

# GALLERIA CONTINUA / Le Moulin

## SISLEJ XHAFI

### *Unpoetic Bride*

Preview: Saturday the 30th June  
From June 30 to September 23, 2012

Galleria Continua / Le Moulin is delighted to announce a new collaboration with Sislej Xhafa. This bond between the artist and the gallery was initiated in 2000, with the project *Arte all'Arte* initiated by Galleria Continua (from 1996 to 2005) that was confronting Contemporary art, Renaissance, architecture and landscape and the territory of Tuscany.

With his first individual exhibition at Galleria Continua / Le Moulin, Sislej Xhafa will inaugurate a new gallery space, the Moulin de Sainte-Marie.

Since its inauguration in Boissy-le-Châtel in 2007, Galleria Continua / Le Moulin has confirmed its desire to take over original sites and welcome artists of international scope. The Moulin de Sainte-Marie is therefore an innovative project for an art venue which constitutes the true renaissance of a post-industrial site in the Parisian countryside. Part of the site will be unveiled by Galleria Continua on the 30th June 2012.

We are pleased to show Sislej Xhafa in his first solo show with Galleria Continua / Moulin in France. A space, with great history is confronted with unique pieces by an artist who displays power, balance and behaviour. Society is questioned through a prism of economy and politics, but also its history is for Sislej Xhafa an escape route from our contemporary ideologies. Erected on fragile but concealed grounds, the latter are the face of a bride hidden beneath the white veil.

This veil, the symbol of a collective challenge blending rituals and rites of passage, is also a refuge from alienation. By working with multiple mediums, Sislej Xhafa explores the different stratum of behavioral and realities that man shapes and vice versa.

The *Broodthaershood* sculpture is thus positioned in the huge outside space at the Moulin de Sainte-Marie, composed of a manhole cover and mussels. The manhole cover refers specifically to what is hidden by the bride's white veil. It punctuates each back lane in our towns, a system of detritus collection that no-one wishes to see, a backbone of city life. In English, the word means 'human hole.' Making the link between the concealed underground and real life. This opens a transit zone which marks the border of what we are able to tolerate. Illegitimate territory reigns beyond this zone the cover of which is only subterfuge, an opening which hides the flaw. Paying tribute to the Belgian visual artist, Sislej Xhafa decorates this small tower with mussel shells opened out like butterflies, repudiating with irony, as did Marcel Broodthaers in his day, established order. A fraternal descent (the title playing with the word 'brotherhood') reunites the two poets.

The mussel, referring to the compartmentalization of a social mould, also has a strong sexual connotation found in *Romeo and Juliette*. The work presents a cigarette stuck in a window, a passion being consumed. It also involves exterior forces which manipulate the two lovers, powerless faced with belonging to enemy clans. The transparency of the window therefore evokes a barely perceptible separation, but with a real boundary.

Sislej Xhafa presents the notion of borders in his works. First of all drawing upon his own stereotype, one of an immigrant in another country, he confronted the notion of a hostile land at an early age. Illegally penetrating the Venice Biennale in 1997, the artist calls himself both sojourner and protagonist of the clandestine Albanian pavilion, pervading the politicized system of an international contemporary art event.

He puts himself at the forefront as a football player by inviting the passers-by to play with him,

Sislej Xhafa sullies the space carefully arranging it according to national identification by comparing the world of art to the one of football. He therefore reveals the absurdity of the rules of the game.

*Still Untitled*, a sack of cement from Israel, has been thrown to the ground and split open, recalling the painful shambles of territorial conflict. The work which remains without a title evokes a land searching for identity.

The evolution of Sislej Xhafa's reasoning will then shift from one situation about identity to another type of universal exile, buried beneath structures of corruptible power and expectations.

*Silvio*, the impassive, impenetrable bust of Silvio Berlusconi, crushes us with its monumentality and power (the piece is over 5 metres high). Its majestic tranquillity is nonetheless threatened by the fragility of the flesh, made entirely from sand, making it ridiculous beneath the weight of his power.

The artist created *Unpoetic Bride* in permanent dialogue with its exhibition venue. Positioning the works in the spacious expanses of the Moulin de Sainte-Marie, the industrial beauty of the building confronts the unique style of Sislej Xhafa's art, which continues to tackle this political and poetic question of the balance of power. With a certain urgency he tries to highlight the vulnerability of the limits that will be imposed by some and that others will be subjected to.

Sislej Xhafa was born in Peja, Kosovo, in 1970. He lives between Brussels and New York.

#### **SOLO EXHIBITIONS (selection):**

MADRE Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples, curator Mario Codognato (2011); GAMeC Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, Giuseppe, Bergamo, curator Giacinto Di Pietrantonio (2007); Museo Carlo Zauli, Stuztespia, Faenza, curator Daniela Lotta (2006); 51<sup>st</sup> Venice Biennale, Pavillon Albanais, Venice (2005); Fundació La Caixa, La Sala Montcada, Miedo Total, xhafabdessemed (an exhibition with Adel Abdessemed), Barcelona, curator Teresa Macri (2005); Deitch Projects, Motion in Paradise, New York (2002); Kunsthalle Bern, Project Room, Berne, curator Evelyne Jouannou (2001); Swiss Cultural Institute, Talk is Cheap, New York, curator Marc Olivier Wahler (2001); Fondazione Olivetti, Rome, curator Bartolomeo Pietromarchi (2000); 47<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Clandestine Albanian Pavilion, Venice (1997).

#### **GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection):**

Riso Museo d'Arte Contemporanea della Sicilia, Palermo, curator Paola Nicita (2012); SPHERES 4, GALLERIA CONTINUA / Le Moulin, France (2011); Palazzo Grassi, The world belongs to you, François Pinault collection, Venice, curator Caroline Bourgeois (2011); The Art Miami Pavilion, In what we trust, curator Julia Draganovic (2011); Stadtgalerie, What's the Difference?, Berne, curator Beate Engel (2011); Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba (2009); Biennale of Gwangju, Gwangju (2008, 2002); Schirn Kunsthalle, All-Inclusive. A Tourist World Frankfurt, curator Matthias Ulrich (2008); Museo Reina Sofía, O lo que vio Betty Boop, Madrid, curator Raimundas Malasauskas (2007); Istanbul Museum Of Modern Art Time Present, Time Past, Istanbul, curators David Elliott and Rosa Martínez (2007); White Box, Theater of Cruelty, New York, curator Raul Zamudio (2007); Mori Art Museum, All About Laughter Humor in Contemporary Art, Tokyo, curator Kataoka Mami (2007); PERFORMA05, New York, curators Defne Ayas and Roselee Goldberg (2005); Monasterio la Cartuja de Santa María de las Cuervas, Séville, curator Harald Szeemann (2004); G 2003, Vira/Ascona, curator Harald Szeemann (2003), Palais de Tokyo, Opening Exhibition, Paris, curators Jérôme Sans and Nicolas Bourriaud (2002); Big Torino 2002, Turin, curators Michelangelo Pistoletto and Giacinto Di Pietrantonio (2002); PSI, Uniform, New York, curator Francesco Bonami (2001); Manifesta III, Ljubljana, curators Francesco Bonami, Maria Hlavajova and Ole Bouman (2000); S.M.A.K., Over the Edges, Gent, curators Jan Hoet and Giacinto Di Pietrantonio (2000); 59<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, curator Harald Szeemann (1999).

#### **PRIZES**

First Prize Hardau City Park, Zurich, with support from the town of Zürich, ZHDK and IFCAR (2009)

NEONS, in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Fund of the City and Canton of Geneva, Plaine de Plainpalais, Geneva (2008)

First Prize Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella (2001)

First Prize Artista Emergente Italiano/Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Premio Querini Furla per l'Arte, Venice (2000)

First Prize Onufri National Gallery, Tirana (1999)

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## Preview programme, Saturday the 30th of June:

- 12.30 pm: opening of the Kendell Geers exhibition *Le Mariage du Ciel et de l'Enfer* at the Castle of Blandy-les-Tours, by Vincent Eblé, Senator, President of the General Council of Seine-et-Marne in the presence of the artist and Galleria Continua directors

- 1 pm: buffet

- 2.30 pm: *A Memorable Fancy*, performance by Ilse Ghekiere

- 3.30 pm: departure from Blandy by bus to Galleria Continua / Le Moulin

- 4.30 pm: exhibitions by Daniel Buren, *Window for Sainte-Marie, work in situ, May 2012* and by Sislej Xhafa, *Unpoetic Bride*

Preview of the opening of the new site - Le Moulin de Sainte-Marie, rue des Papeteries - 77169 Boissy-le-Châtel

- 6 pm : long-term projects by Kader Attia, Leandro Erlich, Kendell Geers, Antony Gormley, Hans Op de Beeck, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Nari Ward, Michelangelo Pistoletto

Le Moulin de Boissy, 46, rue de la Ferté-Gaucher 77169 Boissy-le-Châtel

- from 8 pm to midnight: country-style banquet and DJ set

Bus tour (Paris – Blandy – Le Moulin – Paris) is available leaving Paris at 11 am, place Valhubert 75005, in front of the entrance to the Jardin des Plantes (metro: Gare d'Austerlitz, line 10 or RER C).

9pm / 10pm / 11 pm: return by bus (last arrival in Paris about midnight).

Individual access: join the A5 towards Provins, exit n°16 Châtillon-la-Borde, then follow the D47. Please confirm your presence at the preview(s) : [escapade77@galleriacontinua.fr](mailto:escapade77@galleriacontinua.fr) and/or if you are taking the bus, Please confirm your reservation before 27<sup>th</sup> June, providing your names, contact details and the number of places required.

## GALLERIA CONTINUA / Le Moulin

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