

A symphony, a street, an architecture. La Quinta is an iconic term that, in its almost exclusive formulation within the Italian language, denotes the theatrical wing that structures the stage space, and which creates a filter between the performative moment and the operational processes that make it possible. While this separation was historically necessary to ensure the fulfillment of the aesthetic experience and its cathartic processes, its boundaries now appear porous. Rather than a break, the quinta can be read as a gateway, inviting passage. By focusing on what is unseen—specifically the technical, social, and cultural infrastructures underpinning artistic production—this hidden dimension becomes speculative material, capable of hacking the very grammar of the work

The exhibition invites to inhabit this threshold by delving into the folds of the processes of concealment and exposition of reality, observing the trajectories of the various forces that act as underground engines in its representation. The artists' works bring to light the dynamics of the behind-the-scenes as a space of opacity, in a critique that addresses the automatisms of aesthetic perception, the cracks in the art system, the control over bodies, and the affective transitions underlying artistic creation.

In José Angelino's work, the relationship between reality and its operational systems is constantly negotiated and lies at the heart of a poetic adventure that unfolds through minute deviations—like subtle disturbances that challenge the mechanisms of perception. *Timid Drawings (2025-2026)* is a work that operates by eluding the gaze. The drawing inside the frame is visible only from a distance, due to the action of an opacifying filter that prevents it from being read up close. This dynamic allows the work to determine its own behavior, establishing the extent of a boundary beyond which it may cease to exist, withdrawing into a speculative silence.

Konstantinos Kyriakopoulos investigates the behind-the-scenes as both a political and poetic realm, inhabiting the hidden systems that govern the circulation of art, with a particular focus on its economic and relational dimensions. The core of their research is an exploration of intimate space, which by definition is hidden from view. The sculptures on display, part of the series *Present Works (2026)*, offer a mobile experience of this space: the suitcase is, in fact, a junction between the public and private spheres, preserving and concealing its contents. In this series, the artist envisions a system of economic subversion based on the mechanism of the gift. The prints—offered to visitors—depict gifts intended for their loved ones. This process aims to trace a system of affective relationships that shape the artist's practice and the creative processes of her works. Kyriakopoulos thus seeks to bring to the surface a narrative often invalidated by the official art system, yet one that is, on the contrary, a defining element of artistic practice.

When considering the revelation of aesthetic mechanisms and the act of seeing in painting, one of the most iconic works in art history is undoubtedly Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, which has consequently been the subject of constant references, studies, and reinterpretations in the centuries following its creation. Sofia Mascate draws on this repertoire to reflect on the role of the artist and on the language of painting as an implicitly political device, often serving hidden power dynamics.

In the work *The Exam (Saturn Return)* (2024), Mascate places herself at the center of a reflection on the role of patronage and the systems of power that fuel artistic creation. In an ironic gesture, the artist identifies with the role of the court painter, focusing on the transitions that occur between viewer and artist. The subjugation of art to dominant power is also at the heart of the work *Timeline* (2022), which addresses Velázquez's famous series of paintings used to document the growth of the Infanta Margarita, still a child, destined for her betrothed, her uncle Leopold I of Habsburg. Mascate's work highlights the grotesque dimension of this practice, while simultaneously problematizing the representation of female identity in art history.

Practices of bodily control are at the heart of Agnieszka Mastalerz's work *H (Reconstruction of Position)* (2018), inspired by a series of archival photographs taken at the Neuengamme concentration camp (Hamburg) in 1945, in the context of Nazi medical experiments. In these images, the bodies of boys and girls were forced into unnatural positions for physiognomic study, focusing in particular on the armpits and lymph nodes. The forcing of the position—which in the photographs was carried out by an adult's hand—is evoked in the video through a form of invisible control. Behind the camera, a performer executes movements that are imitated by the young girl protagonist, giving the impression of a seemingly free motion that is, on the contrary, mediated by an external influence. The work suggests the ambiguity of the body as a receptor of control impulses, which act as automatisms independent of subjective will.