

Press release

## Jota Castro

### CAVE CANEM

#### Thursday 25 October 2018

7 pm Galleria Umberto Di Marino - Via Alabardieri 1, Naples

#### Friday 26 October 2018

6 pm Complex of Santa Maria delle Anime del Purgatorio ad Arco, Via Tribunali 39, Naples

8 pm Riot studio, Palazzo Marigliano, Via San Biagio dei Librai 39, Naples

#### Saturday 27 October 2018

10 am Church of San Giuseppe delle Scalze a Pontecorvo, Salita Pontecorvo, 65, Naples

12 am Castel Sant'Elmo, Via Tito Angelini, 22, Naples

**Galleria Umberto Di Marino** is pleased to present **Jota Castro's** new project in Naples entitled *Cave canem*. The wide-ranging solo show extends from the gallery space to the urban areas which have been the subject of shared reflection on territorial identity. Three days devoted to the opening of the event will involve **Castel Sant'Elmo, the hypogeum of Santa Maria delle Anime del Purgatorio ad Arco, the church of San Giuseppe delle Scalze a Pontecorvo and Riot Studio**, alternating between works which have played a crucial role in his career and new works.

Jota Castro is continuing to develop his footnotes on recent European history, this time by immersing himself in the heart of the city which he regards as an extraordinary social workshop for creating different viewpoints with respect to the conflict that underpins various parts of contemporary society.

Reinterpreting some of his works in the light of the places that house them involves bringing reflections on the crucial issues of our time closer to the daily lives of people who live in the territory, inverting the brutal language that has recently characterized the political debate by wrong-footing viewers, an effect that the artist's work has always had on the public.

The artistic investigation that he has carried out throughout the period he has worked with the gallery has been structured in a coherent socio-political and cultural analysis of the crisis, beginning from the evolution of the very idea of Europe rather than that of its institutions.

The themes of migration, the closure of frontiers and the advent of nationalist policies, following economic and fiscal pressures and cultural disintegration, have been identified by Jota Castro for many years now as an important wake-up call. This is due to the painful undermining of the dream of trans-national politics, the guarantor of human and civil rights, which nevertheless still continues to exert an ideological fascination.

The project of this exhibition starts from a gloomy landscape, full of false pomp and disfigured beauty, providing new interpretative frameworks for the phenomena it analyses. The site-specific works become harbingers of reflections that offer a space that still have imaginative potential in which it is possible to try to heal this collective wound and give back some substance and concreteness to what remains of our shared history.

The exhibition itinerary begins on **25 October** at **Galleria Umberto Di Marino** with the rock-hard solidity of steel which has played such a prominent role in the globalization of the 21st century: *Anyone who is not full of outrage at the situation we're currently in is a piece of shit (Chi non si indigna della situazione in cui ci troviamo è un pezzo di merda)* (2018) focuses on the mistaken conviction that we have overcome, through technology, the need for material resources which remain at the basis of new colonialism. These false impressions are also present in the traces of a historic performance at the Palais de Tokyo, *Discrimination day* (2005), in which all visitors who had never experienced discrimination were obstructed when entering the museum. In *Enjoy your travel* (2006), a site-specific work made for a previous exhibition and redisplayed for this show because of the urgent nature of its contents, the imaginary flight on the runway that ends outside the window to escape this political and social myopia is preceded by the act of breaking with the past through *Breaking Icons* (2004-2018), icons that have been such a prominent part of European identity for good or ill.

During the second phase of opening on **26 October**, similar ideas emerge in the space of the **hypogeum of Purgatorio ad Arco**, where 12 colourful butterflies, like the 12 stars of the European flag, are represented with precarious fragility, crushed by volcanic boulders from Vesuvius. *Refricare cicatricem* (2018) is a cry aimed at gifted young people who risk being oppressed by the past in their search for their own spaces of liberty and imagination. The installation begins with the frenetic rhythm of *Someone like me* (2018), the number of human lives lost in the Mediterranean in the last five years, a number which is unfortunately destined to rise at an alarming rate.

Wounds that remain impressed on the collective consciousness like tears in a flag, generating monsters and fears synthesized in the space of **Riot Studio**, followed on the same evening by *Would I lie to you?* (2018), two terrorized eyes that appear from the planks of the wooden floor. A gaze deprived of any control of its future, whose impotence we can all partly recognize, considering the small, extremely heavy marble tiles that make up the metre of problems of *Panem et Circenses* (2011). Once again, the artist invites us to search for new solutions, consigning to the scrap heap the burden of tradition as in *Library 01 (Biblioteca 01)* (2008), which contains fragments of crucial volumes about Neapolitan history and Mediterranean identity.

Similar feelings underpin the installations in the **church of San Giuseppe delle Scalze a Pontecorvo**, open to the public from the morning of **27 October**, where the gesture of leaning out to look at the future in a cot and finding one's own face, as in *Leche y Ceniza* (2008), makes us become aware of our responsibilities towards a world that we are leaving to new generations, dramatically marked by the borders that we inflict upon ourselves (*Borders*, 2006), by the respective dogmas with which we approach the debate on the consequences of climate change (*Kerigma*, 2010, previously on display at Museo MADRE in the group show *Transparencies (Trasparenze)*), and by the prejudices that accompany the encounter with new cultures (*Energy*, 2006). The artist's fears are also encapsulated in an extreme lyrical gesture which attempts to paper over a crack with gold, the material that symbolizes colonial history, without eventually succeeding in *Is it getting better?* (2018).

The works on display at **Castel Sant'Elmo**, which will be open to the public later that morning, try to break down the negative images linked to the theme of travel, as is clear in the garland of handcuffs which stand out against the city landscape in *May your light be eternal and your suffering transient (Possa la tua luce essere eterna e il tuo dolore transitorio)* (2018) and in *Because the life* (2008) with the twitching, crumpled faces of those who left, spurred on by hope. Jota Castro retrieves the symbolic dimension of crossing with the blue of the Mediterranean and the blood red of *Atardeceres rojos* and *Hope and blame* (2018) in the holy water fonts, while he obsessively tries to mend the fragments of the European flag until it is transformed into a single carpet of safety pins (*Jugaad*, 2013-2018).

Lastly, he entrusts the dream of a safe landing to the hands of dozens of people who folded the paper boats of *La Niña, la Pinta e la Santa Maria* (2009-2018, an installation that was also displayed at the 17th Biennale of Sydney), an invitation to rediscover an ideal state of innocence to be brought the new world that one is trying to construct.

**Jota Castro** was born in Lima, Peru in 1965 and lives and works in Brussels in Belgium.

Jota Castro is an artist and curator. His works have been displayed at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Kiasma Helsinki, the Venice Biennale and the Gwangju Biennale where he received the Biennale prize in 2004. He curated the "Pabellon de la Urgencia" for the 53rd and 55th Venice Biennale di Venezia and for Dublin Contemporary 2011.

His work has been exhibited at the Biennale of Sydney, the Uplands Gallery and Y3K Art Center at Melbourne, the Contemporary Art Museum Santiago del Cile, the Josee Bienvenu Gallery in New York, the Barbara Thumm Gallery in Berlin and at the Jumex Collection in Mexico, the Fondazione Helga de Alvear in Madrid, and the Galleria Massimo Minini in Brescia, Italy.

He has had three solo shows at the Galleria Umberto Di Marino: *Enjoy your travel* in 2006, *Memento mori* in 2011 and *Gemütlichkeit* in 2013.

The project has been organized in conjunction with the following institutions and organizations:



Complesso museale  
Santa Maria delle Anime  
del Purgatorio ad Arco

