

# GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS DUBAI

Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, Dubai  
tel. +971(0)561056313 | dubai@galleriacontinua.com | www.galleriacontinua.com

## FROM THE GROUND UP II

GROUP EXHIBITION FEATURING WORKS BY DANIEL BUREN, ALEJANDRO CAMPINS, LORIS CECCHINI, NIKHIL CHOPRA, JR, MOATAZ NASR, PASCALE MARTHINE TAYOU, JOSÉ YAQUE, AND SISLEJ XHAFA.

12/09/2023 - 12/11/2023

Open every day | 11.00 am - 1.00 pm | 2.00 pm - 8.00 pm

It is necessary to register your interest in visiting the gallery at [galleriacontinua.com/reservation-dubai](http://galleriacontinua.com/reservation-dubai)

**GALLERIA CONTINUA / Dubai** is pleased to present the second iteration of the group exhibition *From the Ground Up II*, continuing the series of group shows paying tribute to the heritage of the iconic Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, and providing contemporary response to the context of its opulent interior designs. *From the Ground Up II* features works by GALLERIA CONTINUA represented artists, connected with the theme of earth - one of the four elements forming the visual aesthetics of the Burj Al Arab developed by Khuan Chew of KCA International. The extended edition presents the newest large-scale work by Nikhil Chopra, created in the United Arab Emirates.

The exhibition traces the roots of history through contemporary artistic practices, reflecting on the evolving landscape of Dubai and its timeless symbol - Burj Al Arab, grounded on a man-made island. The works presented in the exhibition immerse viewers in archaeological and spiritual journey, exploring the stories within the formation of minerals, and examine humanity's intricate relationship with nature.

A voyager in today's globalised world, Cameroon-born Belgian artist **Pascale Marthine Tayou** has created his own vocabulary out of images and forms derived from national and economical symbols, and artistic references. In his practice, Tayou explores the position of post-colonial African identity in a contemporary world. His sculptural work *Branch of Life* is a

crystal mask hanging in fragile balance off of a bronze branch, portraying an individual moving through current times.

In durational drawing performances by **Nikhil Chopra** (India), the artist's personas return to new, familiar and sublime landscapes. This return is a moment of reflection in times of transition for the artist, both physically and emotionally. The resulting landscape devoid of any presence of life, nods to the possibility of wild worlds, untouched and thereby uncontaminated, by the pressures of temporality, productivity and extraction. The large-scale drawing *Burn*, presented in the gallery, was created in the UAE in February 2023 during Chopra's live performance commissioned by 421, Alserkal Arts Foundation, and NYU Abu Dhabi.

Cuban artist **José Yaque** creates undulating abstract paintings inspired by natural phenomena, often resembling organic materials such as minerals, plants, and stones. He creates his signature works by applying the pigment by hand and then wrapping his canvases in plastic. In *Limonita I* (2014) the result of this process appears to resemble the bright mineral of limonite, a rock created by natural iron oxidation collecting over a period of time.

Similarly, multiple layers of history and formation of new meanings can be found in *Concetto in Exile*, where Kosovar-Albanian artist **Sislej Xhafa**

uses the PVC fabric from advertising truck boards that were continuously exposed to strong weather conditions, and collected dust over thousands of kilometres. The resulted form of a painting expresses a "space between nostalgia and hope" as defined by Xhafa himself.

The work by French artist **JR** presented in the gallery is also documenting a certain timeframe in the moment of creation of *The Secret of the Great Pyramid*, a gigantic collage that was placed across the courtyard of the Louvre museum in Paris. For the 30th anniversary of the modern landmark, the Pyramide du Louvre, JR produced a collaborative work on full scale of the Cour Napoléon. The paper collage installed by 400 volunteers provided a glimpse at what may lie beneath the ground. Imagining the historical courtyard of the museum as an area of deep excavation or an archeological study, the famous Pyramid looks as if it was submerged in a quarry of white rock. The familiar image completely changes its appearance, altering the viewer's perception.

The installation *Diagram bushes Here and There and Everywhere* by Italian artist **Loris Cecchini** sprouts from the floor of the gallery, and at first glance appears to be abstract and minimalist, but actually takes its inspiration from forms and processes found in nature. Cecchini pulls together the realms of science and art to develop a series of works that illustrate nature's profound mathematical foundation and relate them to biological impulses. The sculptural form, comprised of hundreds of elements, seems to be a biological metaphor – cells that open and flower, releasing molecular components that engage with the gallery space.

The in-situ work *L'Horizon, Infiniment* was specially created for the unique gallery space by **Daniel Buren**. The work must be seen, felt, experienced before it disappears or is produced again in another form, and another place. Designed with the architecture of the space in mind, the work invites the viewer's imagination to wander, allowing us to turn on, as the artist says, our "third eye". It shows what is behind us and what is usually invisible to us. The present moment multiplies

and the work reveals a broader vision of a now infinite horizon.

Landscape in in the centre of attention in the work of **Alejandro Campins**, one of the forerunners of Cuba's young generation of Cuban artists. Campins is interested in approaching objects and places that mark the passing of time, and that in turn have the capacity to influence mindsets and ideologies. *Rio Muerto*, from the series *Bad Lands* (2019), reconsiders earth as an indication of life and an archaeological evidence. The mountain becomes a crucial motif which the artist recreates as a capsule, or as condensation, that expresses the overwhelming leap of the geological ages. The forms are made up of linear residues, each one of them a sign and an axis of a past horizon. Here, time ceases to be a transitory phenomenon and transforms into a concrete fact and monument.

First presented as an immersive, multi-sensory experience in the Egyptian pavilion of the 57th Venice Biennale, the five-channel video work by **Moataz Nasr** titled *The Mountain* follows a young girl who challenges the deep-set superstitions and conventions of her village. Here, a geological phenomena is used as a metaphor for the triumph of human's knowledge over fear. "We should face that mountain and we should conquer it", says the artist.

About the gallery:

Founded in 1990 in San Gimignano, Italy, **GALLERIA CONTINUA** has expanded its locations to Beijing, Les Moulins, Havana, São Paulo, Rome, Paris, and Dubai. Remaining faithful to the spirit of perpetual evolution, and committed to engaging the widest possible audiences in contemporary art, GALLERIA CONTINUA has built a strong identity through its bonds and experiences, thriving away from the conventional urban centres, in completely unexpected yet timeless locations. The gallery inaugurated its permanent space in Dubai, in Burj Al Arab Jumeirh, in November 2021.

The exhibition *From the Ground Up II* at GALLERIA CONTINUA / Dubai at the Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, is on view until 12 November 2023.

For press requests, please contact:  
Phoebe Owston [phoebe@galleriacontinua.com](mailto:phoebe@galleriacontinua.com)  
+39 333 4893216.