

# MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI

*Animitas (Chili)*

16 November 2024 – 18 January 2025

Opening reception: Saturday, 16 November, 5-7 pm

Marian Goodman Gallery is delighted to present the United States premiere of *Animitas (Chili)*, 2014, a video installation by the late French artist Christian Boltanski, who the gallery began working with in 1987. The video notably documents the first incarnation of Boltanski's *Animitas* series, which began as a conceptual monument installed in the Atacama Desert in 2014. This original installation featured 800 small bronze bells on individual stems that were arranged to represent the position of the stars on the night of the artist's birth. The location of Chile was chosen by Boltanski as he originally drew inspiration from the local *animitas* or "little souls"—small, makeshift altars created to worship the departed along roadsides throughout the country; Boltanski also uses the form to commemorate those killed under the Pinochet regime. As the bells chime with the desert winds, Boltanski envisioned that we could hear "the music of the stars and the voices of the floating souls," a moving, ancestral soundtrack of lost spirits, which continues to play on in the remote location of Talabre, Chile today.

The video *Animitas (Chili)* was filmed on-site in a single shot from sunrise to sunset and is presented along a large bed of living hay, petals, and flowers that will naturally decay throughout the exhibition. Viewers are invited to meditate on the ghostly "voices" heard in the original work that contemplate the universal themes of the brevity of human life, the passage of time, and the intimate experience of loss. Widely considered to be one of France's most influential contemporary artists, Boltanski endeavored to create borderless works of art that could be understood by individuals of every global context. In line with this, Boltanski, who considered himself a "sentimental minimalist," created for *Animitas* a landscape of delicate bells destined to succumb to their natural surroundings, which will eventually be memorialized in the video alone, further allowing them to live on as a symbol of the precarious nature of human existence.

Christian Boltanski (1944-2021) was born in Paris during World War II to a Jewish father and a Catholic mother. He spent his childhood hearing stories of the Holocaust, which deeply influenced him. A self-taught artist, he began modeling clay and painting before developing his more conceptual work in the late 1960s. Since his first solo exhibition in Paris in 1968, his oeuvre has been widely shown internationally. In 2011 he represented France at the 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale. This exhibition of *Animitas (Chili)* was organized with the Christian Boltanski Endowment Fund, founded in September 2023 with the aim of conserving, promoting and presenting the artist's work.

Recent solo shows have been held at Busan Museum of Art, Korea (2021); Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2019); Espace Louis Vuitton, Tokyo, Japan (2019); The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan and the National Art Center, Tokyo, Japan (2019); The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2018); The Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China (2018); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2017); Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Italy (2017); The Museum of Contemporary Art of Monterrey, Mexico (2016); Instituto Valenciano Arte Moderno (IVAM), Spain (2016); Mac's Grand Hornu, Belgium (2015); and Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile (2014).

Boltanski was honored with several awards over his lifetime, including the Praemium Imperiale Award (2006) and the Kaiser Ring Award (2001). He participated in Documenta (1977 and 1972) and numerous Venice Biennales (2015, 1995, 1993, 1980 and 1975). In October 2021, a few months after he passed away, three prestigious French institutions in Paris; the Palace of Versailles, the Musée du Louvre; the Centre Pompidou, with the Opéra Comique, organized a joint homage to the artist.

Please join us at the opening reception in Los Angeles on Saturday, 16 November, from 5-7 pm at 1120 Seward Street in Los Angeles, CA 90038.

For further information, please visit our website: [mariangoodman.com](http://mariangoodman.com), or contact Linda Pellegrini, Head of Communications and Events, at [linda@mariangoodman.com](mailto:linda@mariangoodman.com) or (212) 977-7160.