

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS

87 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris, France. Tuesday - Saturday 11am-7pm and by appointment
+33 (0)1 43 70 00 88 | www.galleriacontinua.com

IL EST ICI, TOUJOURS AILLEURS

Leila Alaoui, Alejandro Campins, Nikhil Chopra, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Anish Kapoor, Carlos Martiel, Ornaghi & Prestinari, Susana Pilar, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Kiki Smith, Marta Spagnoli, Pascale Marthine Tayou

07.07.2022 - 24.09.2022

GALLERIA CONTINUA / Paris is pleased to present the collective exhibition *Il est ici, toujours ailleurs* (*It's here, always elsewhere*), exploring through the works of twelve heterogeneous artists the paradoxical way in which certain concrete spaces can give life to utopic elsewhere.

GALLERIA CONTINUA proposes two thematic and complementary exhibitions in its spaces in France: *Il est ici, jamais ailleurs* (*It's here, never elsewhere*) at Les Moulins from June 26, 2022 and *Il est ici, toujours ailleurs* (*It's here, always elsewhere*) in Paris from July 7, 2022. These exhibitions wish to question, through the artists' works, the links present between the regimes of the visible and the invisible.

While the visible seems traditionally associated with the very materiality of the real and would thus place itself on the side of reason, being quantifiable and demonstrable; the regime of the invisible, on the other hand, seems to place itself on the side of feelings, of imagination - or even of superstition. However, this vision of a very marked antinomy between the two ways is not unanimous.

For some artists and thinkers, the relationships between them - rather than being a game of simple oppositions - are often intimately symbiotic. The two exhibitions *Il est ici, jamais ailleurs* and *Il est ici, toujours ailleurs* consider the question from this angle. To do this, they reference two short philosophical texts by Michel Foucault: *Le Corps utopique* and *Les Hétérotopies*¹, where Foucault begins from the etymology of the word utopia in order to develop his discourse. While the Greek word consists of the root τόπος, *tópos* ("place") and the Greek privative prefix ΟΥ-, *ou-*, and therefore means a place "in no place" and seems purely imaginary, Foucault undeniably

connects it to our body. "Utopia is a place outside of all places, but it is a place where I will have a body without a body"².

The Paris exhibition is punctuated by the text *Les Hétérotopies*, where Foucault takes the definition of utopia in order to study physical places that are very real, but which he considers fundamentally different. This newly created field of study, "heterotopology" from the Greek ἕτερος, *heteros* ("other"), thinks of these zones of rupture as counter-spaces when faced to the societal organization in which they are located. They constitute alternative places where the utopia can be realized and take shape; where the elsewhere can happen within our present. The exhibition *Il est ici, toujours ailleurs* proposes to explore the potentialities offered by these spaces well delimited in the real world but inhabited by the uncertain and the imaginary - as would be a child's cabin or a theater.

In the works of Marta Spagnoli, Berlinde De Bruyckere and Kiki Smith, it is first of all the human body itself that becomes a place of utopia. Marta Spagnoli's canvases narrate the ineffable, and reflect the vast interior spaces produced by the sensibility of the body. Complexity and physical fragility are thus represented through pictorial elements. The latter deny the evoked subjects as much as they make them appear, and the evanescent figures here seem to emerge from a myth or the universe of dreams.

At the same time, Kiki Smith's drawing offers us a body that extends like a bridge between ourselves and the cosmos. Behind a few tree trunks, the gaze of the female figure is turned towards the imaginary. Here, the skin - fragile border between the earth and the body - becomes the matrix of a harmonious narration where the real and the fantastic, the immobile and

1. Michel Foucault, *Le corps utopique, Les Hétérotopies*, Éditions Lignes, 2019
2. Ibid., p.10.

the floating, the universe and nature merge. Finally, in the small intimate room overlooking the courtyard, Berlinde De Bruyckere fills the atmosphere with a bitter romanticism. The sculpture that takes place plastically echoes our flesh. A game of complexion is offered to us in all its subtlety through the superposition of layers of wax, and highlights the depth of the body. The sculpture - taking the form of wood - mixes allusion to animal and vegetable nature and to the human flesh.

The elsewhere of the living world and the elsewhere of our lived bodies are embodied in the same form. The body - undeniable anchoring of our being in the moment - announces itself here as a door left open and capable of welcoming within it the multiple cries of the world.

In *Oceano* by Alejandro Campins, it is the painted landscapes that seem here to be immersed outside the present time. The representation shows here the forms of an exemplified nature. Several visions of real and dreamed landscapes are thus mixed, superimposed, and reduced to their essential characteristics to form veritable pictorial utopias making, by metonymy, an allusion to the vertiginous sublime of nature. In *Letargo*, these are bunkers that stand out in an astonishing way from their surroundings. Like cathedrals, these ceremonial war sites - icons of the military power and impotence of an era - remain present like concrete ghosts in European landscapes. Their strong materiality and their aggressive connotation show vibrant heterotopias in now peaceful natural landscapes.

The hybrid works of Nikhil Chopra, whose practice borders on performance, theatre, live art, sculpture, photography and drawing, remind us that heterotopia can juxtapose in a single place several incompatible spaces in reality. The artist thus invents landscapes using his own body as a trigger and creator. He enters his performances dressed in makeup and dressed in a costume thought out in its fragility, made of paper as in *Broken White IV Part 1*, *Broken White IV Part 2* and *Gedankenfreiheit*. This thin envelope is torn by following the movements of a persona that he embodies to reveal an intimacy, always at the border between the other and the self; in perpetual redefinition.

A *Poupée Pascale* by Pascale Marthine Tayou, for its part, shows a silhouette whose body is both visible and transparent, and tells a story of translucent flesh, which tends towards infinite hybridity. On the ceiling, the *Tornado* installation by the same artist, made of suspended metal sheets, reminds us of the violent force of change carried by the wind and the storm, while with the neon installations, the echo to the elsewhere is so entirely literary. With *Coloris*, repair and repetition create a playful transfiguration of the object through make-up.

The works of the Italian duo Ornaghi & Prestinari are inspired by elements of our daily life and forms inherited from the history of art and design to create poetic discrepancies in their works, resulting from the meeting of these two separate worlds. Each work is thus the product of a deep meditation, tests and corrections which testify to a strong interpenetration between artisanal know-how and artistic practice.

With *Green to Yellow to Gold satin* Anish Kapoor leads us to look at an enigmatic, open and limitless space through a play on the materiality of colors and on the physical properties of a reflective surface.

In a game of presence and absence, the broken mirrors of Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Two Less One colored* physically involve the visitor within the work and invite him to look at himself in a multiplied way in a space of revelation and of unknown. These mirrors project our image to infinity, suggesting endless possibilities of renewal, and revealing a purely abstract but clearly visible place, always on the edge of disappearance.

Heterotopia is thus often limited to a predefined space but also to a specific time, and in this sense implies a heterochrony where several moments can overlap within the same instant.

In the works of Susana Pilar and Carlos Martiel the present of the body evokes the past time of a violent history - known or unknown - as well as the future under construction - hoped or feared. In the basement of the gallery, the anchoring of the body in the reality of social contexts - in continuity as well as in opposition with the future and the past - is once again made concrete and alive.

GALLERIA CONTINUA invites you, through the works exhibited in *Il est ici, toujours ailleurs*, to explore reality through the prism of the multiple heterotopias embodied in bodies and places, in order to explore the present through the concrete and the abstract, the visible and the invisible.