

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS DUBAI

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# ANDRÉ KOMATSU

## ABYSS / ABISMO

20 April 2023 - 16 June 2023

Tuesday - Saturday 11am - 7pm

Galleria Continua is pleased to present for the first time in its exhibition spaces in Rome a **solo exhibition by André Komatsu**. A representative on the international scene of the young generation of Brazilian artists, he has **exhibited at important venues like the Bronx Museum in New York, the Drawing Room in London, the Brazilian Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, the Museu de arte de São Paulo, and the latest Aichi Triennial in Japan.**

**ABYSS/ABISMO** is the title of Komatsu's exhibition that consists of a **series of new works specially created for this solo exhibition, aimed at inducing a new level of awareness in the viewer, before taking them on an immersive journey.** "The concept of 'the abyss' is something that we will never be able to fully understand, a concept that opens up to the possible existence of other realities, utopian, dystopian.", says the artist. For Komatsu, **Yves Klein's work Leap into the void** is an important **source of inspiration and reason for reflection.** "In this work, the suspended figure, mid leap, leaves the image unfinished and without resolution. It represents **an alienation very close to that produced by the Brazilian political situation, led by a government that**

has chosen systems of destruction (**Necropolitics**) to shape minds and create systems of corruption.", continues the artist. The question arises, **are we rising to the surface or are we drowning?**

Komatsu describes his **work as a reflection of what he perceives** as he walks through streets and urban spaces. The **objects and materials** that converge to compose his artistic universe can be seen as **invitations to socially resist and appropriate territory.** His works remain in a constant state of tension, on the one hand tending towards a condition of **balance**, on the other resisting that balance. This is undermined by the artist's own effort, or the world's effort at overturning, breaking, disassembling or blowing up apparently solid structures. It is in this **shift between creative energy and entropy** that the beauty of Komatsu's work lies. The movement (real, potential or merely implicit) that characterizes various works, combined with the choice of common materials - fragments, abandoned objects, rubble - allows for a committed and ideological reading of his work.

Most of Komatsu's works require us to **change our point of view**, as

they are **open to various readings** and to be understood in different ways. If we take a step back and look at things from another angle, what at first seemed orderly turns out to be messy and what seemed chaotic finally reveals itself in its perfect logic.

In the main room of the gallery there are **several paintings; these new experiments titled *Sobre amanhã alvorada* (On the dawn of tomorrow) are the result of recent research** by the artist. The title is inspired by a phrase that Komatsu found in the **weekly news magazine *Manchete***, an old magazine that often wrote about **Brasília** and the construction of a dream: a **new capital bringing modernity**, a modern Brazil. The artist reappropriates this phrase to talk about Brazil, during the pandemic, and also in the midst of various health, political, economic and social crises. "At that moment", says Komatsu, "everyone was experiencing this dystopic feeling due to Covid and the political situation. In a way, I was reminded of realism and realist genre painting, a moment in which artists and painters began to portray the everyday: no longer the bourgeoisie, no longer the clergy, but they began to portray the ordinary and the everyday". **During the lockdown, the artist began to use this new technique and new way of making art as a tool with which to investigate.** The images in the paintings **portray the environment in which the artist is immersed:** glimpses of a dark and disturbing metropolis that reflects a dystopian state of mind and disbelief towards the future.

*Quimera* (4) is part of a series of works created with **portions of different coins which, assembled**

**together, make up a whole coin, a metaphor for a global reality dominated by market demand, manipulated information, augmented reality and fake news.** A train of thought that Komatsu has been pursuing since 2018 with his *Contrato Social* series, which consists of **newspaper heads partially covered in lead plates.** The two different materials within the work relate to each other, providing **two possible interpretations:** on the one hand a newspaper represents the spreading of information, it creates a basis from which to understand reality but also to maintain a status quo; on the other hand, lead - in this case folded almost like origami - is a material that is both protective and toxic. The lead sheet protects the information written in the newspaper but at the same time hides it.

*Dormente* is a wall installation made of steel and safety glass with a hanging chain attached. From a certain angle, you see the side of the chain that is new and shiny, but walking around the installation, you see the other side of the chain, rusted and ruined. Through the glass, each side of the chain is visible. **This relationship between glass and chain serves as a metaphor to talk about a social limit,** Komatsu explains, "since the end of the **Cold War** the world has started to change and the **understanding of limits and borders has changed.** It's not a physical barrier, but the **way the system shapes you to follow and obey, slowing you down and limiting you.** The chain here is one, but its body is divided in the middle into two parts. What divides the two sides is transparent and invisible; yet present".

He closes the exhibition with the

work *Untitled*, a work that alludes to how the idea of an economic **market is everywhere and alters our understanding of reality**. "The market in general corrupts ideals, desires and knowledge. The sentence written on the steel plate is inspired by a speech by **Marilena Chaui, a Brazilian thinker** who criticizes capitalist neoliberalism", the artist comments.

On the occasion of André Komatsu's exhibition, the **Brazilian Embassy in Rome is pleased to host a talk by the artist**. The meeting will be held on **Wednesday 19 April at the Guimarães Rosa Institute in Piazza Navona**, Auditorium Glauber Rocha from 16.00 to 17.00.

**To book**, contact: Veronica Siciliani Fendi Gallery Manager & Artist Liaison Galleria Continua [veronicasf@galleriacontinua.com](mailto:veronicasf@galleriacontinua.com), cell +39 3665499387.

**ANDRÉ KOMATSU** (1978, São Paulo, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo. Among his most recent solo exhibitions: *Noite Longa - Projeto Octógono*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2021); *Casual Order*, Futurdome, Milan; Italy (2018); *When the Sun Falls Down*, Cont(in)una Project/Galleria Continua, Beijing, China (2017); *Construction of Values*, Redbull Station, São Paulo, Brazil (2017); *Bolsa Pampulha Project*, Pampulha Museum, Belo Horizonte, Brazil (2006). He has participated in numerous group exhibitions including the Aichi Triennale, in Nagoya (2022); Santander Foundation, in Madrid (2019); Paglione D'Arte Contemporanea (PAC), in Milan (2018); Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, in Beijing (2017); Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP), in São Paulo (2017); Brazilian Museum of Sculpture and Ecology (MuBE), in São Paulo (2017); 56th Venice Biennale, Brazil Pavilion, in Venice (2015); Denver Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA),

Colorado (2015); Bronx Museum of Art, New York (2014); 10th Monterrey Biennial, Museum of Contemporary Art (MARCO), in Monterrey (2012); Museum of Contemporary Art (MOT), in Tokyo (2008).

Among the awards received: Marcantonio Vilaça National Industry Award for the visual arts (2011); Illy Art Cafè, in Arco, Madrid (2011); Bolsa Pampulha, in Belo Horizonte (2005); he was a finalist for the Future Generation Art Prize, in Kiev, Ukraine (2012). He has participated in artistic residencies at the Museu de Arte da Pampulha, in Belo Horizonte (2005), Museu de Arte do Bronx, in New York (2009), Matadero, in Madrid (2010).

His works are held in the collections of institutions such as TATE Modern, London; Museum of Modern Art of New York (MOMA), New York; Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo; Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA); Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) in Middlesbrough.

**Galleria Continua** is located inside the prestigious hotel **The St. Regis Rome**, where since 2018 it has presented works by international artists like Loris Cecchini, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Sun Yuan & Peng Yu, Hans Op De Beeck, and Ai Weiwei, to name a few. Together they also collaborate with the Città dell'Arte Fondazione Pistoletto with which they often host workshops and talks for school-age children. Since 2022, Galleria Continua has been an active part of Arte di Vivere, the festival dedicated to art, music and cuisine for the city of Rome organised by the St. Regis Rome.

Coming up next season, Galleria Continua and The St. Regis Rome are pleased to announce an Artists Residence which will involve young emerging artists.

**For further information on the exhibition and photographic material:**  
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