



Palazzo
Chigi Zondadari

CORTEMPORANEA #5

NATSUKO UCHINO

Weaving Lines Stepping on Folds

curated by Fiammetta Griccioli and Cloé Perrone

17 May – 8 December 2026

Fondazione Palazzo Chigi Zondadari, Siena

The fifth edition of CORTEMPORANEA presents *Weaving Lines Stepping on Folds*, the first solo exhibition in Italy by Japanese artist Natsuko Uchino. The project evokes the layered nature of culture: exchanges and echoes interwoven like the threads of a fabric. Uchino engages with the artworks, furnishings and decorative elements that inhabit Palazzo Chigi Zondadari, entering into dialogue with the histories and traditions they hold. Within this context, her practice investigates the capacity of materials and motifs to carry cultural memory across geographies and traditions, raising questions around landscape, perception and the navigation of real and imagined spaces. Towards this, Uchino has conceived a new body of site-specific works in close collaboration with local artisans from Siena and its surrounding villages, drawing on the traditions of weaving, embroidery and basketry with materials rooted in the territory.

In the loggia of the central courtyard, the artist presents *Weaving Lines Stepping on Folds* (2026), a large structure whose branches were produced and assembled on site by Fabio Guerrini, woodworker, gardener and custodian of the craft of basketry in the Sienese region. The installation brings together two traditions: that of local artisanal craft and the navigational stick charts of the indigenous peoples of the Marshall Islands - instruments of orientation passed down empirically, built with wooden rods and shells to map ocean currents and sailing routes. United by the oral transmission of knowledge and the materiality of gesture, both traditions explore how landscape is mapped, traversed and imagined. Working with branches and cords, the artist reflects on how space is articulated through lines of drawing and passages.

Inside the palace, in the ballroom, Uchino presents a new installation that orchestrates textile works, new and existing, in a rhythm of presences, materials and sonic resonances.

At the centre, *Phonocène (flûtes)* (2026), a new installation conceived and created with sound designer and foley artist Fabien Bourdier and artist and ceramicist Olivier Chouteau, extends shared research developed through "Terres sonores", a course they co-teach at TALM Art School. Composed of ceramic tubes activated by modulating air, the work explores the amplification capacities of pottery and the sonic qualities of clay, both material and symbolic. The inspiration draws from diverse musical traditions — such as the Asian mouth organ and the polyrhythmic language and songs of the Pygmies — whose layering of high and low frequencies becomes a spatial score reverberating through the chambers of the Palazzo.



Tanin Toison (2026) and *In Utero* (2025), obtained through natural dyeing techniques, alongside *Net Stick and Stone* (2026) - a network of knots woven on site that frays toward the ground - and *Textile Écru-Beige* (2026), a series of textiles embroidered by a group of women from the Sienese association "Crea&Dimostra", unfold through the space like a moving curtain opening toward Piazza del Campo. The works resonate with the stick structure in the courtyard, echoing its formal tension and material plasticity.

In the yellow bedroom, the artist suspends a third textile from the *Textile Écru-Beige* (2026) series. At once a ritual, domestic and collective object, the white linen also evokes an Asian calligraphic scroll. Arranged as a curtain before the window, the cloth recalls the care of the domestic environment and the ornamental function of textiles, preserved and passed down by the participants who embroidered it, custodians of traditional artisanal practices.

Natsuko Uchino (b. 1983, Kumamoto, Japan) is an interdisciplinary artist living and working in the South of France. Her practice brings together agriculture and permaculture with convivial artisanal production, working through craft and manual traditions, subsistence economies and vernacular culture. She frequently collaborates with artists, local communities and practitioners, giving form of installations and performances that unite sculptural materials, functional objects and living matter. After studying at Cooper Union (2007) and completing the research program at CCA Kitakyushu (2012), Uchino has taught at TALM Le Mans since 2017, where she co-founded MAGMA. Recent exhibitions include *Fiction Theory Basket*, Château de Rochechouart (2024); *Mutual Aid*, Castello di Rivoli (2024); *Diplomaties terrestres*, Centre International d'Art et du Paysage, Île de Vassivière (2023); *Faire communs*, Maison des Arts Georges et Claude Pompidou, Cajarc (2020). In 2023 she participated in EVA International, the Contemporary Art Biennial in Limerick, Ireland. In 2017 she participated in LUMA Days at LUMA Arles in collaboration with IdeasCity of the New Museum, New York. Her work is in the collections of the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris and Castello di Rivoli. In 2026 she received the MGM Discoveries Art Prize at Art Basel Hong Kong.

CORTEMPORANEA, initiated in 2022 by Flavio Misciattelli, President of the Fondazione Palazzo Chigi Zondadari, has established itself as a platform for dialogue between contemporary art and historical heritage through site-specific commissions to Italian and international artists. After editions dedicated to Pietro Ruffo (2022), Paolo William Tamburella (2023) and Zhanna Kadyrova (2024), from 2025 Flavio Misciattelli has invited Fiammetta Griccioli and Cloé Perrone as visiting curators - beginning with the exhibition of Bianca Bondi (2025).

Opening hours

Courtyard: Monday - Friday | 8am-5pm | free entrance

Casa Museo by appointment only: prenotazioni@palazzochigizondadari.com