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# YOAN CAPOTE / KAN XUAN

## Yoan Capote *Resonancias* Kan Xuan *New Middle Class*

Two solo shows by Yoan Capote and Kan Xuan at Associazione Barriera from 5 November - 3 December 2023. Opening: Sunday 05.11.2023, at 10.00-14.00  
In collaboration with Galleria Continua.

Associazione Barriera invites Galleria Continua to present two new solo shows, *Resonancias* by Yoan Capote, and *New Middle Class* by Kan Xuan, opening at Associazione Barriera in Turin, during the 2023 edition of Artissima.

### Yoan Capote *Resonancias*

The Britannica Dictionary definition of 'resonance' reads "a quality that makes something personally meaningful or important to someone." This intention is palpable in the works that make up this exhibition by Cuban artist Yoan Capote who is apparently and deeply connected to themes such as communication, identity, relating to one another, and the human body. His research often takes common materials, transforming them into tools with which to tell a story of specific context and people, often Cubans but not always, and subsequently causing a shared feeling of resonance with the viewer.

Materials like barbed wires or fish hooks are released of their aggression by taking away their sharp ends and returning them to their primary straight shape. The artist sees this as a purification of the object and its function. An obsessive and almost political action transforms handcuffs and wire into fragile lines that draw clouded skies and vast horizons, referring to a pursuit of liberty that is an intrinsic part of human nature. By these materials contributing to these contrasting images of sky and seascapes, the artist alludes to questions like the access to the ideals of hope, life, and liberty to construct landscapes of optimism. Yoan Capote is interested in the value of art as a tool for social or individual analysis. Often when depicting parts of the body he casts from real people. Works like *Speechless* are molded from the mouths of diverse unknown people. In the work, the interaction of the viewer is crucial in extracting tissues from the mouths, a material which will then be used, discarded and ignored. The work reflects on those who are not listened to. The means of communication of a message comes up many times: in a work like *Lacerating (my silence)* with the aid of a computer program, the artist cut into a sheet of stainless steel, visually replicating the exact pattern of his voice saying "SILENCIO", the edges of the work were then meticulously sharpened by hand, insinuating the violence that can result from resistive silence. Equally in works like *Impunidad* and *Demagogy*, the conveyance of a message is re-dimensioned by juxtaposing communication tools like a microphone with a deadly weapon or by turning the representation of an ear into a basin in which to wash one's hands of dirty residue.

### Kan Xuan *New Middle Class*

Kan Xuan's video and installation works often incorporate static objects and enduring landscapes. She is interested in exploring the relationship

between individuals' subjectivity and the external world, how these relationships form and dissolve, and if art making can provide ways to make new ones. Always starting from personal experience, as an artist she is particularly interested in interrogating the systems within which we live, and in the case of this exhibition, questioning the status of commodities in the global economy and the consumer culture that they contribute to.

In her art, objects and materials are manipulated, connecting to our shared visual vocabulary that is tied to social and economic aspects. Her works enable a visceral experience where aesthetic is interpreted through sight, touch, and sound. For her exhibition in *Barriera*, she will present *New Middle Class*, a video work in which various metal washers are strung together on an industrial crew-rod, spinning around repeatedly. The clinking metal washers softly drop; a brisk expression of emotions, they are quietly telling of how close we are to being imprisoned by while also conforming to the whims of our economic and social systems.

**Yoan Capote** was born in Pinar del Río, Cuba, in 1977. He graduated from the National School of Art in 1995 and from the Higher Institute of Art in Havana in 2001. He currently lives and works in Havana.

He has received distinctions such as the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (2006), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award (2006) and the Vermont Study Center Fellowship (2002). During the 7th Havana Biennial (2000), he received the UNESCO Prize, together with the DUPP artists' collective. His work was part of the group exhibition at the Cuban Pavilion of the 54th Venice Biennale (2011), as well as the Gwangju Biennale (2018), Chengdu Biennale (2021) and Biennale of Sydney (2022). A large-scale painting was exhibited in Art Basel Unlimited, 2022.

His work focuses on the examination of behaviors and psychological states (personal or collective), from the most intangible to the most visceral. His work reflects on shared or thematic conflicts where the identity of the individual subject, sometimes ceases to be important in order to be subordinated to a more global and collective reflection. He is interested in themes such as emigration, resistance, manipulation, stress, alienation, all of which are common experiences of contemporary human beings, regardless of their differences in context. Yoan Capote has achieved a recognisable personal stamp with his well-known paintings done with hooks, from the *Island* series, which illustrates some of these issues.

**Kan Xuan** was born in 1972 in Xuan Cheng, Anhui Province, China. lives and works in Beijing and Amsterdam. She graduated in Painting at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou.

Simple yet incisive, intelligent yet sensorial, Kan Xuan's artistic language seeks the tension and balance between narratives and poetics. Kan applies a sincere and inquisitive self to her practice, whether by examining the prosaic details of quotidian life or engaging complex historical topics, she spends long periods of time with her subjects, an approach that lends her work a unique and focused tempo against the ever-accelerating, overwhelming rush of contemporary life.

In 2014, she won the Best Artist prize of Chinese Contemporary Art Award and 2020 Artist of the Year of 14th Award of Art China. Her works are collected by major museums and institutions around the world, including the Guggenheim Museum in NYC, M+ Museum in Hong Kong, Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art of Oslo.

**Barriera** is a non-profit association for contemporary art, founded in 2007 in Turin by a group of art collectors. Through various initiatives, shows and events, the space creates opportunities for dialogue between artists, curators and collectors to prefer contamination from other cultural areas. *Barriera* promotes curatorial strategies aimed at encouraging young artists in research and directing the latter towards a production that responds to the specifics of the space starting from a process of sharing. *Barriera* is curated by Sergey Kantsedal and Yuliya Say.



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