

Gaëlle Choisne *Exhale/Inhale*

kaufmann repetto is pleased to present Gaëlle Choisne, *Inhale/Exhale* and *Exhale/Inhale*, two mirrored exhibitions opening at kaufmann repetto New York on November 7 and at kaufmann repetto Milan on November 20. Conceived as a diptych, the projects take the movement of breathing as structure and motif, moving between interiority and openness.

In New York, *Inhale* takes its cue from the words "I can't breathe" not just as a slogan but as a measure of the air we share, evoking the physical, social, and political suffocation caused by police violence, notably the death of George Floyd in 2020. In a world that has become unbreathable for many, *Inhale* creates a place of respite and reconnection. In the words of the artist, "breathing has become a luxury, a spiritual wealth too often denied to those living under oppression or fear." In Milan, *Exhale* carries this attention outward, proposing a meditative letting-go that returns attention to the body and to others.

Born in France to a Haitian mother and Breton father, Gaëlle Choisne draws on Caribbean lineages, oral traditions, and Creole cosmologies, bringing them into conversation with contemporary social and environmental urgencies. Rooted in this Haitian ancestry and diasporic knowledge, *Inhale/Exhale* bridges cultures and temporalities, proposing breath as a shared practice of repair and a way of linking communities. Together, the exhibitions trace a single arc of purification, a modest rite for learning again to move through the world with awareness and reciprocity.

Choisne's environments gather sculpture, image, scent, and found matter into charged constellations that oscillate between the domestic and the cosmic. At the core of *Inhale* in New York, a large *Charm for Humanity* folds lavender, coarse salt, and dried herbs into textiles, reactivating materials historically used for cleansing and protection, while a family of ceramic *Boudoirs* nearby offers small, contemplative zones for stillness and repair. Historically, boudoirs were spaces of gathering and exchange among women, sites of intimacy and resistance; here they serve as open sanctuaries for vulnerability, care, and reflection. Cigarettes appear occasionally like quiet provocations, a pointed note on toxicity and the illusion of release. A hand-built brass mesh, *Corps Éthérique*, draws a visible yet passable line through the space, it runs through the room as a porous threshold: a filter for perspectives and energies, a line that conducts rather than divides.

Across both Milan and New York, new works from *Safe Space for a Passing History* develop the artist's collaged "scrap-paintings," where photographs, talismans, and textual fragments are layered onto reclaimed wooden panels, repurposed from the shipping crates of her earlier installations. These surfaces operate like moodboards for thought, sites where disparate histories and memories converge. Rather than illustrating a single narrative, they hold multiple temporalities at once - anti-colonial and abolitionist histories, Indigenous guardianship of knowledge, and popular culture as a communal balm - mapping networks of resilience and transformation. Profoundly influenced by the work of British author and critic Ekwon Eshun and Pan-Africanist Nioussérê Kalala Omotunde, Gaëlle Choisne is also driven by a desire for reparation: "I connect with an energy, I channel messages from other worlds to create new temporal lines of healing and make our planet healthier."

In Milan, the sequence centers on the diptych *Safe Space for a Passing History - Ère du Verseau 999 (Long Story First)*, first presented at the Centre Pompidou in 2024 on the occasion of Choïsne's Marcel Duchamp Prize, where her installation explored astrological imaginaries as engines for rupture. The *Boudoirs* ceramics recur in both cities; the Milan iterations were developed during the artist's 2025 residency at Scuola Piccola Zattere in Venice, where production was embedded in local craft networks. In the same context, Choïsne collaborated with Venetian glassmakers on *I hear my heart in your ear*, a lamp inspired by the city's iconic lampposts – folding neighborhood know-how, daily rhythms, and material vernacular directly into the exhibition's meditative cadence.

If *Inhale* turns inward, *Exhale* releases that charge into motion, tracing the delicate continuum between tension and rest. The two chapters form an ecology of gestures—spatial, spiritual, and emotional—through which Choïsne imagines her practice as a means of healing, connection, and balance. They honor the Yanomami and Indigenous peoples as guardians of land and breath, and they align with human and spiritual forces working toward freedom, peace, and repair. Across both sites, breathing itself becomes form: a disciplined pacing that involves care, attention, and reciprocity – an invitation to breathe with, and for, one another.

Gaëlle Choïsne (b. 1985, Cherbourg, France) has exhibited at institutions including: Scuola Piccola Zattere, Venice (2025); Acacia Art Center, Paris (2023); Palais de la Porte Dorée, Paris, (2023); MAC VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine (2022); Musée Henri Prades, in collaboration with MO.CO., Montpellier (2020); Musée d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris, Paris (2020); The Mistake Room, Los Angeles (2019); and Bétonsalon, Paris (2018), among others. Her group shows include the 14th Taipei Biennial (2025); 15th Gwangju Biennale (2025); WIELS, Brussels (2025); 3rd Toronto Biennial of Art (2024); Fondazione Zimei, Teatro Michetti, Pescara (2023); HKW, Berlin (2022); 5th New Museum Triennial, New York, USA (2021); GIBCA, Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2021); the 15th Biennale de Lyon (2019); the 14th Curitiba Biennial, Brazil (2019); the Sharjah Biennial 13 (2017); the 12th Havana Biennial, Cuba (2015); and the 13th Biennale de Lyon (2015). In 2024, She was the recipient of the prestigious Marcel Duchamp Prize.