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04

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From Wynwood to Medellín

GALERIE MIGHELA SHAMA

THOMAS LESIGNE
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We spoke with Mighela Shama, founder of Galerie Mighela Shama, a gallery based in a modernist building in the heart of Geneva that dedicates to supporting artists and creating a dialogue with its audience, while being fertile ground for sharing ideas and boosting cultural exchange.

Exhibiting in such a vivid environment allows us to create a unique dialogue between the works of our artists and the space. It also efficiently enables

To start, what's your background and how did you decide to open an art gallery?

I was privileged to be raised in a multi-national environment. Being Swiss and Italian with Egyptian, Syrian, Greek and Scottish roots, all gave me a favourable insight into multi-cultural exposure. After studying art and fashion, I began my career as a PR officer at Chanel in London and shortly after I joined their image department in Paris, working closely with Karl Lagerfeld and Eric Pfrunder.

Thereafter I moved to Geneva and founded Untitled Sculpture Studio, offering young artists the opportunity to work on clay modelling with live models. After a couple of years, the studio turned into the current Galerie Mighela Shama.

In the end, it is all about the relationship and the exchange with artists that made me want to pursue this path. Today I feel lucky working and living among many of them.

How do your exhibitions create a dialogue with the gallery's distinctive design?

The space definitely emanates several sources of inspiration and auras, including Japanese architecture with prominent wood design elements, and large sliding windows allowing a permanent and spectacular amount of natural light to permeate every corner of the gallery.

— I think — our collectors and visitors to project themselves or imagine the works we are presenting in their own interior or living space.

Moreover, this space is ultimately an invitation to exchange and discuss with our audience, given its warmth and conviviality. This is an essential and unique characteristic of the gallery's identity and one of the main reasons why I wanted to work in such an inspirational venue.

To be able to engage in exchange, interpretation and intervention, as well as sharing one's knowledge and opinions, takes on increasing significance and shows the cultural influence of what an art gallery can be in the 21st century.

How would you describe the program and vision of your gallery?

The gallery presents a diverse and comprehensive program of exhibitions aiming to showcase some of today's most exciting and emerging international artists. We represent multiple artists of different generations and backgrounds, working with a wide range of mediums including painting, sculpture, photography and printmaking.

In addition to continually featuring both Swiss and international artists with whom the gallery works on a longer-term basis, the space is also dedicated to welcoming artists during a year-round residency program, which runs along our exhibition activity. Recent artists' residencies include Karolina Orzelek, Thomas Lesigne and Poppy Jones.

By inviting artists to visit the city and its outskirts, Geneva becomes a catalyst for creativity. With this idea, Galerie Mighela Shama abandons the traditional artist representation model to develop an advanced approach to the gallery mission. Creative, intuitive, and pertinently supportive of artists' growth, the gallery increasingly enhances its interaction with the viewer, not only as a place of commerce and cultural enjoyment but also as a place of cultural production.



Galerie Mighela Shama, 2022. Photo Julien Gremaud.

Recent artists exhibited at the gallery include Charles Hascoët, Richard Burton, Yoora Lee, Poppy Jones, David Weishaar, Audrey Guttman, Chloe West and Johan Deckmann. Where and how do you find new artists to exhibit and what do you look for when considering a new artist for your gallery?

Building the gallery's program and considering new artists depends on different elements

including a lot of research, word of mouth and networking. Beyond the significant factors of consistency and quality in the work of each of our artists, there is definitely a drive towards bringing something new to the market as well. Ultimately, it's about my own reaction to the work, it's about trusting my instincts, as well as those of my collaborator Iraj Nabavi, who remains essential to the decision making process. I believe that being empowered by my team is indispensable for succeeding in this competitive business. I also find myself guided by the advice of a good friend who once told me: "Don't exhibit a work you wouldn't buy for yourself".

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Can you tell us a bit about your current/upcoming show?

Our current show presents an exciting combination of artists, some with whom we have

worked in the past and some newcomers. The show focuses on each of the artist's practices and the emotional connection that can be found between them, giving the spectator a sense of the process and true healing power of each individual work.

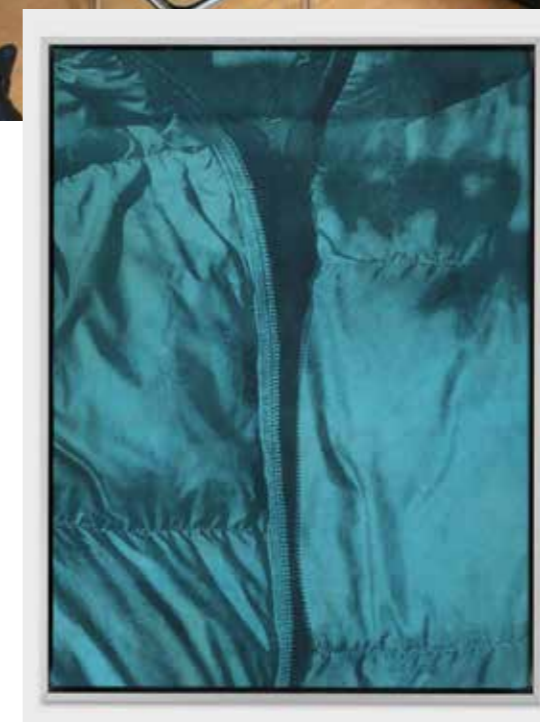
This collective exhibition, "Psychic Self-Defence", includes the work of artists Pepe Dominguez, Richard Burton, Chloe West, Dorian Büchi and Tomas Harker. Our upcoming show will take place on the occasion of the 2023

edition of the art fair artgenève (from 26 to 29 January in Palexpo, Geneva) and will feature a group show with new works by several of our represented and exhibited artists, including Richard Burton, Audrey Guttman, Tomas Harker, Charles Hascoët, Yoora Lee, David Weishaar and Chloe West.

Moreover, for its second participation in the international fair, the gallery will also present a solo exhibition by artist Poppy Jones, a graduate of the Royal College of Art.

Poppy Jones (B. 1985, London) finds her subjects in her daily life of the Sussex countryside. It's the familiar objects surrounding her that feeds her work. The artist starts with photographs that she transcribes into a fabric support (suede, silk or leather) painted with oil and watercolour and finally builds her own aluminium frames for each of her pieces. Her eyes captures the fragility of everyday life, the elusiveness of life,

leaving an imprint on the support that already seems to have a patina of time.



Poppy Jones, Personal/Past, 2022, Oil on suede, aluminium frame, 23 x 17.5 cm.

Our forthcoming exiting projects also include residencies of London-based artist Richard Burton in December 2022, as well as British American artist Madelynn Green, followed by a solo show of her works in spring 2023 at Galerie Mighela Shama.

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