

Matèria

Maimouna Guerresi

La Création du Monde

19.10.2024 -
11.01.2025

Opening on Saturday October 19, Matèria is pleased to present *La Création du Monde*, Maimouna Guerresi's second solo exhibition at the gallery, her first after joining as a represented artist. A celebrated multimedia artist, Guerresi's work has garnered international acclaim for its profound exploration of spirituality and cultural hybridity. Spanning multiple decades of production, *La Création du Monde* offers a profound journey through Guerresi's artistic practice, showcasing her unique blend of photographs, sculptures, moving-image, and works on paper.

The exhibition takes its title from a newly produced video, making its debut at the gallery, inspired by an ancient Dogon oral tale, transcribed into French by anthropologist Marcel Griaule and featured in Makhily Gassama's book *Kuma*. The video's poetic narration, translated into Wolof, a traditional Senegalese language, highlights the deep phonemic and cultural ties between Wolof and ancient Egyptian, as underscored by anthropologist Cheik Anta Diop. Diop posited that the ancient Egyptian language marked the cultural beginnings of Black Africa and served as the foundation for Mediterranean civilizations, influencing Greek and Roman philosophers. This cultural connection, however, was later obscured and forgotten by the West.

The exhibition opens with *Colonna Minareto*, a white iron structure evoking the spiritual act of prayer through the presence of shoes, a symbol of the physicality needed to access the divine. Moving deeper into the gallery, visitors encounter *Terracotta Carpets*, whose clay surfaces carry imprints of lace and feet, summoning a space where birth, prayer, and death intersect, grounding the human body in both the physical and spiritual realms.

The Golden Door, a large-scale photograph part of Guerresi's acclaimed series *The Giants* - inspired by mystical figures from Muslim Africa - features a figure draped in a voluminous mantle, outlining the form of an absent body—an absence that becomes presence through a void. This void is infinite, empty of spatial and temporal dimensions, vibrating with a quantum energy that draws in those who are attuned to it, inviting them to deepen their inner knowledge. Behind the figure stands a golden door, echoing the architectural shape of the mantle and creating an atmosphere of metaphysical suspension.

In her complex photographic polyptych *The blue table, light salt*, women dressed in shades of black and pink sit before a surreal banquet, examining grains of salt as if they were jewels. This symbolic gathering becomes a quiet meditation on isolation and togetherness, suspended in a moment of metaphysical stillness reminiscent of Renaissance compositions. Adding a celestial dimension to Guerresi's exploration of birth, femininity, and cosmic creation.

La Via Lattea - a key installation from the year 2000 - captures her mystical vision through an arrangement of numerous small white ceramic nipples forming the milky way, that according to mythology, originated from a spray of breast milk from the goddess Juno while she nursed Hercules.

The recurring themes that have preoccupied and inspired Maimouna Guerresi throughout her career guide the viewer's journey, culminating in the video *La Création du Monde*. In this work, floating plastic bags—normally inert and discarded—take on new life, moving as celestial bodies in a cosmic dance. The interplay of light and shadow, along with the poetic Wolof narration, lends the piece a hypnotic, otherworldly rhythm. The voice in the video is that of N'Goné Fall, an independent curator and consultant in cultural policies, whose vocal contribution enhances the tonal transitions of the scenes, further deepening their resonance.

Through her seamless fusion of the earthly and the cosmic, Guerresi creates a space for contemplation that transcends the visual, leaving behind a silent but powerful meditation on the universal human condition, faith, and transformation. As we engage with these profound themes, we are invited to reflect on the shared narratives that bind us all—a call to reconnect with the richness of our collective history and to honor the voices that have crafted our understanding of existence.

Maimouna Guerresi is a multimedia artist whose practice encompasses photography, sculpture, video, and installation. Her work explores the spiritual dimensions of humanity, offering a tender view of our inner mystical connections. Guerresi's narratives unfold fluidly, transcending psychological, cultural, and political divides, while emphasizing a shared humanity. Her figures and scenes transform the individual into a sacred space, revealing profound truths about community and the soul.

Guerresi has exhibited extensively across Europe, Africa, the U.S., Asia, and the Middle East.

Notably, her work has been featured at the Venice Biennale (1982, 1986) and Documenta K18 (1987), as well as in major institutions like the National Museum of Bamako, Kiasma Museum in Helsinki, I.M.A. in Paris, New Orleans Museum of Art, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. She is internationally represented by Mariane Ibrahim Gallery and has collaborated with several prestigious museums, including the Royal Ontario Museum, Aga Khan Museum, Fotografiska Museum Shanghai, and Tate Modern in London.

Her works are part of prestigious collections around the world, such as the LACMA in Los Angeles, Palazzo Forti in Verona, MIA in Minneapolis, and Hood Museum of Art. For over two decades, Guerresi has focused on empowering women and fostering connections among diverse cultures, celebrating our shared humanity beyond boundaries.

Based in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Rome, Matèria opened its doors to the public in 2015. The gallery proposes an exhibition programme that touches upon all aspects of Contemporary Art. Since its founding, Matèria's purpose has been the furthering and development of the work of its selected group of Artists. The gallery programme features four exhibitions per calendar year, conceived and produced directly with its artists and often in dialogue with the space through a site specific approach. Matèria's gallery shows strive to further the research and experimentation aspects of artistic practice, with the results of this approach often showcased in a growing list of Italian and international art fairs.

Matèria represents the work of Fabio Barile, Karen Knorr, Mario Cresci, Chen Xiaoyi, Giuseppe De Mattia, Sunil Gupta, Marta Mancini, Joachim Lenz, Francisca Valador, Stefano Canto, Bekhbaatar Enkhtur, Eduardo Fonseca e Silva and Maimouna Guerresi.

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La Création du Monde

19 October 2024 - 11 January 2025

Matèria | Via dei Latini,27 - Roma

materiagallery.com

Matèria

Hours
From Tuesday to Friday
from 1 pm to 8 pm

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