

MARCEL ODENBACH

Conosci la terra dove fioriscono i limoni?

Zweigstelle Capitain X – Casa delle Arti Napoli in Palazzo Degas

September 26 – December 5, 2026

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce Zweigstelle Capitain X, the tenth edition of its biannual exhibition programme at Casa delle Arti, Napoli, in Palazzo Degas, Naples, Italy. The programme presents a solo exhibition by Marcel Odenbach, *Conosci la terra dove fioriscono i limoni?*, marking his fourth exhibition with the gallery.

“Do you know the land where the lemons blossom?” Goethe's famous question has long represented a lasting European image of Italy as a land of light, beauty, art and longing. For Marcel Odenbach, Italy is also a place of memory, shaped by personal encounters as well as the surrounding images, histories and cultural associations. His new works for the exhibition draw on archival material, photography and literature, bringing together different moments and perspectives on Italy.

A recurring motif in the new collages is the lemon. The three works *roman still life 1–3* recall Odenbach's travels to Naples in the 1980s and, particularly the artistic context surrounding the gallerist Lucio Amelio. In 1980, Amelio brought Joseph Beuys and Andy Warhol together for the landmark exhibition *Joseph Beuys by Andy Warhol*. Five years later, during a stay on Capri, Beuys created *Capri Battery* (1985), plugging a light bulb into a lemon. Odenbach's lemons evoke this history while becoming part of his own language of collage, montage and archival association. At the same time, the title *römisches Stilleben* introduces the tradition of the still life, in which seemingly simple objects can carry a sense of time and transience.

This movement between personal memory and collective history is also evident in the two-part video installation *Take it or leave it* (1987/89), which is presented alongside the new collages. Created during Odenbach's residency at the Deutsches Institut für Kunstgeschichte in Venice, the work contrasts archival images of political and military events with footage of pigeons filmed at ground level in Piazza San Marco. The birds move unpredictably into the frame, pecking at the camera and challenging the traditional symbolism of the dove as a symbol of peace. Images of politicians and historical events are repeatedly interrupted by scenes from Venice, including the Canal Grande and a passing gondola. The political realities of today resonate with these historical images, giving them a renewed and unsettling urgency.

The work also contains a deeply personal dimension. During his time in Venice, Odenbach experienced the death of a close friend from AIDS. Against the backdrop of the political imagery and the everyday presence of death, the gondolier became a symbolic ferryman for Odenbach. Personal loss thus enters the same field of images as political history without being separate from it.

The pigeon reappears in the new collage *The Crash*, in which a dead bird forms the focal point of the composition. Like *But those are old stories*, a tightly packed wall of skulls with red paint running over it, the work belongs to the tradition of vanity motifs. In *time is running out*, a large cloud of smoke rises against a blue sky, recalling the volcanic landscape of Naples. These works remain deliberately open, allowing images of beauty, catastrophe and disappearance to coexist without resolving into a single meaning.

The large-format collage *Stairway to heaven* is composed of fragments from Italy's archive of literature, photography, and cinema. A deserted flight of steps rises to a church portal, but access is barred by a rusty gate. Weeds grow between the steps, the door is covered in graffiti, and a ball lies there as if someone had just been

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playing with it. The title holds out the promise of an ascent to heavenly spheres, yet the hope it offers remains out of reach.

Marcel Odenbach's work has been presented in numerous solo exhibitions, including Tbilisi Photography & Multimedia Museum (2026); Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne (2024); Kurt Tucholsky Literaturmuseum, Rheinsberg (2023); MALLAM Contemporary Art Museum, Chiang Mai (2022); Museum Ludwig, Cologne, and Kunstsammlung NRW K21, Düsseldorf (both 2021); Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld (2020); Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremberg (2020); National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai (2019); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2017); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2016); Museo de Arte de Lima (2015); and Kunstmuseum Bonn (2013), among others.

In 2021, Marcel Odenbach was awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize.

Programme Zweigstelle Capitain X

Saturday, September 26

Opening reception
12 – 8 pm

Saturday, December 5

Finissage

Zweigstelle Capitain X

Casa delle Arti Napoli in Palazzo Degas
Calata Trinità Maggiore, 53
80134 Naples, Italy

Opening hours

Wed – Sat
11 am – 1 pm | 3 – 7 pm
and by appointment

+49 172 219 71 21
info@galeriecapitain.de
www.galeriecapitain.de