



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

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SUN YUAN & PENG YU

Opening: Saturday 27th April 2019, Via del Castello 11, 6pm-midnight
Until 1st September 2019, Monday to Sunday, 10am-1pm / 2pm-7pm

Some years on from their first solo exhibition in Italy, Sun Yuan and Peng Yu – two prominent figures of the contemporary Chinese panorama – return to Galleria Continua in San Gimignano. Internationally known for the often destabilising and provocative nature of their works and for the use of unusual materials, the artists began their collaboration at the end of the '90s.

Sun Yuan and Peng Yu's work centres on the unceasing confirmation of paradox and the perpetual exploration of the duality between white and black, reality and untruth, that which is manifest and that which is concealed. Their work demonstrates a constant analysis of life through experience, in which often the public is also invited to take part, with the aim of finding the essence and substance which are hidden behind appearances.

Existential conflicts, the human condition, an obsession with death and old age, and violence are all themes which they address, placing the spectator in front of scenes that are devoid of any conventional filter. Video, photographs, documentaries and installations are sometimes inspired by reality, which the personal gaze of the artists modifies and transforms, presenting us with unsettling images in which irony – at times, bitter – reveals deeper meanings. "*I didn't notice what I am doing*" is a perfect example: an installation composed of a series of objects which gives centre stage to the subliminal dimension which underlies cognitive processes and daily actions. Contemplating the animals represented (a rhinoceros and a triceratops), our brain automatically establishes connections and similarities which have no basis in reality, nor any scientific relevance. In another work, entitled "*Teenager Teenager*", we reflect instead on the limits of communication and on generational conflicts, but also on the possibility of changing and protecting what we have: reclining on leather sofa a man well-dressed, on his head a cumbersome boulder prevent any seeing at all.

Their interest in unusual materials (from human fat tissue, to live or stuffed animals and dead fetuses), combined with a hyper-realistic style and an extraordinary intuitive ability, renders Sun Yuan and Peng Yu's works intense and unique. In the most recent installations

and performances, organic materials are substituted by synthetic ones, and “omnipotent machines” characterised by a great technical virtuosity act as a metaphor for a consumerist society which has lost its way.

Sun Yuan & Peng Yu are among the artists invited by Ralph Rugoff to take part in the 58th Venice Biennial.

Sun Yuan was born in 1972 in Peking. **Peng Yu** was born in 1974 in Heilongjiang, China. They studied in the same years at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Peking, the city where they still live and work today. They have exhibited in numerous public and private institutions, including: 5th Lyons Biennial (2000); Yokohama Triennial (2001); 1st Guangzhou Triennial (2002); Today Art Museum, Peking (2003); MAC Contemporary Art Museum, Lyons (2004); Kwangju Biennial (2004); MuHKA: Contemporary Art Museum of Antwerp (2004); Kunstmuseum, Berne (2005); 51st Venice Biennial (2005); Liverpool Biennial (2006); 2nd Moscow Biennial (2007); Kunsthaus Graz (2007); Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Les Moulins / Habana (2008, 2009, 2011); The Saatchi Gallery, London (2008); The National Art Centre, Tokyo (2008); Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art – UCCA, Peking (2009); 2nd Moscow Biennial (2009); Aichi Triennial, Nagoya (2010); Sydney Biennial (2010); Para\Site Art Space, Hong Kong (2011); The Pace Gallery, Peking (2011); dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel (2012); Contemporary Art Centre, Taipei (2012); Hayward Gallery, London (2012); PinchukArtCentre, Kiev (2013); Uferhallen, Berlin (2014); Qatar Museums (QMA), Doha (2016); Guggenheim Museum, New York (2016); 11th Shanghai Biennial (2016); DMA- Daejeon Museum of Art, Daejeon (2017); Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao (2018).