



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO **PARIS**

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«À BRAS OUVERTS»

Etel Adnan, Leila Alaoui, Kader Attia,
Daniel Buren, Chen Zhen, JR, Pascale Marthine Tayou

Exhibition from May 20 to June 19

To guarantee maximum safety it is compulsory to book your participation indicating the time of your visit and the number of participants: paris@galleriacontinua.fr

In compliance with the measures for the containment of the contagion of Covid-19, the entrance to the exhibition will be limited.

À bras ouverts (With open arms) is an exhibition that has been conceived as an embrace to celebrate the reopening of cultural places in France. It is also the opportunity to inaugurate a part of GALLERIA CONTINUA's newly renovated space in the heart of the Marais in Paris. In collaboration with MBL Architectes, we have stripped the space of its storage facilities and false ceilings, bringing to light its basic structure together with all the scars and traces of its recent history. Each one of us will be able to read our own heritage on its walls. Two other spaces in the 800 square metres gallery will be unveiled to the public soon.

This warm, rich setting hosts a second exhibition with a series of works that resonate with this ethic of remembrance and with the special patina of the space. The artists behind the works exhibited in *À bras ouverts* invite us to question the territory they occupy and to uncover the cultural markers that have fashioned it. Daniel Buren's piece *Del colore della materia* (1989) makes a natural home for itself here, questioning the transparency of the artwork and the surface that is allowed to appear through it, overlaying two simultaneous memories.

Etel Adnan, born in Beirut in 1925 and now living and working in France, uses tapestries, or 'wall carpets', as an active force for creating a feeling of home. Adnan first felt the need to work with carpet when she moved to California, borrowing an artisanal artform from the domestic environment of her childhood in Lebanon, and revealing all its poetic energy in the process. *Lumière Blanche* (2016) is a striking example of the result of this memory work. A shifting perspective on the realms of art and the artisanal, on the past and the contemporary, is also at stake in the large alabaster screen of *San Gimignano 4* (2014). With these two pieces, Etel Adnan uses the language of everyday objects to create disturbances in domestic space, while simultaneously introducing a sense of poetic, joyous potential.

Kader Attia's hybrid objects, testifying to a duality observed in society, produce a more frontal collision between aesthetic repertoires. With *Sombre joie* (2017) and *Dé-construire Ré-inventer* (2012), Attia used his multiple identity to draw from a vast iconographic repertoire without hierarchy, probing the connections between the body, architecture, and culture in collective memories and territories.

Mémoire 4 (1989) and *Les Textes de la lumière / La Lumière des textes* (1992) are two historical pieces by Chen Zhen that testify to a shift in his poetic discourse, moving from Chinese symbolics to the Western discourse of installation. The two works testify to the richness of the encounter produced by an artist navigating between two aesthetic horizons.

The exhibition's title, *À bras ouverts*, is also a reference to a time undergoing historical movement of populations in a society where the act of welcoming, of embracing, can be paradoxical. The embrace is both comforting, like in the mirrored surface made of marbles in Pascale Marthine Tayou's *Lampedusa* (2016), and rough: looking closer, the viewer makes out the landscape of a storm at sea, in which the tragic destiny of men and women attempting to reach the European shore of Mediterranean is played out in the crossing to Lampedusa.

Leila Alaoui's series *Crossings* (2013) explores the experience of immigration in the sub-Saharan community, the humanist light of her gaze lingering over faces and bodies that embody a collective trauma.

JR also interrogates this duality in an archival work made on Ellis Island in 2014, in which the artist unearths the history of this island off the shore of New York that took in twelve million immigrants between 1892 and 1954. By interrogating the symbolic charge of this island in the history of modern immigration, now an abandoned territory, JR places it on a human scale, filling it with the individual stories of the men and women who once stayed there.

With the works on show in *À bras ouverts*, GALLERIA CONTINUA / Paris calls on us to celebrate culture and territory. We will pay homage to artists who have experienced the territory of France in all its richness and complexity, interrogating the act of inscribing memory in the history and tracing a continuum between art and life.

JR is presented in collaboration with gallery PERROTIN.