Spazio Disponibile:
Galerie de l'UQAM presents a major exhibition by Dawit L. Petros

Curator: Irene Campolmi
Artist: Dawit L. Petros
Dates: November 4, 2022 – January 21, 2023
Opening: Thursday, November 3, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

Montreal, October 25th, 2022 – Galerie de l'UQAM presents *Spazio Disponibile*, a major exhibition by artist **Dawit L. Petros** initiated, organized, and circulated by The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (Toronto) and curated by **Irene Campolmi**. Concluding its North American tour at Galerie de l'UQAM, this project presents the artist's vast field of research on the complex layers of colonial and post-colonial histories linking Eritrea, Italy, and Canada.

The exhibition
Dawit L. Petros presents a new body of work underlining the unexplored links between colonization, migrations and modernism. *Spazio Disponibile* – Italian for 'Available Space' – alludes to vacant advertising sections that appeared in *Rivista Coloniale*, a widely circulated early 20th century magazine and the official organ of the Italian colonial project. The title is also a reference to the colonial gaze that viewed the lands of Africa as available space to occupy and exploit its resources.

Petros has developed an expansive suite of works that reflect his research into the complex layers of colonial and postcolonial histories connecting East Africa and Europe. Employing archival materials collected over a period of seven years, he documents the Italian presence in Ethiopia and Eritrea between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The exhibition highlights the ties between the contemporary resurgence of nationalism and the suppressed but lingering memory of Italian colonization.

Extending the artist's ongoing project, *The Stranger's Notebook*—the result of a thirteen-month journey exploring mobilities within Africa and across the Mediterranean—to focus on built forms including architecture, the exhibition also addresses questions of labour, the pitfalls of nation building and intertwined narratives of migration. Examining parallels between African histories and European modernism, the artist investigates the manner in which objects operate as texts in the construction and transmission of cultural ideologies. *Spazio Disponibile* looks at how these objects obscure power differentials while connecting people across borders, binding disparate geographies such as Italy, Eritrea and Canada.

About the artist
Dawit L. Petros is a visual artist, researcher, and educator. Petros' work is informed by studies of global modernisms, theories of diaspora, and postcolonial studies. Throughout the past decade, he has focused on a critical re-reading of the entanglements between colonialism and modernity. These concerns derive from lived experiences as an Eritrean emigrant, having spent formative years in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Kenya before settling in central Canada. His work offers an introspective and textured analysis of the historical factors that produced these migratory conditions. Petros installs photographs, moving images, sculptural objects, and sound work according to performative, painterly, or site-responsive logics. Petros holds an MFA in visual art from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Tufts University, a BFA in photography from Concordia University, and a BA in history from the University of Saskatchewan. Petros is a co-founder of the Black Athena Collective with artist Heba Y. Amin (EGY). He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Photography at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Petros is represented by Tiwani Contemporary in London, England, and Bradley Ertaskiran in Montreal, Canada.
dawitlpetros.com

About the curator
Irene Campolmi is a Copenhagen-based curator. Her current research investigates postcolonial, queer, and feminist theories through performance and hybrid artistic ecologies. In the past, her curatorial research and practice have focused on curatorial ethics. She has worked as an independent curator and a researcher for ten years within art museums and institutions across the world, including Musée d'art de Joliette (Canada), The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (Toronto, Canada), MAAT (Lisbon, Portugal), Copenhagen Contemporary

(Denmark), MAH (Azores, Portugal), and Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Copenhagen, Denmark). She co-curated the Estonian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennial in which *Birth V: Hi and Bye* by Kris Lemsalu was featured. Currently, she's employed at Copenhagen Contemporary as the curator and researcher of the exhibition and research project *Yet, it Moves!* and is working on the exhibition *Realistic Utopias - An archive of the Future* at KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces (Køge, Denmark). Since 2019, she is the Head Art Program and Curator of Enter Art Program, a publicly funded satellite program of performances and talks in conjunction with Enter Art Fair. Before joining the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen as a PhD Fellow (2013-2016), she worked as a researcher in the Max Planck Institute research group *Objects in the Contact Zone: The Cross-Cultural Life of Things*.
irenecampolmi.com

Public activities
Book launch: *Dawit L. Petros. Spazio Disponibile*
Thursday, November 3rd, 2022, 5:30 p.m.
Galerie de l'UQAM
Free admission
$ 48, 340 pages, softcover
French and English texts
Artist: Dawit L. Petros
Authors: Sean Anderson, Irene Campolmi, Teresa Fiore, Fabrizio Gallanti, Elizabeth Harney, Ghirmai Negash, Liz Park, Tak Pham, Gaëtane Verna

During the opening at Galerie de l'UQAM, Dawit L. Petros will launch the recently published book *Dawit L. Petros. Spazio Disponibile* produced in the wake of the traveling exhibition.

Artist Dawit L. Petros in the exhibition space
As part of *L'art observe* series
Friday, November 4, 2022, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Galerie de l'UQAM
In French and English
Free admission

Galerie de l'UQAM invites you to come and discuss with the artist Dawit L. Petros within his exhibition setting. This informal activity will be an opportunity to better understand the scope of the artist's work, which deals with several current issues such as migratory movements and the resurgence of nationalisms.

Round table (details to come)
As part of *L'art observe* series
With artist Dawit Petros and curator Irene Campolmi
Friday, January 20th, 2023
Casa Italia, 505 Jean-Talon E Street
Free admission

To kick off the year 2023, Galerie de l'UQAM invites you to a roundtable discussion that will explore the ideas and themes behind the exhibition *Dawit L. Petros. Spazio Disponibile*. The event will feature local and international participants, including artist Dawit L. Petros and curator Irene Campolmi.

Educational Program
Our mediators look forward to taking you and your group on guided tours of *Dawit L. Petros. Spazio Disponibile*. The tours are flexible and open to all school and community groups. Their content can be adapted to meet your particular needs and to complement material covered in the classroom. These activities are available anytime, in French or English, free of charge.

+ More information: galerie.uqam.ca/en/educational-program

Reservations required:
Léa Lanthier-Lapierre
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Support provided by

Address and opening hours
Galerie de l'UQAM
Judith-Jasmin Pavilion, Room J-R120
1400 Berri, corner of Sainte-Catherine East, Montréal
Berri-UQAM Metro

Tuesday – Saturday, noon – 6 p.m.
Free admission

Information
Tel.: 514 987-6150
galerie.uqam.ca / Facebook / Twitter / Instagram

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