

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS DUBAI

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TENSIONE CONTINUA

CURATED BY CARLO FALCIANI

Adel Abdessemed, Ai Weiwei, Juan Araujo, Kader Attia, Massimo Bartolini, Hans Bellmer, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Alberto Burri, Marcelo Cidade, Jonathas De Andrade, Cai Guo-Qiang, Chen Zhen, Luigi Ghirri, Shilpa Gupta, Renato Guttuso, Zhanna Kadyrova, Anish Kapoor, Alicja Kwade, Quinto Martini, Sabrina Mezzaqui, Giorgio Morandi, Gina Pane, Giuseppe Penone, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Pontormo, Arcangelo Sassolino, Ettore Spalletti, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Francesco Vezzoli

23/09/2023 - 14/01/2023

Opening Saturday 23 September 2023, via del Castello 11, 4-9pm.
Until 14 January 2024.

The gallery is open from Monday to Sunday 10am - 1pm / 2pm - 7pm.

Galleria Continua is pleased to welcome in its spaces of the former cinema-theatre of San Gimignano, *Tensione Continua*, an exhibition curated by Carlo Falciani. Through the selection of a large number of works capable of a strong dialectic with the twentieth century and with the past, the curator develops a reflection on the theme of tension, studying it from different points of view: tension as a flow of energy, as a reaction of a body to an external force, as a state of excitement, but also as the perception of a social contrast and as the result of an intense intellectual

engagement. Falciani groups the works according to different conditions and around these he thinks of equivalent sections in which the works enter into a dialogue with each other in precise spaces of the gallery, chosen for their functionality and type of tension.

Some of the most authoritative figures on the international art scene are on display: Adel Abdessemed, Ai Weiwei, Juan Araujo, Kader Attia, Massimo Bartolini, Hans Bellmer, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Alberto Burri, Marcelo Cidade, Jonathas De Andrade, Cai Guo-Qiang, Chen

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"Tension is the first element that appears in many works present in Galleria Continua's archive which, since its beginning, has always involved artists who are attentive to social, aesthetic, contemplative tensions and who are capable of facilitating dialogue between local and global contexts in a vision that has a powerful humanity at its centre. Through a historical analysis and contemporary criticism lens, Galleria Continua's been most successful in its vision that is attentive to the local roots of each artist in a planetary perspective while keeping their expressive integrity intact" declares the curator.

From the critical text by Carlo Falciani, we extrapolate a passage that thoroughly explores the intentions of the curator: "(...) The itinerary of the exhibition is therefore divided into nuclei that are stylistically inhomogeneous and that have been chosen to represent different forms of tension. The first relates to the forces that rule the universe, the arcane forces of Nature that, although explained by science, remain capable of generating poetry in their effect on the life

of those who are subjected to them; this generates a deeper sensibility than that episodic expression connected to nature that is understood today through our communication system as only a theatre of sustainable development. As a symbol of an ancient origin of a different sentiment, simultaneously rational and poetic, Galileo Galilei's Sidereus Nuncius is exhibited, with its engravings of the phases of the moon set within a foundational text for the modern representation of the solar system. It is a text that symbolises a centuries-old journey of understanding but also of poetic reflection on the laws that regulate natural forces, laws that are similarly explored by Arcangelo Sassolino. The laws of nature are also recorded by the growth rings of the tree, dug in an action that goes back in time, by Giuseppe Penone, or represented by the remains of combustion that leave traces of galaxies and nebulae by Cai Guo Qiang.

Erotic tension as an expressive engine has equally ancient roots and is represented here by images and sculptures by Jonathas De Andrade; they incite a tension that focuses the gaze on parts of the body that are capable of taking over the mind and driving it towards an obsession. Obsession is similarly present in the photographs of Hans Bellmer and in the waxworks of Berlinde De Bruyckere.

The social tension shaking up our time is instead represented in the larger

space of the theatre. Here, the bewilderment of a society, which in the principles of the metaverse would be without class, lives immersed in the apparent sparkle of a time that advertising claims as luxurious and luminous but is actually harsh in the shattered Miroir du Monde by Kader Attia, funereal in the large sculpture by Ai Weiwei, and opaque and filled with the acrid smell of combustion in the sculptures by Adel Abdessemed. Expanding on this are works that reflect twentieth-century tensions, such as in Renato Guttuso's Partisan, in a Combustion by Alberto Burri, up to the state violence depicted by Marcelo Cidade. If social tension is the representation of a fracture of collective feeling, a work by Jacopo Pontormo, which represents the Sacrifice of Marco Curzio made to save Rome, symbolises precisely the sacrifice of the individual necessary for the salvation of the whole of society.

The last phase of the exhibition is instead dedicated to the highest degree of tension, the contemplative one, through which contingency is transcended, towards an overcoming of the existence of individuals, therefore of the physical body and, consequently, of its image in art. As in Michelangelo's Poems, exhibited among the works, earthly beauty can be the first step towards the contemplation of the absolute. In Francesco Vezzoli's work the emperor Adriano contemplates

Antinous, while the objects painted by Giorgio Morandi or photographed by Luigi Ghirri bear witness to an everyday contemplation. Nonetheless, if Michelangelo's words remind us that to move towards the absolute it is necessary to overcome the contingency of the body, the crystalline transfiguration of one's organs assembled by Chen Zhen at the point of death prepares us for the absence of any image in the absolute forms achieved by Ettore Spalletti, Massimo Bartolini and Hiroshi Sugimoto".

Carlo Falciani teaches History of Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence and is an independent curator. He studied at the University of Florence and was a fellow at Villa i Tatti, Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, and at the C.A.S.V.A of the National Gallery in Washington. He has published monographs on Rosso Fiorentino, on Pontormo, and essays on Renaissance and contemporary art. He curated: at the Jacquemart-André Museum in Paris the exhibition *Florence, portraits à la cour de Médicis*; at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence the trilogy *Bronzino, painter and poet at the Medici court*, 2010-2011, *Pontormo and Rosso, divergent ways of the manner*, 2014, *The sixteenth century in Florence*, 2017-2018; for the Metropolitan Museum of New York the exhibition *The Medici. Portraits and Politics*, 2021.

For further information on the exhibition and photographic material:

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