Hany Armanious takes on the role of artist, archeologist and alchemist. By digging through the refuse and cast-offs of contemporary society, he embarks on an excavation of the ritualistic origins of form making, while imbuing familiar objects with a profound archaic mysticism. Previous materials have included mud, bubbles, worms, sandpaper, manila folders, pool cues, and hot melt. Creating a magical bricolage of cast organic, found, and self-made objects, he explores the ambiguous distinction between the natural and the artificial. Disillusioned yet fascinated by the veneer of consumerism, Armanious pursues a “pure” state of materials, and finds sanctuary in the fundamental gestures and processes of the pre-industrial workshop.

For The Front Room, Armanious continues his experimentation with casting, both as a means of reproduction and as a process in its own right. His meticulous method denies the immediacy of the readymade, yet his choice of material provides visual proximity to the original forms. Polyurethane-cast tiles mark the space, which is presided over by the crumbling, prophetic obelisk. Despite its name, The Oracle disrupts our quest for meaning: at closer inspection, the inflatable toy bats are revealed as fragile glass vessels, and the soft, foamy floor tiles question the solidity of our foundations.
Hany Armanious was born in Egypt in 1962, and he currently lives and works in Sydney, Australia. He has exhibited extensively throughout Australia and New Zealand, including City Gallery, Wellington; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland. His work was been selected for the 1993 Venice Biennale and the 1995 Johannesburg Biennale. His first solo exhibition in the United States, Selflok, was held at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, in 2001. His most recent exhibition, Year of the Pig Sty, 2007, was held at Foxy Production, New York.

Image:
The Oracle, 2008
Cast polyurethane, blown glass, and asphalt
Courtesy of the artist and Foxy Production, New York

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