



JOSE-MARIA CUNDIN
reception may 3rd 6 - 8 pm

DÉJÀ VU

Callan Contemporary is pleased to announce *Déjà Vu*, a 30-year survey of paintings by internationally acclaimed artist José-Maria Cundin. The exhibition focuses on abstract works from the mid-1990s to 2025, highlighting the evolution of Cundin's evocative forms and vivid, luminous color. Born in the Basque Country of northern Spain in 1938, he was exposed from an early age to the chiaroscuro and complex color relationships of Spanish Baroque painting. When, at eighteen, he traveled to Colombia on an art scholarship, he was struck by the "free, powerful, uninhibited colors" and radically different quality of light he encountered there. "The light in Cartagena," he reflects, "struck me like a phenomenon. It was explosive, conspicuous, impertinent! Then I went to Bogotá, and the light was filtered—very fine and soft." In his paintings, he has integrated these varied moods of light, value, and saturation into an instantly recognizable style, which marries the richly symbolic chromaticism of the Old World with the exuberant directness of the New.

Although his scholarship's duration was only three months, Cundin remained in Colombia for two years before moving in 1958 to New York City, then at the peak of its post-War flowering. Later he lived, painted, sculpted, and taught in Mexico, France, Belgium, Miami, and New Orleans, where he has been based since 1964. The artistic and cultural traditions of these diverse locales filtered into his aesthetic sensibility, imbuing his work with a cosmopolitan sophistication and subtly subversive wit. Prized by private, corporate, and institutional collectors and widely exhibited across Europe and the Americas, his work is included in the permanent collections of the Museo de Bellas Artes (Bilbao, Spain), Artium Museum (Vitoria, Spain), Museo de Antioquia (Medellín, Colombia), New Orleans Museum of Art, and Johnson & Wales University (Providence, Rhode Island). This summer his paintings and sculpture will be featured in the exhibition *Refreshing America* at the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans.

Déjà Vu, his tenth solo exhibition with Callan Contemporary, explores his uniquely sculptural approach to abstraction. The organic forms in his compositions appear to float in three-dimensional space and cast shadows, as if illuminated by real-life light sources. The illusions of volume and depth suggest the uncanny possibility of abstract shapes hovering in physical space. In some pieces, gold leaf, painted frames, and text complement the enigmatic forms. In his Folsom studio, Cundin mixes his own paints from raw pigment and linseed oil, conjuring the hues of sky and sea; warm reds; pastels; and earth tones, which coalesce in the glowing, enveloping presence of his finished works. Unexpected combinations of color and form, united by a deep knowledge of art history, are common threads across diverse series and subject matter. This survey, with its focus on a fertile, 30-year span of creative output, offers a rare glimpse into the artistic vision and stylistic development of a modern-day Spanish master.

Richard Speer

RECEPTION: SATURDAY, MAY 3RD 6–8 PM

EXHIBITION DATES: MAY 1ST - JUNE 28TH, 2025



José-María Cundín in his studio in Folsom, Louisiana

Front cover:

The Nocturnal Philanthropist (A Benevolent Delinquent from my Village)
2008, oil on linen, 50" x 44"



Spanish Lady with an Excellent Pedigree, 2008, oil on linen, 52" x 58"



Gomez the Lawyer, 2008, oil on linen, 50" x 44"



The Investigator, 1998, oil on canvas, 68" x 58"



The Coveter, 2013, oil on linen, 60" x 52"

CALLAN CONTEMPORARY

518 Julia Street | New Orleans, LA 70130



Gomez the Lawyer (detail), oil on linen, 50" x 44"

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