

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS DUBAI

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FROM THE GROUND UP

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

7/06/2023 – 10/09/2023

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

GALLERIA CONTINUA / Dubai is pleased to announce the new exhibition **From the Ground Up**, 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. The new exhibition, *From the Ground Up*, showcases 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 exhibition *From the Ground Up* 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.

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.

Verona-born artist living and working in Venice, **Marta Spagnoli** also explores our physiological attachment to nature, while establishing a dialogue between the bareness of the earth, and the human body. In her painting *Pilgrims*, the fluctuating figures create a universe through pictorial practice and mythical shapes, in a world poised between reality, myth and dream. Spagnoli creates a symbolic universe, raising awareness about ecological sustainability, and questions the liveability of the planet and people's capacity to be a "guardian of the Earth".

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 presented in the exhibition, *Branch of Life*, is a crystal mask hanging in fragile balance off of a bronze branch, portraying an individual moving through current times.

The soil becomes the centre of attention in the work of **Alejandro Campins**, one of the forerunners of Cuba's young generation of 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.

Another acclaimed artist from Cuba, **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.

Temporality is also reflected in the in-situ work L'Horizon, Infiniment 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.

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 Jumeirah, in November 2021.

The exhibition **From the Ground Up** is on show at GALLERIA CONTINUA / Dubai at the Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, from 7 June to 10 September 2023.

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