

WIDEWALLS

A Meditation Upon the Restless Journey - New Francesco Clemente Work in a Double Show

by Elena Martinique
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Francesco Clemente - *India II* (detail), 2019. Oil on canvas, 96 x 92 inches (243.8 x 233.7 cm). © Francesco Clemente; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Projects.

A contemporary Italian-born and American-based artist, Francesco Clemente is celebrated for his distinctive sense of color and his deeply personal visual lexicon that subsumes eclectic narratives, rituals, ideas, and symbols. Working across oil painting, installation, and watercolor, he seeks to collect images and references from different contemplative traditions and connect them with the emotions from the present-day, and common experiences.

Clemente's latest body of work will be on view at Vito Schnabel Gallery in a pair of parallel solo exhibitions in the United States and Switzerland. Both shows, titled *Francesco Clemente: India* and *Francesco Clemente: Clouds*, will present new paintings and frescoes - boldly expressive, large-scale

works that comprise a meditation upon the restless physical and spiritual journey that has shaped the course of the artist's acclaimed four-decade career.

India

The body of works featured at Vito Schnabel Projects in New York is a continuation of Francesco Clemente's lifelong dialogue with the cultural and artistic practices of India. A series of monumental canvases painted in a sensual palette of understated earthen hues, these works combine the country's geographic borders with symbols that draw from the itinerant experiences of Clemente's life, and from his passion for paradox and metamorphosis.



Francesco Clemente - *India III*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 96 x 92 inches (243.8 x 233.7 cm). © Francesco Clemente; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Projects



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These four colossal paintings represented in different ways – one painting combines a field of pink flowers with white skulls surrounding the outline of the nation; another work shows the map of India covered by waves and inhabited by fish; the third depicts it as an apparition in the sky; while the fourth painting depicts a haunting female figure dressed in a traditional sari and rendered with hollow white eyes, inhabiting and animating the country's distinctive shape.

Clouds

The exhibition in St. Moritz, on the other hand, features a body of work which references mystical and celestial themes and allude to histories in the tradition of painting itself. Examining the value of clouds and the laden symbolism of this trans-historical motif, Clemente fosters an exchange between sensuality and spirituality, eroticism and ecstasy. Featuring depictions of large cumulus clouds, these works are characterized by soft washes of color and dynamic strokes of the brush.

The show will also present six frescoes from the series *Aspects of the Moon*, where the artist returns to a classical medium and technique with allegorical and mythological narratives and charged, intimate, sensual, and at times, grotesque expressive imagery.

Francesco Clemente Exhibitions at Vito Schnabel

Throughout his career, Francesco Clemente has forged a unique oeuvre rich in references and often charged with eroticism and intimacy, exploring, the metaphysics of spirituality, mysticism, identity, and the self.

The exhibition *Francesco Clemente: India* will be on view at Vito Schnabel Projects in New York City from November 8, 2019 until January 17, 2020. The opening reception will be held on November 8, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Francesco Clemente: Clouds will be on view at Vito Schnabel Gallery in St. Moritz, Switzerland from December 17, 2019 until February 2, 2020. The opening reception will be held on December 27, from 6 to 8 p.m.

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE



Francesco Clemente - *Clouds III*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 71 x 87 inches (180.3 x 221 cm). © Francesco Clemente; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery



Francesco Clemente - *Clouds I*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 71 x 87 inches (180.3 x 221 cm). © Francesco Clemente; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery