

CHISENHALE



Arash Nassiri, *A Bug's Life*, 2025. Still. Co-commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery, London; Fluntum, Berlin; and Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris. Produced by Chisenhale Gallery. Courtesy of the artist.

Arash Nassiri

A Bug's Life

18 January – 22 March 2026

Opening: Saturday 17 January 2026, 12–6pm

For his first institutional solo exhibition, Berlin-based artist Arash Nassiri presents *A Bug's Life*, a major new moving image and sculptural installation that transforms Chisenhale Gallery into a site of spectral storytelling, layered architectural memory, and dreamlike disorientation. Nassiri's commission offers a surreal journey through one of the last remaining examples of a once-distinctive architectural micro-movement: an opulent Beverly Hills mansion that fuses Iranian and American aesthetics, built in the 1980s-90s before the city of Los Angeles banned the style.

Nassiri's practice draws on the visual languages of music videos, television, and cinema, reworking familiar formats into speculative, allegorical forms. His work often investigates how built environments absorb and reflect histories of migration, displacement, and cultural hybridity. In *A Bug's Life*, Nassiri examines a private domestic space suspended between lived reality and distortion, where personal and architectural histories intersect in mysterious and unexpected ways.

The film follows its protagonist – a small, hand-carved wooden puppet in the shape of an insect – who slinks through a palatial home that is both lavish and uncanny. Irresistibly drawn to its glossy surfaces and gold-tinged décor, the puppet becomes a guide through rooms thick with memory, illusions, and half-forgotten stories. Creeping through hallways and lingering in shadowed rooms, the insect guides us into a voyeuristic encounter with the home and its histories. The work's eerie intimacy positions the viewer as both observer and intruder, blurring the line between curiosity and complicity.

Fragments of narrative emerge through meticulously staged details: glossy magazine covers hint at the glamour and scandal surrounding the home's construction; an eavesdropped phone call reveals the fragile dynamics of the community that formed around such houses; while snippets of distant conversation drift like ghosts down endless hallways. Through these clues, the story of the home – and the people who imagined, built, and lived in it – comes into view.

Beneath its playful and surreal surfaces, *A Bug's Life* asks unsettling questions about how the spaces we inhabit silently shape our sense of self. Channelling traditions of political theatre that use puppetry to animate suppressed or contested histories, Nassiri's puppet is a witness: fragile and observant, it slips through the seams of a house that withholds as much as it reveals.

The installation is presented in a large-scale translucent architectural shell that both contains and refracts the moving image. Hovering between structure and apparition, this form echoes the home's dreamlike qualities, inviting viewers to move through shifting layers of light, image, and shadow.

A Bug's Life is an homage to forgotten architecture and a meditation on the fragile systems through which histories are kept alive. By weaving oral testimony with illusion, and humour with haunting detail, Nassiri creates a cinematic world in which the domestic becomes political and the overlooked becomes newly vivid. This new commission asks what our spaces remember long after we have left them, and what remains when only stories linger in the walls.

This project marks the culmination of a collaborative partnership between Chisenhale Gallery, London; Fluentum, Berlin; and Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris, established to jointly support an artist across both institutions. Arash Nassiri's commission, produced by Chisenhale Gallery, will be presented across both spaces, premiering at Chisenhale Gallery, London from 18 January to 22 March 2026, and subsequently at Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris from 12 May to 18 July 2026.

Notes to the Editors:

Press images can be downloaded through this [link](#). For further information please contact: media@chisenhale.org.uk

Arash Nassiri lives and works in Berlin. Selected exhibitions include: *Half-Light*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2024; *Rayon Jouets*, Hangar Y, Paris, 2024; *GRIS NARDO*, Octo Productions, Marseille, 2023; *Barbe a Papa*, CAPC Bordeaux, 2022; *Metabolic Rift (Berlin Atonal)*, Kraftwerk Berlin, 2021.

Chisenhale Gallery commissions and produces contemporary art. We are an artist-centred organisation, dedicated to championing risk, experimentation, and critical thinking through the creation of groundbreaking work by today's most significant early-career artists. Operating as a production agency, exhibition space, and research centre, we support international and UK-based artists to pursue new directions and make their most ambitious work to date. Premiering four major new commissions, our 2026 programme foregrounds radically experimental exhibition-making and critically engaged, artist-driven practice.

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Wednesday to Sunday, 12–6pm

Registered charity no.1026175

Image: Arash Nassiri, *A Bug's Life*, production image, 2025. Co-commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery, London; Fluentum, Berlin; and Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris. Produced by Chisenhale Gallery. Courtesy of the artist.

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Chisenhale Gallery



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