



# GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

Via del Castello 11, San Gimignano (SI), Italia  
tel. +390577943134 | info@galleriacontinua.com | www.galleriacontinua.com

## GIOVANNI OZZOLA

### *Octillion*

Opening Saturday 26th January 2019, via del Castello 11, 6pm-midnight  
Until 7th April 2019, Monday to Sunday, 10am-1pm, 2-7pm

*Octillion* is the title of the project conceived by Giovanni Ozzola for his personal show in the gallery spaces of the former cinema and theatre, Galleria Continua, in San Gimignano. It comprises new sculptures, previously unseen photographs and a video piece created specifically for the occasion. In his work, Ozzola frequently engages with fundamental philosophical issues, such as the existence of man and the meaning of life. The journey as metaphor, exploration as a means of confronting ancestral fears, awareness of the passing of time, the dialectics of light and dark, or rather of life and the mental locus of emotion and fantasy... In this show many of the themes that have been at the heart of his work over the years converge and are developed, giving rise to a broader contemplation of the relationship between man and the universe.

A person of average build is made up of seven billion billion billion atoms. Recently a team of astrophysicists organised by Northwestern University, Evanston, discovered that approximately half of our body is of cosmic origin: we are made up of atoms from interstellar collisions. Not just our bodies but also the flora and fauna of our planet are the result of processes that came about millions of years ago inside stars and which gave rise to the basal elements (carbon, nitrogen and oxygen) – the building blocks of human, plant and animal life on earth. “*We are, deep down, the universe in human form... each and every individual, in all their complexity and with their own unique way of being and of perceiving the world is actually an infinitesimal part of the universe,*” states Ozzola. “*An octillion, a one followed by 48 zeros, is the number of atoms that make up the human body and conceptually, this provided the stimulus for the project which culminates in this exhibition.*”

Ozzola's sculptures are about change, a passing state, a contagion. With a new series of works comprised of incisions in aluminium the artist joins past and present, the human and the cosmic in a single field of sensory perception, to which time and place are secondary. We see only these lines, which intersect to form an image that is abstract in nature: maps of the universe, cosmic geographies, the paths of journeys into the unknown, even scars and destinies delineated in the palm of a hand come together and overlap, suggesting infinite combinations. Just like James Hillman in his famous best-seller, “*The Soul's Code*”, Ozzola reflects on the theme of destiny. To crack said code, the American psychologist turned to Plato's Myth of Er: before birth the soul chooses a demon (daimon in Greek) as companion on the terrestrial journey. The associated ‘acorn theory’ encompasses vocation, character and destiny: each individual comes into the world with an innate essence that defines them – a unique and unrepeatable form that must be realised if we are to achieve balance and harmony in our lives. “*Our destiny,*” the artist explains, “*is already laid out by the demon which governs us, whether for Good or Evil. The fact of being one with the Universe and made of the same matter makes us reflect on being part of a far bigger organism, and on the particular role we are to play within that.*”

Although Giovanni Ozzola's favoured mediums are photography, video and installations, his works find their roots more in the history of painting. This is clearly visible in another series of new works on show: sections of wall, 'torn' from a place, and bringing with them a multitude of stories. *"They are completely painted, translating the vision of graffiti-scarred walls (an image that the Bunker photos show often), through a process that seems derived from photography and recalls the ancient 'strappo d'affresco' technique<sup>1</sup>: that of a silicon sheet which when exposed 'on contact' creeps into the crevices of the graffiti to form a positive image of their pattern. Only after tearing this off – lo strappo – does the artist work with colour and create other layers, giving the impression of another time (that of the act of painting) that overlaps the incalculable time inscribed in the history of the graffiti."* (Davide Ferri in "Fallen Blossoms", Gli Ori, 2018).

At the heart of Ozzola's work lies an interest in the three-dimensional space and light. His research begins with the observation and analysis of the visible world: minor events, natural phenomenon that repeat daily, the same as ever yet nonetheless unique and distinct. Moments from a world made of sights on the verge of disappearing are probed with an almost scientific intention. His photographs capture variations of light in an endless attempt to still something inherently fluctuating and fleeting, as if desiring to prove the epiphanous qualities of the photographic medium. In *"Fallen Blossoms"*, the new cycle that the artist presents with *"Octillion"*, leaves and flower petals fall to carpet the tarmac as they reach the end of their life cycle. Images that meditate on the transience of life and the ephemeral nature of beauty, but also on the uninterrupted mingling of natural and artificial elements.

<sup>1</sup> technique for detaching a fresco from a wall

Born in Florence, in 1982, **Giovanni Ozzola** currently lives and works in Canary Islands, Spain. Exhibitions of his work have been held internationally in numerous public and private institutions, most recently: in 2018 – *Pitch Black*, Palacio de los Marqueses de Moctezuma, Museo Unicaja Joaquin Peinado, Ronda (Málaga), Spain; *MI VERDAD, CON SU TIEMPO Y ESPACIO – ALGO TUYO Y MÍO*, Fundación Unicaja, CUC Centro Unicaja de Cultura de Antequera, Spain; *Vanitas*, Rotary Waregem, Claessens Canvas, Waregem, Belgium; *RECTO VERSO*, at the Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris, France; *IL RICHIAMO DI CTHULHU*, MANIFESTA 12, collaborative event, Palazzo Mazzarino, Palermo, Italy and *WunderMoRE*, MAXXI (Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo), Rome, Italy; in 2017 – *Relitti e Camere con stelle*, Untitled Association Lynchen, Berlin, Germany; *Mirage*, Suburbia Contemporary Cultures, Granada, Spain and *Fumo*, Macro, Rome, Italy; in 2016 – *Adrift*, District 6 Museum, Cape Town, South Africa; *Sistemi di realtà*, Sms, Pisa, Italy and *Re-Birth*, Abu Dhabi Art, Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates. His works are held in numerous private and public collections, among which feature MART, Rovereto, Italy; Chelsea Art Museum, New York, USA; Sharjah Maraya Art Center, Dubai; Mori Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Schunck- Glaspaleis, Herleen, Netherlands; Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn Und Taxis, Bregenz, Austria; Man Museo d'Arte, Nuoro, Italy; Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan; Centre d'Art Bastille, Grenoble, France; GC,AC, Monfalcone, Italy; Viafarini Docva, Milan, Italy; Centro Arti Visive Pescheria, Pesaro, Italy; OCAT – Contemporary Art Terminal, Shanghai, Guandong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China; 2139, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; District Six Museum, Cape Town, South Africa. Among Ozzola's awards are the Premio Cairo (2011), Premio Terna (2008) and Seat Pagine Gialle (2007).