

**ENGLISH**

**GALLERIA CONTINUA**

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS DUBAI

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# MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO

A GREAT EXHIBITION IN ALL OF GALLERIA CONTINUA'S 8 LOCATIONS

**SAN GIMIGNANO - I QUADRI SPECCHIANTI**

**HABANA - AMAR LAS DIFERENCIAS**

**LES MOULINS - 60 ANS D'IDENTITÉS ET D'ALTÉRITÉS**

**ROMA - COLOR AND LIGHT**

**PARIS - SEGNO ARTE**

**SAN PAOLO - IL CASO**

**BEIJING - QR CODE POSSESSION**

**DUBAI - IL TEMPO DEL GIUDIZIO**

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## PARIS SEGNO ARTE

GALLERIA CONTINUA | Paris - From June 23, 2023

GALLERIA CONTINUA is delighted to present in its Parisian space **SEGNO ARTE**, an exhibition by Michelangelo Pistoletto, as part of a major project initiated by the gallery around the world. This global exhibition will involve all eight GALLERIA CONTINUA spaces, each of which will host an exhibition devoted to the artist in 2023, marking this master's 90th birthday and aiming to highlight Pistoletto's art in all its forms, from its genesis to the present day.

It will be the story of a journey through the ages: the highlights of his career and the long collaboration with the gallery. Galleria Continua celebrates him as one of the most important exponents of Arte Povera and of contemporary art with a succession of personal exhibitions on a worldwide scale: from 27 May at Galleria Continua / San Gimignano; from 27 May at Galleria Continua / Cuba; from 3 June at Galleria

Continua / Les Moulins; from 22 June at Galleria Continua / Rome; from 23 June at Galleria Continua / Paris; from 28 October at Galleria Continua / São Paulo; from 15 November at Galleria Continua / Beijing and from 18 November at Galleria Continua / Dubai.

The exhibition **SEGNO ARTE** at GALLERIA CONTINUA / Paris has its origins in the "Segno Arte" ("Art Sign"), an element characterized by the intersection of two triangles framing a human body with arms raised and legs spread, in the manner of Leonardo da Vinci's famous *Vitruvian Man*. This personal symbol of the artist, which deliberately differs from religious, political or advertising symbols, provides the key to entering an intimate, shared space, a place conducive to social interaction, through the door of art. This shape, mainly used in a basic module measuring 210 x 120 centimetres, corresponds to

the maximum extension of the artist's body, around which he has created numerous works and objects in different materials: doors, windows, furniture, mirrors, functional objects, etc., ten of which are presented in the Paris exhibition.

This fundamental symbol in the artist's practice was first revealed at an exhibition held simultaneously in Rochechouart, Thiers and Vassivière in the summer of 1993, opening a new phase of work that would develop in two parallel directions, already outlined in *Cento mostre nel mese di ottobre* (One Hundred Exhibitions in the Month of October, 1976): the production of a series of works - called *Segno Arte* - by the artist throughout his career and, at the same time, an invitation to the public to create their own *Segno Arte*.

*Segno Arte* found a major representation in the installation *Il tondo delle otto porte* (The Round of Eight Doors), featured in the exhibition *60 ANS D'IDENTITÉS ET D'ALTÉRITÉS* presented concurrently at GALLERIA CONTINUA / Les Moulins. In his aforementioned *Cento mostre nel mese di ottobre* (1976), Michelangelo Pistoletto described a hundred possible exhibitions in the space of a single month. One of the proposals contained in this booklet was to create a series of works consisting of several hourglass-shaped doors.

To coincide with the exhibition, GALLERIA CONTINUA is reinventing one of Paris's exhibition spaces around *Segno Arte*, and offering a new iteration of *The Round of Eight Doors* through works and objects imagined by the artist.

Having been produced several times between 1970 and 1990, *Porta - Segno Arte* (Door - *Segno Arte*) finds its incarnation in a 1997 piece presented in the exhibition. These works are made up of two unconventional doors, formed by the intersection of two interlocking triangles. They create an opposition and a convergence between the tangible real space and the virtual space of the mirror. Each *Porta - Segno Arte* by

Pistoletto evokes a human body with arms raised and legs spread, in reference to the drawing of *Vitruvian Man*. The door, as a point of passage from one universe to another, here becomes the metaphor of the mirror, evoking an extension of present time where gaze, space and body are superimposed in the ceaseless movement of life.

In the work, *Does God exist? Yes I Do!* (1976-1997), Pistoletto is interested in the mechanics of the joke, and how it breaks the link between object and viewer. Preferring humour to analysis, his work avoids taking a political stance.

Two works in the exhibition are direct interpretations of the *Vitruvian Man* in *Segno Arte: Uomo Segno Arte* and *Uomo Vitruviano Segno Arte*. Dating from 1993, the first work takes the form of a human silhouette depicted from behind, silkscreen-engraved on mirror-polished stainless steel, certainly matching that of the artist. Echoing this, a carpet from 2007 directly depicts the *Vitruvian Man* inscribed in the *Segno Arte*, printed on textile. Finally, three complementary pieces dating from 1997 show the *Segno Arte* reinvented through the prism of various furniture elements: an iron bench with upholstery, a table in crystal and steel, and a steel radiator over two meters high.

Michelangelo Pistoletto was born in Biella in 1933. He began to exhibit his work in 1955 and in 1960 he had his first solo show at Galleria Galatea in Turin. An inquiry into self-portraiture characterizes his early work. In the two-year period 1961- 1962 made the first *Mirror Paintings*, which directly include the viewer and real time in the work, and open up perspective, reversing the Renaissance perspective that had been closed by the twentieth-century avant-gardes. These works quickly brought Pistoletto international acclaim, leading, in the sixties, to one-man shows in important galleries and museums in Europe and the United States. The *Mirror Paintings* are the foundation of his subsequent artistic output and theoretical thought.

In 1965 and 1966 he produced a set of works entitled *Minus Objects*, considered fundamental to the birth of *Arte Povera*, an art movement of which Pistoletto was an animating force and a protagonist. In 1967 he began to work outside traditional exhibition spaces, with the first instances of that "creative collaboration" he developed over the following decades by bringing together artists from different disciplines and diverse sectors of society.

In 1975-76 he presented a cycle of twelve consecutive exhibitions, *Le Stanze*, at the Stein Gallery in Turin. This was the first of a series of complex, year-long works called "time continents". Others are *White Year* (1989) and *Happy Turtle* (1992).

In 1978, in a show in Turin, Pistoletto defined two main directions his future artwork would take: *Division and Multiplication of the Mirror and Art Takes On Religion*. In the early eighties he made a series of sculptures in rigid polyurethane, translated into marble for his solo show in 1984 at Forte di Belvedere in Florence. From 1985 to 1989 he created the series of "dark" volumes called *Art of Squalor*. During the nineties, with *Project Art* and with the creation in Biella of *Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto* and the University of Ideas, he brought art into active relation with diverse spheres of society with the aim of inspiring and producing responsible social change.

In 2003 he won the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifelong Achievement. In 2004 the University of Turin awarded him a laurea honoris causa in Political Science. On that occasion the artist announced what has become the most recent phase of his work, *Third Paradise*.

In 2007, in Jerusalem, he received the Wolf Foundation Prize in the Arts, "for his constantly inventive career as an artist, educator and activist whose restless intelligence has created prescient forms of art that contribute to fresh understanding of the world."

In 2010 he wrote the essay *The Third Paradise*, published in Italian, English, French and German. In 2012 he started promoting the *Rebirth-day*, first worldwide day of rebirth, celebrated every year on 21st December with initiatives taking place all around the world.

In 2013 the Louvre in Paris hosted his personal exhibition *Michelangelo Pistoletto, année un - le paradis sur terre*. In this same year he received the Praemium Imperiale for painting, in Tokyo.

In May 2015 he received a degree honoris causa from the Universidad de las Artes of Havana in Cuba. In the same year he realizes a work of big dimensions, called *Rebirth*, situated in the park of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, headquarters of the UN.

In 2017 the text written by Michelangelo Pistoletto *Ominitheism and Demopraxy. Manifesto for a regeneration of society* was published.

In 2021 the *Universario*, an exhibition space in which the artist presents his most recent research, was inaugurated at *Cittadellarte*, and in December 2022 his latest book, *La formula della creazione*, in which he retraces the fundamental steps and the evolution of his entire artistic career and theoretical reflection, was published.