

## A TRIBUTE TO JULIO LARRAZ



CONTINI ART GALLERY – CALLE LARGA XXII MARZO – VENICE

JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup> – OCTOBER 23<sup>RD</sup> 2016

The Contini Gallery is pleased to present the opening of the exhibition *“A Tribute to Julio Larraz”* to be held in its location in Venice on **Calle Larga XXII Marzo – Venice**.

**Julio Larraz** is a polyhedral artist, whose extraordinary creative geniality is the fruit of a mixture of linguistic expressions with roots firmly planted in the large artistic spectrum of Contemporary Art.

The compositional absolutism of his subjects that appear lacking any real dimension, recalls to mind the Surrealist and Metaphysical lessons of great masters, where the expression of a concept was entrusted to allegory, symbolism and to a dream-like world.

The apparent calmness, so characteristic of the seascapes as well as in the architecture (whether inhabited or not), echoes the anguish, but also the delicateness of American realism. The solitude of the scenery suggests the idea of a space to lose oneself in, nevermore to be found again.

The professional past of Larraz, whose caricatures were published in important magazines, has contributed to foment his sense of irony towards the world of politics.

The sharp-edge in his painting is most certainly influenced by the suffered and intricate political situation of his native Cuba. The obsessions and weaknesses of powerful men and women are

revealed through dilated proportions, overturned equilibriums, all evinced through intense unreal images.

Beyond the variety and diversity of his themes, which are never repetitious, what strikes us the most in Larraz' works is the use of color: through an ample field of hues, he conveys the illusion of the tangibility of his subjects; he confers an autonomous and active role to their corporeality. This expressive language, singular, visionary and imaginary – which all his works have in common – generates in the viewer a sense of waiting for something unexpressed.

*Julio Larraz was born in Havana, Cuba on March 12, 1944. The son of Julio Fernandez, a newspaper editor, he began to design at an early age. In 1961, the family left Cuba for Miami, Florida and the following year they moved to New York where Julio would live for the next five years. It was here that he began to realize politically-oriented caricatures that were published in the New York Times, The Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune and Vogue magazine, just to name a few. In 1967 he began to dedicate himself full-time to a career in painting. Larraz credits a number of New York artists – particularly Burt Silverman – to having taught him various pictorial techniques.*

*The year 1971 is the year of his first solo exhibition at the Pyramid Galleries of Washington. D.C. In 1972 Larraz holds a show at the New School for Social Research and a year later at the FAR Gallery, both in New York. In 1976 Julio Larraz was awarded prizes from the American Academy of Arts and Letters as well as from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. In that same year, Larraz moved to San Patricio in New Mexico fascinated by the light and atmosphere of the rugged hills of the Hondo Valley. It was here that he met Texas gallery dealer Ron Hall, who in the future would become his agent. In 1978, Larraz purchased a home in Grandview, New York where he was later introduced to Nohra Haime, whose gallery would represent him until 1994.*

*In 1983 Larraz moved to Paris where he would reside for two years. He later moved to Miami in Florida.*

*The artist with his ironic style, gives us an insight of his harsh criticism through his burlesque portraits which are hostile towards any type of tyranny, abuse of power, or injustice in an obscure, but playful moral protest. The varied nature of his paintings embraces numerous themes from politics to landscapes, to women (one of his preferred themes). In his works, many cultural references are made towards his native Cuba and to Surrealism. Julio Larraz owes his notoriety to a precise technique with an emphasis on details, to his vivid imagination, and to his delicate touch, three elements that have contributed to his being one of the most important Latin American artists in the world of Contemporary Art. Since 2005 he has collaborated with Contini Art Gallery, with locations in both Venice and Cortina d'Ampezzo. After having lived in Florence for three years, Larraz currently resides in Miami, Florida.*

**Galleria d'Arte Contini / Contini Art Gallery**

**San Marco 2288 - Calle Larga XXII Marzo - Venice**

**Inauguration on Saturday, June 18 2016 with the presence of the artist.**

**The exhibition will remain open through October 23rd 2016**

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

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**Catalogue available in the gallery.**