

GUARDATORI

20.03.2026 – 30.05.2026

GALLERIA CONTINUA is pleased to present, in its Parisian space in the Marais, the new solo exhibition of **Manuela Sedmach**, *Guardatori*. Devoted to observation, both of the external world and of interiority, Sedmach invites viewers to pause and immerse themselves in the suspended, mysterious atmospheres of her paintings.

Born in Trieste in 1953, Manuela Sedmach now lives in northern Portugal. For over thirty years, the artist has worked with an essential chromatic palette composed of three colors, black, white and Siena earth. This choice has allowed her to explore in depth the multiple nuances and expressive possibilities of these tones, investigating their mutability and infinite variations. Through this rigorous research, Sedmach continues to find new perspectives on nature and its changes.

The title of the exhibition, *Guardatori* ("viewers", in English), refers to one of the series on display, begun by the artist in the late 1980s with oil painting and recently resumed with acrylic painting. The ***Guardatori***, a name given by the artist to the characters inhabiting these paintings, are dual figures: observers who look and at the same time are being looked at. For Sedmach, they represent an emanation of the individual and their deepest fears, a mirror that reveals what we want to hide and that sometimes, in the course of life, resurfaces, forcing us to confront an image of ourselves from which it is impossible to escape.

Sedmach defines herself as a writer who writes with painting, and she draws extensively on literature, music and cinema to conceive her works. In the case of the

Guardatori, it is impossible for her not to evoke Andreï Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*, which has deeply marked her pictorial research. In the film, the Stalker guides men towards a forbidden zone where the most intimate nature of the individual manifests itself. Similarly, Sedmach considers herself a figure who leads the viewers towards directions unknown to her: each person is left free to recognize, in her paintings, what resonates most deeply within them.

The idea of passage, transition and entry into a new phase also emerges in the ***Liminal*** series. Inspired by the majestic Moroccan desert, this series of paintings presents deserted landscapes. The human being does not appear in these images, and the places represented allude rather to the dimension of solitude that belongs to the human condition and which, despite the social relationships, one cannot really escape from.

In her paintings, the space alludes to the landscape without fully defining it: the presence of a horizon line is not accompanied by recognizable subjects, as the traditional landscape genre would require. Atmosphere and light become the true protagonists, outlining, however, impalpable, ethereal subjects, which prevent the gaze from dwelling on a precise element, inviting the viewer to move freely in the pictorial space.

The impalpability of light becomes the protagonist of the ***Passare al bosco*** series ("Going into the woods"), in which explosions of matter allude to implosions of the inner universe of each individual. The reference is, once again, cinema, in particular a famous sequence from Michelangelo Antonioni's film

Zabriskie Point, where a slow-motion explosion of an American villa alludes to the decline of society. The title, on the other hand, refers to a chapter of Ernst Jünger's *The Forest Passage*, in which the passage to the forest represents the return to a mental state capable of practicing resistance and thinking freely.

For Manuela Sedmach, vision also has a deeply political dimension. Wanting to see means wanting to know, and knowledge is the driving force of action. Originally conceived under the title *Nunca pare de lutar* ("Never stop fighting"), in reference to a song by Ludmila Ferber, the series was ultimately named "*Nunca pare de ver*" ("Never stop looking"). This shift highlights a central idea: to observe is already to begin to act - a first step towards engagement.

In *Ponte do Prado* ("Bridge of Prado"), the perception of the immensity of nature and the impossibility of seeing all the facets of reality clearly takes shape through a more circumscribed vision. The painting depicts the surface of the Cávado river in northern Portugal, observed from the Ponte do Prado that crosses it, a place often frequented by the artist and observed in all its conditions. On one occasion, thanks to the particular clarity of the water and the extraordinary clarity of the air, Sedmach was able to glimpse the lush vegetation located beneath the surface. The fleeting experience of that vision is here fixed and made permanent on the canvas.

The series *Foglie ferite* ("wounded leaves") shows that even when life leaves its marks, something continues to endure and move forward. This autobiographical project also led to a publication presented in the exhibition, which highlights fragility and hardship as essential aspects of the human experience.

Completing the exhibition is a sound composition titled *Guardatore*, created by the musicians of the group Herbarium: Erica Benfatto, Martin O'Loughlin, and Katia Marioni. It accompanies the visitor's experience, stimulating the emergence of emotions and the possibility of abandoning oneself to one's own sensations. Inspired by Sedmach's works, the musical project translates the atmospheres evoked by the paintings into sound, thus opening up an additional perceptual dimension.

Manuela Sedmach's paintings, suspended in an ethereal dimension, suggest spaces in transition. Their atmospheres invite to dialogue with the deepest part of ourselves. It is in this process of immersion that the viewer ends up transforming himself, in turn, into a *Guardatore*.

About the artist:

Manuela Sedmach was born in Trieste in 1953. She lives and works in Viana do Castelo, Portugal.

Over the years, her work has explored inscrutable spaces and dilated time. Her pictorial weave is built up through a slow process, beginning with the dark black of the ground and then adding glazes and layers of colour, apart from black, white, and Sienna. In this way, the artist achieves a very wide range of greys, reflections, and light effects. It is the light that emerges behind these transparencies, combined with the natural light of the setting and its changes throughout the day, that makes Sedmach's 'landscapes' atemporal and ever-changing. Sedmach was awarded the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 1999.

Among Manuela Sedmach's solo exhibitions: *Un altro passo* (Nuno Centeno, Porto, 2024); *Nunca pare de ver* (Galleria Continua, Paris, 2023); *Em Lugar algum* (Nuno Centeno, Porto, 2023); *Liminal* (Alfonso Fratteggiani Bianchi studio, Perugia, 2022); *La discesa contempla in sé la risalita* (Associazione culturale Cizerouno, Trieste, 2022); *Non smettere mai di sognare* (Kubik Gallery, Porto, 2021); *In Deep - La profondità dello sguardo* (Magazzino 26, Trieste, 2021); *Passare al Bosco* (Stadtgemeinde St Andrä, 2018); *I Colonos*, Villacaccia di Lestizza, Udine, 2017; *Arca-Itis*, Trieste, 2016 and *Dove* (Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Udine, 2010).

She has been featured in several group exhibitions, including: *Über die linie/ Oltre la linea/Čez Črto* (The Circle, Gorizia, 2025); *Liminal: Borders_Confini_Grenzen_Meje* (Museo Civico del Territorio, Cormòns, 2025); *A certain instance of 'verrition'* (Fundação Leal Rios, Lisbon, 2023); *Contrappunto 02* (Casa Cavazzini, Udine, 2022), *My way, a modo mio* (MAMBO- Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Bologna, Bologna, 2017); *Corrispondenza d'Arte* (Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Revoltella, Trieste, 2016); and *Follia Continua* (Le 104, Paris, 2015).

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