



Comunicato Stampa

JOAN FONTCUBERTA - *Celestial Stories*

Inauguration

Saturday May 10th

5 PM to 8 PM

The artist will be present at the opening, with the curator **Mauro Zanchi**

Cartacea Galleria

Via San Tomaso, 25 - Bergamo

May 10th - July 5th



Élevage de poussière (Trauma#8904), 2022
Giclée prints 60x80cm on Hahnemühle Museum Etching paper Edition of 3 prints + 1 AP

Cartacea Galleria is pleased to announce *Celestial Stories*, an exhibition dedicated to **Joan Fontcuberta**, a leading artist and theorist in the field of conceptual photography, internationally recognised as one of the most important exponents of contemporary photography. With his works, Fontcuberta manages to create a visual universe in which the concepts of truth and fiction are closely intertwined, examining the persuasive power of the image and its veracity. The exhibition includes twelve works from a previously unpublished work, “The Milky Way” together with the legendary “Sputnik” project, thanks to which his work has become internationally renowned.

Among the most representative institutions where his work has been exhibited are: Folkwang Museum (Essen, 1987), MoMA (New York, 1989), IVAM (Valencia, 1992), Musée Redpath in Montreal (Canada, 1999), Miró Foundation (Palma de Mallorca, 2007), Australian Centre of Photography (Sydney, 2007), Fotografiemuseum (Amsterdam, 2010), Fotografins Hus (Stockholm, 2013), Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris 2014) and at the Science Museum (London, 2014). His work is part of important collections: MoMA and The MET (New York), the Art Institute of Chicago, the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Reina Sofía (Madrid), Centre Pompidou (Paris), MNCARS (Madrid), and MACBA (Barcelona), etc.

The Milky Way

As a reference to this project, Fontcuberta quotes Pablo Neruda, who composed “Ode to the Researcher” in which he describes the work of a cyclops with “one efficient eye”, someone who uses the microscope to observe and discover the mysteries hidden in the tiniest things: in his words, Neruda elevates the work of the laboratory technician to the grandiose level of epic poetry, showing how his efforts are fundamental in facing both life and death.

Neruda has a biological laboratory in mind, but it is easy to take the liberty of also thinking of the photographic laboratory, the dark womb in which the assaults of light and shadow are revealed. For the photographer, also endowed with a Cyclops eye, scrutinises life and death under the mantle of the Milky Way. More than the microscope, it is the camera that confirms the state of the world and its history. The photo lab becomes a crucible of memory, where the image remains as a trace of what we have been and struggled against. We will disappear, we will have loved, we will have devastated Hiroshima and Gaza. The Milky Way will continue to flicker.

The lockdown due to the Covid pandemic prompted the artist to review his archive and reinterpret his work, exploring his research projects and looking for connections between images that would suggest new narratives and poetics, i.e. that would go beyond their original interpretation. This transversality allows the author to interweave works that evoke many of the concepts around which his research has always oscillated: the ambiguity of the image and the construction of meaning, the conflict between document and invention, regimes of truth, the visual text and its expressive dimension, palimpsests and repentance, pareidolia and trompe-l'oeil. ‘The Milky Way’ is thus a project made up of projects that bring together different strategies and practices: conventional photographs, photograms (prints without a camera), photographs from scientific catalogues and satellite recordings, archive work, recovery of damaged photographs, acquisitions made with electronic microscopes, photo-realistic images generated with artificial intelligence... For instance, here we find works from the “Constellations” series (1993), which are direct prints of mosquitoes and other flying insects crashed on the windshield of the artist's car simulating nocturnal views of starry skies, with others from “Dust Culture” (2022), large enlargements of small surface fragments of old, mould-covered negatives that look like representations of the deep cosmos with its galactic nebulae. For all these reasons, “The Milky Way” can be considered, to a certain extent, a synthesis of all Fontcuberta's work. As he himself declared, should his death be announced, “The Milky Way” would constitute a kind of summary of his artistic testament.

Sputnik (1997)

is a masterful example of Joan Fontcuberta's artistic practice, in which fiction and documentary intertwine to question the way we perceive and believe history. Through the creation of the fictional Soviet cosmonaut Ivan Istochnikov and the support of a vast repertoire of archive materials - photographs, official documents, interviews - Fontcuberta demonstrates how easy it is to manipulate collective memory and rewrite the past. His work skilfully plays with the boundaries of truth, challenging the authority of photography and the media in the construction of reality. Sputnik particularly emphasises the dangers of blind trust in official narratives, especially in the context of Cold War secrecy and propaganda by addressing the issue of disappearance and the construction of a historical narrative between reality and imagination.

INFORMATION

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Exhibition Dates
From May 10th to July 5th 2025

Timetable
Thursday, Friday and Saturday
from 3 PM to 7 PM

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