

# JOSÉ ANTONIO SUÁREZ LONDOÑO

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## DRAWING BY NUMBERS

03.05.2025 – 07.09.2025

**GALLERIA CONTINUA** is pleased to present *Drawing by Numbers*, José Antonio Suárez Londoño's third solo exhibition in San Gimignano. Featuring 100 drawings and 84 etchings, the exhibition offers an intimate look at the Colombian artist's evolving practice, rooted in discipline, ritual, and quiet introspection.

For Suárez Londoño, drawing is not merely a form of expression but a daily act of devotion. His works emerge from intimate formats, A4 sheets, notebooks, and found materials such as business cards, ticket stubs, teabags, and flower petals. These fragments are transformed into intricate constellations of figures, dancers, animals, surreal forms, and natural elements going from the pure abstract to the most figurative and academic subjects. Each drawing holds personal resonance, yet together they construct a kaleidoscopic universe where repetition, accumulation, and delicate detail invite the viewer into dreamlike yet contemplative spaces.

A central feature of this exhibition is a unique collaboration with his students, with whom Suárez Londoño has met for weekly portrait sessions for over two decades. In 2024, he invited them to submit themes they wished to see explored in his drawings. From more than 400 suggestions, he created a system: each theme was written on a slip of paper and placed in a box. Each day, he randomly selected one, allowing the chosen prompt to guide that day's drawing. As he describes, the process was like "going to an oracle or a church in search of divine inspiration" but instead of divine forces, it was the collective voice of his students that shaped the work.

This approach introduced both unpredictability and challenge. Some prompts left the artist "disappointed or confused," yet his willingness to engage with uncertainty underscored his commitment to process and discovery over perfection. From the 366 drawings created, Suárez Londoño selected 100 for the exhibition, each chosen for the connection it held at the time, with the acknowledgment that different selections might emerge on another day.

The exhibition also marks a significant return to etching for Suárez Londoño. Since the 1980s, he has produced nearly 400 etching plates, originally working in a studio in Colombia. After a period of sporadic work in New York and Madrid, his practice fell dormant, until 2018, when he began teaching etching to some students from his Friday portrait group. This initiative, which began as an intensive course and evolved into regular monthly sessions, gave rise to a collective known as *Grabadores de Domingo* ("Sunday Etchers"), inspired by the tradition of amateur Sunday painters.

Created alongside his students, the 84 etchings on view reflect this renewed engagement with the medium, interrupted only briefly by the pandemic, and highlight Suárez Londoño's deepening commitment to collaboration, mentorship, and experimentation.

The exhibition's title, *Drawing by Numbers*, refers to a formative childhood memory: a "paint by numbers" kit brought by his parents, depicting a German Shepherd. That experience, at once structured and liberating, mirrors the methodology of the current work, where each drawing is tied to a numbered student prompt.

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This blend of order and spontaneity, structure and freedom, defines both the process and the resulting body of work.

Suárez Londoño's drawings inhabit a space between method and intuition, image and text, solitude and shared experience. They testify to an enduring search for meaning, intimacy, and artistic completeness.

About the artist:

**José Antonio Suárez Londoño** was born in 1955 in Medellín, Colombia, where he continues to live and work. After completing studies in biology at the University of Antioquia, he attended the École Supérieure des Arts Visuels in Geneva (1978-1984). His work has been featured in major international exhibitions, including The Yearbooks at The Drawing Center, New York (2012), The Modern Myth: Drawing Mythologies in Modern Times at MoMA, New York (2010), and the 24th and 32nd São Paulo Biennials. In Italy, he first exhibited in 2013 as part of the 55th Venice Biennale. His works are held in public and private collections worldwide, including the Banco de la República (Colombia), Graphische Sammlung Albertina (Vienna), and MoMA (New York).

About the gallery:

Founded in 1990 in San Gimignano, Italy, GALLERIA CONTINUA has expanded its locations to Beijing, Les Moulins, Havana, São Paulo, Rome, and Paris. GALLERIA CONTINUA represents the desire for continuity between eras and the ambition to write a contemporary story. In thirty-five years of activity, thanks to its commitment to revitalizing and breathing new life into forgotten and unconventional spaces, the gallery has developed a strong and unique identity. Located within a former 1950s cinema-theater, GALLERIA CONTINUA San Gimignano has hosted numerous exhibitions over the years, offering artists the opportunity to create memorable site-specific installations and tailor-made exhibition projects for these distinctive and character-rich spaces.

**GALLERIA CONTINUA / San Gimignano**

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From Monday to Sunday: 10 AM-1 PM | 2 PM-7 PM;

**For further information about the exhibition and photographic material:**

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