



# JULIO LARRAZ

## VIAGGIO NELLA FANTASIA

CONTINI ART GALLERY – SAN MARCO 2288 – VENICE

*From October 20<sup>th</sup> to December 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018*

**EXTENDED THROUGH MARCH 3rd 2019**

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Cortina d'Ampezzo (BL): Piazza S. Franceschi, 1 – Tel. 0436.867400 / Cortina d'Ampezzo (BL): Piazza S. Franceschi, 7 – Tel. 0436.867156

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Galleria d'Arte Contini S.r.l. – Cap. Soc. € 51.480,00 - P.I. 02452380278 – C.C.I.A.A. n. 217827 – Trib. VE 34779 – Reg. Soc. 40374 vol.

Contini Art Gallery is delighted to present a solo show dedicated to the Cuban master, Julio Larraz. The exhibition will take place in Calle Larga XXII Marzo Venice, on view from Saturday October 20th, until December 22nd 2018.

For many years, Contini Art Gallery has proudly represented Julio Larraz, collaborating and fostering a lifelong relationship with one of the most important Latin American contemporary artists, whose work is prevalent among private art collections and art institutions worldwide.

This exhibition celebrates Larraz as a painter and sculptor, presenting a vast selection of works that show the progression of his life from his childhood in Cuba through to the U.S. and a lifetime of travelling. Larraz paints deeply layered satires of art and life. He is a visual philosopher interchanging reality and imagination. Without being hyper-realistic, fragments of scenes are revealed with abundant descriptions. His paintings are dominated by imposing landscapes, powerful seas, enigmatic space scenes, and elegant individuals wearing resplendent attire that call into question the meaning of beauty.

Julio Larraz is best known for a distinctive, almost metaphysical approach to painting, each work exemplifies the artists' master of dexterity through wide brushstrokes, exquisite use of color, and his unique way of seeing that lead him to create bewildering, surrealist images that recall reality and everyday life. Each artwork reveals his subtle touch and is a unique journey into Larraz's imagination where viewers are curious to interpret the visual metaphors.

Symbolism is key in Larraz's work, whether it be a mere detail or certain look or gaze in the eyes of a character in his painting, his art is progressively suggestive and allures the viewer into his oeuvre. At times it seems as though Larraz transmits his artistic energy into the characters on the canvas, as though he exists within their suspended thoughts and contradictions. As such, the viewer takes on both a contemplative and receptive role and is able to manifest a connection with both the artist and artwork.

The way in which Larraz frames his subjects is also important in understanding his pictorial language. Figures may appear deformed through color scheme or the application of paint, or through dilated proportions and inverted balances. Often Larraz will juxtapose objects with landscapes, contrasting reality with memory building dreamlike scenarios or apparitions, which appear to conceal intrinsic and profound meanings.

Though Larraz often alludes to the corruption of political and social power, the cropped compositions and obscured faces render the narratives of his paintings ambiguous. Concepts such as desire and the will to dominate manifest in a playful and at times grotesque fashion, and this pervasive sense of irony that echoes his early career as a caricaturist.

The Cuban master Julio Laraz is the undisputed master of realism, creating alienating and disquieting atmospheres, which are both poetic and profoundly real. Larraz conceives these works of art in his mind and manifests them in the physical realm, and once they are viewed, the viewer's imagination retains them forever.

### **Biography**

*Julio Larraz was born in Havana, Cuba, on March 12, 1944. His father Julio Fernandez, was a newspaper editor. Larraz began drawing at a very early age in his childhood. In 1961, the family left Cuba and moved to Miami, Florida, and the following year to New York, where Julio lived for five years. There he began to draw caricatures depicting current political and social affairs for major publishing houses, namely; "New York Times", "Washington Post", the "Chicago Tribune" and "Vogue" magazine. In 1967, he began to devote himself full time to painting. Larraz became acquainted with many artists in New York, including Burt Silverman, who taught him various painting techniques. In 1971, Pyramid Galleries hosted his first solo show in Washington. In 1972 Larraz exhibited at the New School for Social Research and a year later at the FAR Gallery, both in New York. In 1976, Julio Larraz won several awards of achievement from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters and in the same year obtained the Cintas scholarship from the Institute of International Education. A year later, fascinated by the light and atmosphere of the rugged hills of the Hondo Valley, Larraz moved to San Patricio, New Mexico. There he became acquainted with his future gallerist Ron Hall. In 1978, Larraz bought a house in Grandview, in the state of New York, where he met Nohra Haime who represented him at her New York gallery until 1994. In 1983, he moved to Paris for two years. A year later Larraz moved to Miami, Florida. After living in Florence for three years, he is currently living with his family in Miami, Florida.*

**The exhibition will inaugurate at Contini Gallery Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> 2018 at 6:30pm with special presence of the artist.**

**The exhibition will remain open every day, closing date March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018.**

**Opening hours: 10.30am-1pm to 2pm-7:30pm**

**CONTINI ART GALLERY**

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