

Short biographies

Wolfgang Wirth (1966, Austria). He lives and works in Vienna.

The artist works mostly in painting and drawing, having moved from small-sized works to large oversized formats in the last few years.

“His artistic work can be compared to the one of research activity. Painting and the reflected use of painting material do not only create images but also make possible the acts of knowledge that are created through our observation, which enrich and change the perception of visual objects.” (Kurt Kladler)

Important solo and group exhibitions have been: *Ecologies of Care: Weaving Patterns for a careful Future* at Kunstpavillon and Neue Galerie Innsbruck (2023), *Ornamental Confrontation* at Stadtgalerie Museumspavillon, Salzburg (2021), *EXIT WIEN*, at Belleparais, Munich (2021) and *Orte des Sehens* at Rabalderhaus / Museu da Cidade Schwaz (2017), among others.

His work is represented in several Austrian institutional collections, as well as in private collections in Germany, Portugal, and Spain.

Tomaz Hipólito (1969, Portugal). He lives and works in Lisbon.

As an architecture graduate, his work addresses the questions of space, its occupation, and transformation. By mapping gestures, he creates a new territory, an interval between subjectivity and the experience occurring from that.

Multiple media such as photography, video, performance, painting, and drawing are used to better support each work's concept. The entire process becomes part of the work. Like gestures, all works are unique pieces.

Tomaz Hipólito has been awarded several art prizes and awards, such as the Santander Art Prize Edifício dos Leões, 2023, and the Monovision Photography Award (Honorable Mention).

His work has been showcased in various venues worldwide, including the Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism, the Emily Harvey Foundation in New York, and La Tabacalera in Madrid.

Since 2010, he has regularly exhibited between Seoul, New York, and Portugal. His work is represented in private and public art collections and he continues to engage in thought-provoking exploration of space and experience.

16.05. -
20.07.2024

Eng.vs.

Wolfgang Wirth *Battered Fields*

Project by
Tomaz Hipólito
DELAY

GALERIA
BELO -
GALSTERER

“Our battered suitcases were piled
On the sidewalk again;
We had longer ways to go.
But no matter, the road is life.”
(Jack Kerouac, 1957)¹

I got to know the artist Wolfgang Wirth and his work in 2014. At this time, he created a series of works for which he used old maps (mostly of the Alps) to explore questions of painting theory as well as the development of landscape painting. This series already revealed the artist’s interest in the geopolitical aspects of cartography and its potential to influence the perception of territories and their borders. Since then, he has worked on a variety of territory-related projects whose complexity has never ceased to fascinate me;² always starting with precise and careful observation and analysis of key issues of our time and based on a complex understanding of history. So it is with great pleasure that I present this text for Wolfgang Wirth’s third solo exhibition at Galeria Belo-Galsterer, written at four hands together with the artist:

The English word *battered* comprises several meanings such as *beaten, wounded, abused, damaged, falling to pieces...* which resonate in the title of the exhibition and at the same time describe the war-torn region of eastern Ukraine, which Wolfgang Wirth places at the centre of his exhibition.

The artist once again devotes himself to the theme of territories, a common thread in his work. The basis for the concept of this exhibition is a fragment of a historical map from World War II showing the main parts of eastern Ukraine. It comprises the regions (oblasts) of Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk with Bakhmut, which has been one of the most affected cities by the current war, in the centre of the map. On this map, Bakhmut’s name is Artemivsk.³ This city has been renamed several times, which is characteristic of many places in the region. On the basis of a comprehensive study of this map, the exhibition addresses in a very subtle way the impact that the current war as well as previous wars and political and economical changes and interests have had on the territory in question, and deals with issues such as “wounding”, “inscribing”, “superimposing”, “covering”, “erasing”, “blurring”, “disguising”, “interfering”, but also with aspects such as “pacifying” and “healing”.

In a first, extremely time-consuming approach, the artist retouches all cartographic information from the map that refers to civilian intervention in the depicted territory (such as names of places, roads, railroads and borders). In an almost meditative and cathartic process, he erases all traces of human interventions until he arrives at a neutralized version of the map that contains only landmarks such as rivers and ground formations. It is from here that the artist begins to explore the concepts presented above.

A second reference that Wolfgang Wirth uses is a colour lithograph by Ernst Heyn⁴ from 1892 showing flowers and plants from the dealt with regions in Ukraine. This landscape-like botanical depiction in some way shows a pure state of the area in question and thus forms a peaceful contrast to the current reality.

A series of oil paintings, which are a clear reference to the original map, are presented as a spatial installation. Vibrating horizontal lines, inspired by the colours of cartographic inscriptions, cover the painted canvases and create the impression of interference and disturbance.

A set of small works interweaves the used pictorial references such as reproductions of the (neutralized) map or the above-mentioned lithograph or even a depiction of the lines from the artist’s left hand. One of the small works has a hand-carved wooden frame quoting the flowers from the 19th century lithograph resembling a wreath of flowers surrounding a printed and collaged version of the neutralized map.

By posing questions about the vulnerability of territories, about violent inscriptions and erasures both, in/from territories, landscapes and nature, Wolfgang Wirth presents a subtle network of interwoven works.

The way the artist approaches difficult topics of our time is described by Gürsoy Dogtas as follows: “Wolfgang Wirth deals with complex temporal horizons. Applying the means of abstraction, he momentarily removes the temporal directions of past, present and future from their conventional framework, reconfigures them and redirects the subject’s gaze to the object of the imagination.”⁵

Alda Galsterer
& Wolfgang Wirth
May 2024

Galeria Belo-Galsterer is delighted to present DELAY, Tomaz Hipólito’s first solo presentation at the gallery, with an individual project whose starting point is a series of concrete tetrapods lining the Azores Archipelago.

Navigating the gallery space, the viewers come across a video projection of a 3D-drawing animation and a series of drawings referencing the tetrapod. The works explore the object’s sculptural quality, suggesting its transformation and dematerialization.

Hipólito contemplates these tetrapods from a sculptural angle. He considers the material and durability of the objects, pondering their mass and how they interact with the ocean and the surrounding environment.

At the heart of this project lies the concept of delay as both a temporal phenomenon and a philosophical inquiry. Moving from the utilitarian to the aesthetic form, the tetrapod is converted to an object that avails itself to an uncommon dialogue within the urban landscape.

In addition to exploring space, its occupation, and transformation, the works also address a mapping gesture to establish a new territory, an interval between subjectivity and the resulting experience. Through a sculptural lens, he considers the materiality of these objects, particularly in their function of protecting against sea erosion.

Employing these strategies, Hipólito introduces a delay in the viewer’s response to familiar imagery by advocating for slowness as a counterbalance to contemporary speed. This approach mirrors the delay inherent in Duchamp’s exploration of reproduction, thereby creating a dialogue between the physical and conceptual aspects of space and experience.¹

Alexia Alexandropoulou
May 2024

¹The Duchampian notion of “delay” comes from exploring the impact of mechanical reproduction in the definition of an artwork. Every new piece creates a conceptual gap between the original and its reproduction. The new piece refers less to itself than to another pre-existing object, which brings forth a “delay” in the valuation of the work and holds off the viewer’s reception of the message.

Footnotes to “Battered Field”

¹Jack Kerouac: *On the Road*, Viking Press, NYC, 1957 (original 1st edition);

²Series Maps of 2014/15 and Territory of 2016 as figured on his webpage: www.wolfgangwirth.com;

³Bachmut was Artemivsk between 1924 and 2016 (it is first mentioned in 1571 and was granted city status in 1783 - it was also the scene of a massacre of the Jewish population by the invading Nazis in 1942);

⁴Ernst Friedrich Heyn is a German painter and illustrator of the 19th century (1841–1894).

⁵Gürsoy Dogtas on the Territory series (2016) in: “The Space-Time Link”, in: Wolfgang Wirth: *Topologies of Painting*, ed. Wolfgang Wirth (Vienna: Wolfgang Wirth, 2017), p. 30.