

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS

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PASCALE MARTHINE TAYOU

Update!

Opening: Saturday 31 May 2014, Via del Castello 11, 6pm–12 midnight
Until 30 August 2014, Monday–Saturday, 10am–1pm, 2–7pm

Update! is an artistic and initiatory project,

Update! to stir once again my interest in the permanent shock of mass culture,
a project like a large question mark over the imagination of a large world,
a project portrait of multiple-man, god-man, cult-man, man of rituals and taboos,

Update! like a visual disruption of beliefs and traditions,

plastic testimony that mixes sounds and images, forms and smells,

an Art-architecture constructed as a detector at the heart of current customs,

Update! is uncertainty, and is also and perhaps only incomprehension.

(Pascale Marthine Tayou)

With these words Pascale Marthine Tayou introduces *Update!*, the new solo show for Galleria Continua, where, besides a series of recent pieces, the artist is also presenting works conceived specifically for the exhibition spaces in San Gimignano's former cinema and theatre.

It is hard to find a definition to identify the poetic process activated by Tayou, perpetually suspended between the eccentric and colourful recounting of the everyday and the need to mix situations, human peculiarities and geographies. For the artist the work comes into being in close connection with life; the origins of the installations lie in personal experience and in the use of found materials or images, and relate to the continual circulation of individuals and objects in the world. The journey, the encounter, energy, spontaneity and chance play a fundamental role in it.

Pascale Marthine Tayou's exhibition for Galleria Continua explores the idea of the journey, and likewise the capacity to engage with a continually changing reality. Conscious that the notion of geography is becoming ever more mobile, the artist conceives the journey not only as a condition of life but also as a psychological dimension capable of subverting social relations, the symbolic, psychological, political and economic patterns of life. "Many of the people I have met think I am an "artist", but I think of myself more as a traveller. Ferrying a void and searching for nothing, a criminal of luxury in search of pleasures. I am insatiable, and I always want to reveal myself. Sometimes I conceal myself in my mirror, and often I break it, I shatter it. Mute every day, and every day that passes I hope to be the opposite of my Self in the mind of those who think they know who I am. It is a certainty that travelling is the hope of encountering the magic that hides the mysteries of human rationality." This was Tayou's response to a journalist's request to define the term 'journey'. In *Update!* the journey is

evoked by the postcards of *Menu Familial*, by the small French motorbike – *mobylette* – covered with African objects and materials, and again, by works like *Landscape o Terres Riches*, the oneiric and at once realistic representation of a rich and distant land.

Images of migration, untranslatability of cultures far removed one from the other, paradoxes and inventive solutions that arise within the ambit of processes of appropriation – these are the themes developed in the *Falling Houses*. These works gives us the image of a new and overturned world, a form of carnival where the poor become rich, where the children of Cameroon dress up in the costumes of figures from Western culture. The same happens in other works in the exhibition, for example in the prints on wood of *L'Ecole des Clowns* and in the *Poupées Pascale*, the result of a hybridization of different traditions: the European one, with the technique of blown glass, and the African one with the fetish form. The cultural mimesis wrought by Tayou starts from tribal identity and ends up offering a contemporary and global reading of the characters. Sophisticated and highly colourful, the *Poupées* are a bridge between spirit and matter; they represent a fluid space where geographic-cultural boundaries are erased in order to speak of sacredness and life.

In the context of mass culture, intermingling and anarchic development can lead to situations of crisis, creating problems that endanger the whole of humankind. Of these problematic issues, *Update!* brings to the fore the pollution of the planet, but also the exhausting of conflict-generating energy resources. The knotted “tentacles” of *Octopus* offer an apt metaphor of this. Despite these negative aspects, Tayou never ceases to remind us that the encounter is the reason and origin of life, and the artist does so with works that are authentic celebrations of life, articulations of the poetry and of the physical nature of amorous sentiment, such as *Graffiti Neon* and *Scene of Life*.

Born in Nkongsamba, Cameroon, in 1966, Pascale Marthine Tayou lives and works in Gent. The artist's work, besides mediating various cultures and placing humans and nature in relation to each other, is configured as a social, cultural and political construction. Tayou's works are composed through a process of accumulating heterogeneous elements. The environments created for the exhibition projects are absorbing and multi-coloured, packed with stimuli, visual prompts, thoughts, words and characters that trigger full-blown short circuits between imagination and reality.

Active since the middle of the 90s, the artist has taken part in important international exhibitions and events, from Documenta 11 (Kassel, 2002) and the Münsterland Skulptur Biennale (Münster, 2003) through to the Biennali of Istanbul (2003), Lyon (2005), Venice (2005 and 2009) and Havana (2006). The artist has shown in important museums and exhibition spaces around the world (the Kunsthalle in Vienna, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Grand Palais in Paris, the SFAI of San Francisco, the Talpiot Beit Benit Congress Centre in Jerusalem, Tate Britain in London, the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain in Toulouse and the Hayward Gallery in London), and has had solo exhibitions at: MACRO (Rome, 2004 and 2013), S.M.A.K. (Gent, Belgium, 2004), MART (Herford, Germany, 2005), Milton Keynes Gallery (Milton Keynes, UK, 2007), Château de Blandy-les-Tours (Blandy Les Tours, France, 2008), Benedengalerie Culturcentrum (Kortrijk, Belgium, 2009), the International Film Festival (Rotterdam, Holland, 2010), Malmö Konsthall (Malmö, Sweden, 2010), Gare Saint-Sauveur, lille3000 (Lille, France, 2010), Goethe Institut Johannesburg (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2010), MAC (Lyon, France, 2011), Mudam (Luxembourg, 2011), La Villette (Paris, 2013) and KUB (Bregenz, 2014).

For further information about the exhibition and for photographic material:

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