

M A R Y B O O N E G A L L E R Y
745 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10151. 212.752.2929

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE

On 5 May 2012 Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Chelsea location *Nostalgia/Utopia*, an exhibition of new works by FRANCESCO CLEMENTE.

The foundation of Francesco Clemente's work is the belief in the objectivity of imagination, radically different from the arbitrary and sentimental fantasy promoted by a materialistic society. His work aims at recording a consciousness in flux, where the only constant factor can be described as the continuity of discontinuity. Clemente believes in the hermetic tenet: "as above so below". The strategy of his work is nomadic and syncretic, drawing on a variety of cultures, to indicate a commonality of experience.

For the current exhibition, Clemente continues his masterful interlacing of disparate images, materials, and cultures that reflect many locations where he has lived and worked. The paintings run autonomously through Colonial Baroque, Afro-Brazilian, Indian, and urban American iconography. Deftly painted imagined scenes and figures co-exist with real sculptural objects affixed to the canvas surface. Each work exists outside of specific reference to place or time.

Although individual motifs of Clemente's paintings can be linked to influences of his peripatetic lifestyle and spiritual exploration, the precise reading of any work remains elusive. In one, an African mask at the center of a radiant sunflower sheds a string of pearl tears. Another painting exhibits strands of rainbow-hued barbed wire stretched across a painted quilt or tile pattern; this spectrum appears again in a work in which brightly painted transistor radios sit in a row atop an enigmatic image comprised of quilts, ladders, crescent moons, and collaged fragments of Piranesi prints. Each element – mysterious and rich in associations – is free to form new and surprising relationships.

Also included in the exhibition is a new series of eighteen gouache and sanguine drawings. These intimate works function as a sourcebook of ideas expanded upon in the paintings.

The exhibition, at 541 West 24 Street, will continue through 30 June 2012. A fully-illustrated catalogue with text by Peter Lamborn Wilson will be available at the Gallery. For additional information, please contact Ron Warren at the Gallery, or visit www.maryboonegallery.com.