



Mikhail Baryshnikov, *LFTD: Untitled #1, Argentina*, ca. 2014-2017, Archival UV Pigment Print on Dibond, ed. 1/3, cm 60.96 x 91.44

MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV

Looking for the Dance

Contini Art Gallery – Calle Larga XXII Marzo, San Marco 2414 Venice
May 6 – November 24, 2019

The Contini Art Gallery is pleased to present *Looking for the Dance*, an exhibition dedicated to the captivating photographic works of Russian-born artist Mikhail Baryshnikov. The exhibition – which will open on May 6 -

Venezia: San Marco, 2288 Calle Larga XXII Marzo - Tel. +39 041.5230357
Cortina d'Ampezzo (BL): Piazza S. Franceschi, 1- 7 – tel. +39 0436 867400

will be inaugurated on Saturday May 18, 2019 at the gallery's new location on Calle Larga XXII Marzo, San Marco 2414 in Venice. The artist will be present.

Known primarily as a dancer and theatrical artist, Mikhail Baryshnikov continues his restless exploration of dance photography. Bright colors and amorphous abstract figures capture the energy of dance in densely saturated images that vibrate with movement and emotion.

After the immense success of the exhibition *Dance This Way*, inaugurated in 2013 at the Contini Art Gallery in Venice, and its subsequent presentation at the Cortina d'Ampezzo location, Baryshnikov returns to Venice with his latest works, presented exclusively for the first time at the new exhibition space on the upscale street, Calle Larga XXII Marzo.

Alongside his earlier series *Dance This Way* and *Dominican Moves*, *Looking for the Dance* presents a series of dance images from Baryshnikov's travels in Argentina and India. The works depict the intimate essence of dance at its purest and most abstract.

In creating this series, Baryshnikov's eye gravitated to the colors, movements and emotions of dance. Sinuous *Odissi* dancers from the Nrityagram village in southern India exude harmony and spirituality, while the sensual compelling rhythms of tango flash from the gritty *Milonga* halls of Buenos Aires. Baryshnikov renders a metaphor for movement in blurry contours and frenzied figures that emanate energy and passion.

The artist's technical-artistic inspiration is derived from the hypnotizing dance imagery of Ilse Bing, the iconic ballet photographs of Alexey Brodovitch, and Irving Penn's groundbreaking work with dancer Alexandra Beller in *Dancer*, a book that proves movement can be crystallized in still images.

Biography

Born in 1948 a Riga in Latvia, Mikhail Baryshnikov is considered one of the most talented dancers of this era. After initiating his career at the Kirov Ballet Company in St. Petersburg, he left the Soviet Union in 1974 to dance with major ballet companies around the world including New York City Ballet where he worked with George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins. In 1980 he was named Artistic Director of American Ballet Theatre, which, in the following decade under his guidance, introduced a new generation of dancers and choreographers. Between 1990 and 2002, Baryshnikov was director and dancer with the White Oak Project, which he co-founded with choreographer Mark Morris – whose objective was to expand the repertoire and the visibility of American modern dance.

He has performed in numerous on and off- Broadway productions, as well as in television shows and films. For these performances he received a nomination for the Tony Award, the Drama Desk Award for *Metamorphosis* and an Oscar nomination for *The Turning Point*. Other theatrical productions include *Forbidden Christmas or The Doctor and the Patient*, *Beckett Shorts*, *In Paris*, *Man in a Case*, *The Old Woman* and *Letter to a Man*. He is currently involved in the theatre performance *Brodsky/Baryshnikov*, a solo

performance work inspired by the poetry of Joseph Brodsky and directed by Alvis Hermanis, as well as a collaboration with Jan Fabre on an art installation with film entitled *NOT ONCE*.

In 2005 he inaugurated the Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC) in New York City, a creative space for presenting and nurturing multidisciplinary artists from around the globe. Under his artistic leadership BAC programs have grown to support more than 800 artists and 20,000 spectators per year.

Amongst the many awards and honors Baryshnikov has received, most notable are the Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Honor, the Commonwealth Award, The Chubb Fellowship, the Jerome Robbins Award, and the Vilcek Award. In 2010 he was conferred Officer of the French Legion of Honor and in 2017 he received the prestigious Praemium Imperiale International Arts Award in Japan for the category of Theatre/Film.

His photographs - recognizable for their blurriness and amorphic forms that strive to reproduce the excitement of dancing – have been exhibited during festivals, and in museums and galleries world-wide. His works have been published in magazines such as *Aperture*, *Vanity Fair* and *New York Magazine*; they can be found in both public and private collections. His book, *Merce My Way* was released in 2008.

The exhibition will include approximately 40 photographs taken during the artist's extensive travel between 2009 and 2017, exploring dance from the street to the stage, from the Forró and Baile Charme of Brazil, to the magical Nrityagram dancers in southern India.

The exhibition will remain open daily from May 6 through November 24, 2019

Opening hours: 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. / 2:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The inauguration will take place on the 18th of May at 6:30 p.m. with the presence of the artist.

Contini Art Gallery

San Marco 2414
Calle Larga XXII Marzo
30124 Venezia

T. +39 041 237 8557

venezia2@continiarte.com

www.continiarte.com