

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

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SERSE

ONDES TRACÉES

GALLERIA CONTINUA | Paris - From November 19, 2022

GALLERIA CONTINUA is pleased to present Serse's first solo exhibition in its Parisian space.

Depictions of the sea and water are central to the work of Serse, who was born in Venice and later chose Trieste as his adoptive home. At his studio in Trieste - a city that overlooks the Adriatic Sea and has historically been the beating heart of Central European culture - Serse grapples with the seemingly impossible task of conveying the fleeting and fickle nature of the sea, which is transitory and dynamic in form, reflection, and direction.

Serse applies the tangible medium of graphite to paper with extreme precision, allowing light and shadow to create detailed textures that mimic the silver bromide contained in old photographs, thus achieving the look of a photographic print or blurred screen.

Serse's preferred subjects are natural motifs, including mountain landscapes, cloudy skies, and still water. However, he is also inspired by fragments of architecture, geometric shapes, and the surface of the sea. To quote Riccardo Caldura, Serse is able to 'bring an element that changes incessantly by its very nature to the limits of the describable and recognisable'¹.

The vibrant seascapes depicted in *Riflessi d'Acqua* animate the evocative exhibition space at GALLERIA CONTINUA/Paris and echo the liveliness of the Marais district and

the historic rue Michel le Comte on the other side of a large window.

In the heart of this urban setting, Serse's landscapes lack a human presence, which is the measure of all things in Western artistic and philosophical traditions. Visitors are thus confronted with Serse's 'boundless' landscapes and, in doing so, are invited to view things from a new perspective.

What Lorand Hegyi describes as a 'radical self-referentiality'² - or a compact, concrete, irrefutable, and strict objectivity, combined with a lack of any sense of time - characterises Serse's representation of the total and definitive absence of references to anything other than the surface of the drawing itself. For Serse, 'the gigantic does not compete with the open eye, but with the closed eye. It is not a question of enlarging an image or increasing its size to render the invisible more visible. Instead, it is about imbuing the colossal with symbolic meaning and conveying the sense that we can look at markings on paper and recognise in them an inner immensity that belongs primarily to the soul'. These landscapes do not refer to anything external but to an inner immensity. They are landscapes of the soul.

Alongside the large drawings, the gallery is also exhibiting Serse's smaller formats, including his precious miniature series *Cartoline di Mare* (13 x 18 cm), to which the artist dedicated himself from 2017 to 2019.

¹Riccardo Caldura, press release for the Serse. *Cartoline di Mare* exhibition, Atrio Monumentale - Itis, Trieste, 2019.

²Lorand Hegyi, 'Enigma e Rivelazione. Il Disegno di Serse', p. 18-21, in *Serse. Geometriche dissolvenze*, Trieste, 2010, exhibition catalogue, Trieste, Ex Pescheria, 2010.

In this smaller series, a sublime vastness is also enclosed in an intimate, personal format that shrinks the physical and emotional distance between the viewer and the work. Reminiscent of romantic domestic painting in size and subject, the Cartoline di Mare series allows viewers to share Serse's sense of wonderment at nature.

As noted by Jérôme Sans³, in all of Serse's drawings, 'time seems to stand still, from the extreme precision of each line to the markedly figurative and silent nature of his chosen subjects'. Suspension and silence allow visitors to revisit states of mind that are no less fluid or difficult to describe than the striking drawings in front of them.

³Jérôme Sans, 'La transparencia del diamante. Jérôme Sans intervista Serse', p. 12-17, in *Serse. Geometriche*, Trieste, 2010, exhibition catalogue, Trieste, Ex Pescheria, 2010.

About the artist:

Serse was born in San Polo di Piave in 1952 and now lives and works in Trieste. Having rejected colour work, Serse focuses his artistic practice on graphite drawings on paper. The artist uses graphite to revisit themes and landscapes in contemporary art: the sea, aquatic surfaces, the reflection of plants on water, cloudy skies, tall mountains, snowy forests, and natural spaces that are devoid of humanity and are transformed by light and shadow.

According to Serse, graphite 'allows [me] to convey the tautological act of drawing and create artworks that do not hide the fact they are purely drawings'.

A selection of Serse's most recent solo exhibitions includes: *Qui tutto è aperto. Fogli d'Acqua* (St. Regis, Galleria Continua, Rome, 2020); *Water Veils* (Modern Studio, Shanghai, 2019); *Serse* (Tan Guobin Museum, Changsha, 2017); *Aquí todo está abierto. Nada es cercano, nada es lejano* (Museo Nacional De Bellas Artes, Havana, 2017); *Paysage Analogue dessins 1994-2014*, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Saint Étienne, 2014); *Serse - Koh-i-noor* (Museo d'Art Moderna e Contemporanea, Rimini, 2012); *Geometriche dissolvenze* (Ex Pescheria, Trieste, 2010).