

SUCEDÁNEOS

19.01.2024 – 19.03.2024

GALLERIA CONTINUA / PARIS is delighted to present the artist Alejandro Campins (Manzanillo, Cuba, 1981) within its space from January 19 to March 19. The exhibition *Sucedáneos* brings together paintings created specifically for this occasion, drawn from different series, as the artist confronts them with each other for the first time in a single space.

Originally from Cuba, Alejandro Campins lives and works between Madrid and Havana, developing a pictorial and photographic practice inspired by various places visited during his journeys. His homeland, with its history, architecture, and iconic landscapes, has always permeated the artist's imagination. The dreamlike landscapes he creates blend different temporalities, blurring the lines between memories and imagination. The absence of human representation lends an enigmatic atmosphere to the depicted places.

The title of the exhibition, *Sucedáneos*, which can be translated as "substitutes", reveals for the artist the close links between politics and religion, directly referring to the history of his country. Indeed, following the Cuban Revolution and the prohibition of practicing any religion, amphitheaters promoting the ideology of the Communist Party emerged throughout Cuba. For the artist, these spaces became substitute places with their own liturgy, where the worship of religion was replaced by that of politics – as depicted by the artist in the recent works of his series *Public Statement*, which began in 2015.

Spaces, now empty and deprived of their function, have become the stage sets for a bygone history. Although painted based on photographs and on-site sketches, the detailed architectural representation of the amphitheaters starkly contrasts with the almost evanescent portrayal of the background landscapes, thereby questioning the reality of the image and its temporality.

The series *Lethargy*, started the same year, revolves around the motif of the bunker, an architectural element that played a significant role in tumultuous historical periods during World War II and the Cold War. Through his various travels in Europe, the United States, or Cuba, Alejandro Campins is struck by the timeless aspect of these constructions.

Thus, a common universe is created around the idea of defense systems, connecting the bunkers of the *Lethargy* series with the Cuban amphitheaters depicted in the *Public Declaration* series. These seemingly diametrically opposed architectures both reveal a shared mechanism of defense against the fear of change, a desire for control in response to instability. Developed by Alejandro Campins after a trip to Tibet in 2018, the works in the *Tíbet* series, initiated in 2020, serve as a gateway to one of the most breathtaking and perhaps lesser-known geographies in the contemporary world: the northern plateau of the Himalayas, known as the "Roof of the World". Taking conceptual inspiration from the phenomenon of acculturation, the works capture not only the grandiose landscape but also the hidden conflict behind its enchanting beauty: the impact of the Chinese cultural revolution

on Tibetan Buddhism. The ruins of stupas, sacred worship monuments in the Buddhist religion, depicted in the paintings of the *Tíbet* series, explore the formal or unofficial connections between religion and politics.

Two new series are also presented: *Altars*, which explores the idea of monuments in Cuba, and *Untitled* dedicated to the exploration of Cuban spaces transformed into parks whose functionality is altered by the absence of architectural and urbanistic criteria. These various series are characteristic of the artist's practice, highlighting the structural modification of landscapes through the prism of human action.

Alejandro Campins approaches the place, space, and landscape that are the subjects of his work using photography, drawings, and sometimes video. In the process of preparation, these different mediums guide the artist in the elaboration of the essence that will define his painting.

Alejandro Campins Fleita (Manzanillo, Cuba, 1981)

lives and works between Havana and Madrid. He studied at the Professional Academy of Fine Arts "El Alba" in Holguin (2000) and at the Higher Institute of Arts (ISA) in Havana (2009). Campins's paintings, drawings, and photographs explore the genre of landscape and places with a strong emotional charge that challenges our perception of space and time. In 2019, he was part of the Cuban Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale and the 13th Havana Biennale.

Among his solo exhibitions: *Memoria oculta*, Fondation Brownstone, Paris, France (2023); *Distancia interna*, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy (2022); *Perpetuate-dislocate-perpetuate*, Fondazione Giuliani, Italy (2021); *Miedo a la muerte es mía la verdad*, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba (2019); *Déclaration publique*, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy (2017); *City of Queen Anne's Lace (Duo Show)*, Wasserman Projects, Detroit, Michigan (2017); *Los ojos de la percepción*, Fototeca de Cuba, Havana, Cuba (2016); and *Lapse*, Sean Kelly Gallery, New York (2016).

Among the group exhibitions featuring his work: *Time for Change: Art and Social Unrest in the Jorge M. Pérez Collection*, Tampa Museum of Art (2023); *You Know Who You Are: Recent Acquisitions of Cuban Art from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection*, El Espacio 23, Miami (2023); *Art as a thoroughfare*, Wuhan Biennale, Wuhan (2022); *In the Mind's Eye*, Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami (2022); *La Brèche*, Galleria Continua, Paris (2021); *Time for change: Art and social Unrest*.

Continuing the list of group exhibitions: in the Jorge Perez Collection, El Espacio 23, Miami, Florida (2019); *Buena Vista*, Fondation Clément, Martinique, Martinique (2018); *Pintar a contratiempo*, Centro Hispanoamericano de Cultura, Havana, Cuba (2018); *Edifice, Complexe, Visionnaire, Structure*, Galerie Sean Kelly, New York, New York (2018); *Las ciudades invisibles*, Colegio de Arquitectos (UNAICC), Havana, Cuba (2017); *Cuba mi amor*, Franco Parenti Theater, Milan, Italy (2017); *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (2017); *Art x Cuba, perspectives contemporaines depuis 1989*, Ludwig Forum fur Internationale Kunst, Aix-la-Chapelle, Germany (2017); *Overseas*, Halle 14, Center for Contemporary Art, Leipzig, Germany (2017); *Cuban art now*, Singer Museum, Laren, Netherlands (2017); *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950*, MFAH, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas (2017); *Wild Noise/Ruido Salvaje*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2017); *Q&A*, MDC Museum of Art and Design, Miami, Florida (2016); *Nido sin árbol*, Colegio de Arquitectos (UNAICC), Havana, Cuba (2016); *Cuban Forever Revisited*, Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, Ohio, Illinois (2016); *Transhumans*, CAB Art Center, Brussels, Belgium (2016); *Q&A*, Centre culturel de la Banque interaméricaine de développement (BID), Washington DC, Washington (2015); *Anclados en el territorio*, Galleria Continua, Havana, Cuba (2015); *Pour briser les murs*, Musée national des beaux-arts, Havana, Cuba (2013); *Musée Gulliver Freies*, Berlin, Germany (2012); *XII Biennale du Caire*, Cairo, Egypt (2010).

Alejandro Campins's work is part of numerous international public and private collections, including Fondazione Giuliani, Italy; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana; Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, Netherlands; Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP), Paris; Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, Ohio, United States; Daros - Latinamerica Collection, Zurich; Ella Cisneros Fontanals Collection; AMA Foundations, Chile; Jorge Pérez Collection, Miami; among others.

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