ALMINE RECH

The Memory Palace.
Focus on the French art scene with the Marcel Duchamp Prize

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Art Safari, the most loved art event in Romania and Eastern Europe, will present 'The Memory Palace. Focus on the French art scene with the Marcel Duchamp Prize', curated by Daria de Beauvais, assisted by Lisa Colin.
The exhibition takes over the second floor of Art Safari, located in the Dacia-România Palace of The Bucharest Municipality Museum. Built in 1882 in the heart of the city, this palace full of memories and its successive uses represent a form of resilience for Romania's historical legacy.
'The Memory Palace. Focus on the French art scene with the Marcel Duchamp Prize', highlights a selection of eight artists and two duos of the French scene, from different generations and cultural backgrounds, who participated in the Marcel Duchamp Prize in the past fifteen years.

Ioana Ciocan, CEO Art Safari and Romanian commissioner at the Venice Biennale d'Arte: "After presenting in 2022 a major exhibition in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for the first time in Eastern Europe, it is an honor for Art Safari to exhibit the French contemporary art scene through the Marcel Duchamp Prize, a reminder of the close cultural connection and the constant artistic dialogue between France and Romania. We are so excited to present to our Romanian and international audience the French art of the moment next to contemporary Romanian art and the masters of 19th century Spanish art. In 2023, Art Safari will also host the „Love Stories" exhibition in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, London."

The prestigious Marcel Duchamp Prize is organized by the ADIAF, Association for the Diffusion of French Art, in partnership with the Centre Pompidou since the beginning. Each year, it distinguishes one laureate among four artists (French artists or artists living in France) working in the field of visual arts: installation, video, painting, photography, sculpture, performance etc. ADIAF has already organized 50 exhibitions around the 90 artists distinguished by their prize (laureates and nominated), including 20 at an international level.

Claude Bonnin, President of the ADIAF: "The ADIAF mission is to promote the French scene internationally, through exhibitions that we organize around the Marcel Duchamp Prize artists. I am looking forward to this meeting in Bucharest that will allow us to resume our international program after the pandemic. In the current context of uncertainty and war, art is essential, and we must emphasize the importance of this exhibition which reflects the spirit of our time and will allow a dialogue with our Romanian friends."

Julien Chiappone-Lucchesi, Advisor for Cooperation and Cultural Action and General Director of the French Institute in Romania: "We are proud to have contributed to the realization of this high-level exhibition, which offers the Romanian public an intelligent, poetic and daring journey in the company of wonderful artists active on the French contemporary scene.This original proposal by the curator Daria de Beauvais will undoubtedly be well remembered by the visitors. The history of artistic relations between France and Romania is very rich and I am glad that ADIAF and Art Safari are part of this long tradition as both of them are representatives of a dynamic and ambitious vision - more necessary than ever in Europe - in the service of dialogue, diversity and creation."

Daria de Beauvais, curator of the exhibition: "The ‘method of loci’, also known as ‘memory palace’, is an art of memory practiced since Antiquity. It is based on the memory of places already well known, to which we associate by various means the new elements we wish to memorize. It appears as a common thread that can accompany us throughout our lives, showing that the roots of the future lie in the past. "The Memory Palace" reveals how a selection of contemporary artists take hold of the past to reinterpret it, towards a hopeful future.

Some of these artists revisit the Western cultural history, for instance Farah Atassi with her vivid canvases, subjective visions of the 20th century history of painting, or Clément Cogitore whose reinterpretation of Rameau’s ‘Les Indes Galantes’ with krump dancers allows this 18th century opera-ballet to enter a new urban and political space. Others take a fresh look at crafts: Mircea Cantor thus imagines a monumental rosace made of used cans, using the technics of upcycling while combining Middle Age inspiration and contemporary consumer society. Daniel Dewar and Grégory Gicquel for their part question traditional wood sculpture, mixing different skills and life forms in their surrealist furniture.

It is also about creating bridges between the past and the future, with Katinka Bock filming the sinking of a boat full of stones, creating a landscape undetermined in space and time, or Enrique Ramírez’s neon stating in French that "The future never ceases to repeat itself, inseparable from the past.

Memory functions as a guiding thread in the exhibition, whether a ghostly memory with Tatiana Trouvé’s works, a historical memory with Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige’s geological cores extracted from Parisian cultural sites, or a political memory with Thu-Van Tran’s drawn clouds, delicate works evoking the tragic actions that can be done in wartime. Finally, Michel Blazy encourages time to do his work, and various plants grow freely above-ground.

Artists in "The Memory Palace" show that the present allows us to bring together the broken bonds of the past, to offer new readings in order to excise its traumas or on the contrary to revisit it for inspiration while different knowledge and know-how are put forward. These artists question our legacies, open the field of possibilities and invoke stories beyond human memory, in a perpetual renewal".