

# PLEIN SOLEIL

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JUAN ARAUJO, AI WEIWEI, HANS OP DE BEECK  
BARBANA BOJADZI, YOAN CAPOTE, LORIS CECCHINI  
ELIZABET CERVIÑO, NIKHIL CHOPRA, BERLINDE DE BRUYCKERE  
LEANDRO ERLICH, SUBODH GUPTA, JR, JOSÉ MESÍAS  
GIOVANNI OZZOLA, SERSE, NEDKO SOLAKOV, MARTA SPAGNOLI  
PASCALE MARTHINE TAYOU, SISLEJ XHAFA & JOSÉ YAQUE

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GALLERIA CONTINUA is pleased to present the group show *Plein Soleil*, shown across its two Paris spaces, located respectively in the Marais and Matignon districts. The two exhibitions feature works by **Adel Abdessemed, Ai Weiwei, Juan Araujo, Barbana Bojadzi, Hans Op de Beeck, Yoan Capote, Loris Cecchini, Elizabet Cerviño, Nikhil Chopra, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Leandro Erlich, Subodh Gupta, JR, José Mesías, Giovanni Ozzola, Serse, Nedko Solakov, Marta Spagnoli, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Nari Ward, Sislej Xhafa and José Yaque.**

Bringing together artists from different generations and geographies, working across a range of practices, *Plein Soleil* sets out to evoke the sensations we typically associate with the summer season. Light becomes material, colors gain in intensity, while landscapes, bodies, and natural elements unfold in a surge of vitality and blossoming. Hovering between contemplation and celebration of the living, the works on view in both galleries evoke that time of year when time seems to stretch, the gaze relaxes, and the mind gives way to a renewed sense of lightness.

Color emerges as the exhibition's protagonist, infusing both spaces with a luminous, vibrant atmosphere. It calls to the mind flowering trees, the colorful parasols of summer beaches, the bustle of tourist crowds, starlit nights, the discoveries of travel, and moments of leisure. Yet, beneath this apparent carefree spirit, more complex questions surface. By evoking the imagery of holidays and leisure, the exhibition invites reflection on the privilege that the very possibility of travel and movement represents. It sheds light on the environmental stakes tied to tourist

mass flows, while also evoking a more subtle layer of meaning: emigration, driven by harsh political, economic, or climatic realities. This way, the imagery of mobility, discovery, and escape take on a more ambivalent dimension, revealing the inequalities that underpin our relationship to movement.

Taking its title from the cinematic masterpiece *Plein Soleil*, whose Mediterranean atmosphere, steeped in light, creates a striking contrast between the dazzling beauty of the landscapes and the moral darkness of the plot, the exhibition engages in a similar reflection. Unlike many noir films set in shadow, the crimes committed by the protagonist of the movie are concealed in broad daylight, beneath a light that nevertheless seems to reveal everything. In much the same way, *Plein Soleil* allows essential questions of our contemporary societies to surface behind a joyful, summery aesthetic. It thus invites the viewer to move beyond the immediate seduction of the works and interrogate the more complex issues they convey.

Visitors are welcomed by **Pascale Marthine Tayou's** installation *Plastic Tree*, in which a fruit tree springs from the wall. On closer inspection, however, its fruits, or flowers, turn out to be made of plastic bags, drawing attention to the challenges of waste management and its persistence in the environment. The work thus prompts reflection on the impact of our consumption habits and the consequences of our collective actions on ecosystems.

**Ai Weiwei's** sculpture *Wave* continues this two-sided reflection by depicting a wave whose foam

metamorphoses into menacing claws. A symbol of freedom, travel, and openness, the sea here reveals its most unsettling and violent face. Shifted from its epoch, an antique Chinese display cabinet becomes the support for a contemporary sculpture. Through its colours and lacquered finish, the work enters into dialogue with the tradition of Chinese porcelain, while invoking art history, from Yuan dynasty paintings to Japanese woodblock prints.

This ambivalence is equally present in **Yoan Capote's** *Sentimientos encontrados (melancolía)*. Composed of a multitude of echocardiograms forming the surface of a turbulent sea, the work evokes the countless lives suspended or lost at sea. Behind the poetry of this maritime expanse lies the tragedy of contemporary migration, recalling the fate of those who cross the waters at the risk of their lives in the hope of a better future.

Throughout a varied journey with materiality at its core, art reveals itself as a language capable of synthesising complex reflections in visual form. This is the case with **Subodh Gupta's** installation *Untitled*, in which a stroller overflowing with everyday objects questions our relationship to material possessions, the importance we place on them in the construction of our identity, and the need to carry them along in contexts of migration so as not to lose one's memories and roots.

The duality running through the entire exhibition also takes shape in **Berlinde De Bruyckere's** *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. Long drawn to decadent vitality, the fragility of life, and its transitory nature, this early work, made in 1992, already reveals the themes that would go on to define the Belgian artist's practice. By transforming a traditional symbol of beauty, a basket of roses, into an object of weight and immobility, the work expresses a fundamental paradox: forms associated with delicacy and life are rendered inert by lead, a material that evokes permanence and gravity. The work thus presents itself as a meditation on loss, memory, and the impossibility of preserving life in an unchanging state.

The exhibition unfolds the full complexity of contemporary society, its contradictions and persistent inequalities, with the intention not of concealing or softening them, but of exposing them, in broad daylight.

About the Gallery:

**GALLERIA CONTINUA** is a contemporary art gallery founded in 1990 in San Gimignano by three friends—Mario Cristiani, Lorenzo Fiaschi, and Maurizio Rigillo—today it operates in San Gimignano, Rome, Beijing, Paris, Les Moulins, Havana and São Paulo.

**GALLERIA CONTINUA** represents a desire to create, through art, a continuity between eras, enhancing the connection between past, present, and future, with a commitment to actively contributing to the writing of the contemporary art scene. Investing in unique, historically infused spaces, often far from conventional ideals, the gallery has developed a strong identity over more than thirty years of activity, embracing themes related to creation and cultural blending. Its various global locations spaces foster encounters and exchanges centered around works of art, presenting a vision of beauty that is pluralistic, joyful, cosmopolitan, and rich in diverse influences.

In 2024, the gallery inaugurates a third French space in the heart of Matignon, the historic epicenter of the art market and a lively neighborhood in western Paris where important international contemporary art galleries, modern art dealers, and iconic fashion, craft, and lifestyle houses come together, attracting visitors from all over the world.

**GALLERIA CONTINUA / Paris Marais**

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