets of the early 2000s, a nod to his own association with light and sound, formed through early memories of the announcements of catastrophe.

For Noujaïm, St John's retreat from the world signalled a way for him to make sense of its evils. In the darkness, in his solitude, everything was revealed to him. The artist sets this story against a present moment marked by

GIANNI MANHATTAN

SILENT CHOIR

VALENTIN NOUJAÏM

CURATED BY ODESSA WARREN

giannimanhattan.com
WASSERGASSE 14
1030 VIENNA. AUSTRIA

permanent noise and hyper-exposure, three years into a livestreamed genocide met with impunity. In Greek, ἀποκάλυψις (apokálypsis) carries a double meaning- apocalypse and revelation. In a world where sound and image have failed, the artist asks what may be revealed to us in the dark quiet.

The exhibition carries forward Noujaïm's interest in myth and storytelling as a means of thinking through the present, turning here to the Christian apocalyptic imagination. He approaches St John not as a religious icon, but as a figure who, at a time of persecution and defeat, retreated from the world, and was granted a vision of its unmaking and renewal. The work also extends the artist's reflection on evil, as a concept reached for to explain destruction and violence that is otherwise inexplicable. In the Book of Revelation, each trumpet, sounded in turn, announces a different part of the apocalypse. The muteness of the seven trumpets in Noujaïm's *Silent Choir* is undetermined- whether because they have already sounded, or because their silence keeps a further catastrophe at bay.

- Odessa Warren