ALMINE RECH

Atrás y más allá
Beyond Behind

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The Museo de Arte de Zapopan (MAZ) presents *Atrás y más allá* by Alicja Kwade and Gregor Hildebrandt, their first joint institutional exhibition in Mexico. Curated by Viviana Kuri Haddad, the exhibition presents works selected by the artists that engage in a dialogue and highlight connections between their conceptual and poetical approaches. While Kwade's work explores the essence of our reality to examine social structures by breaking down frames of perception, Hildebrandt makes extensive use of analog recording mediums, such as cassette tape and vinyl records, to evoke personal and collective memories with a subtle sensitivity. In a spirit of mutual exchange, the exhibition encompasses painting, sculpture, photography, installation, and video, showcasing recent as well as new work conceived specifically for MAZ. As part of MAZ's Double program, *Atrás y más allá* weaves invisible threads between Kwade and Hildebrandt's works and sheds light on how their relationship as a couple and their shared references and artistic interests nurture their idiosyncratic visual languages.

In the Sala Juan Soriano, a number of Hildebrandt's black-and-white audiotape collages are on display. These are part of his ongoing "rip-off" series, presenting both positive and negative counterparts of the same abstract motifs. The audio tapes adorning the surface have been recorded by the artist with songs that hold personal significance to him, hinted at in the titles of the works, even though they remain inaudible. Shown alongside are two of Kwade's *Big Be-Hide's*. In these works, a natural stone and its aluminum replica are divided by a double-sided mirror, challenging the viewer's perception as they mutually reject their reflections. The presentation underscores the mirroring dynamics and the significance of the concepts of complementarity and duality within both artists' works, suggesting the potential for other dimensions to unfold.

In the Sala Barragán, visitors encounter Hildebrandt's *Orphéeee* consisting of hundreds of VHS tapes pre-recorded with Jean Cocteau's film *Orphée* from 1949. Hildebrandt's key sequence in the film features Orpheus passing through a mirror that turns into water, enabling him to access the netherworld and resurrect his wife, Eurydice. These gradient curtains, the first of their kind, placed as transitional elements between two rooms, resonate with the artists' shared fascination for concealed dimensions. Alongside *Der Parabolspiegel weiß* and *Das New Yorker Zimmer (Il cielo ...)* the curtains function as architectural elements, reshaping space as well as guiding viewers. Akin to his paintings, these sculptural works bear films and musical compositions which act as silent imprints of personal and collective memories.

In the style of a traditional Mexican balcony, Kwade's *Standpoint and Case* incorporates boulders within, obstructing entry and blurring the line between private and public realms. Within this confined space, the interplay of gravity and human intention exposes the ongoing tension between freedom and restraint that defines our everyday lives. Private space is also depicted in Hildebrandt's *Wohnzimmer linker Teil Stirnwand* and *Wohnzimmer rechter Teil Stirnwand*, in which fragmented views from their shared Berlin apartment are recomposed within cassette shelves. The notion of a brief moment of freedom returns in Hildebrandt's *Segel* by weaving various audiotapes. It propelled him on a journey from Cyprus to Tel Aviv on which Kwade joined him. Now adorning the wall as an abstract black triangle and bearing a selection of songs related to sailors and sailing, the work functions both as a practical object and a poetic symbol of travel. Similarly, Hildebrandt's *Selbstportrait mit Diabola* stems from a photograph taken by Kwade during a joint trip to Martinique in 2012. This image was captured spontaneously and later laser-engraved onto granite, creating a sense of enduring permanence while also toying with the concept of time's ceaseless progression, leaving us with nothing but memories. The profound awareness of time's passage is heightened by Kwade's *Die Bewegte Leere des Moments*, a continuously orbiting, double-sided clock and a substantial stone suspended by chains. As both the clock and the boulder follow their perpetual trajectories with unwavering consistency, they evoke a diverse range of sensory experiences. The unceasing ticking of the clock resonates clearly, establishing a rhythmic cadence that is bound to captivate our contemplation. Time falls silent in Kwade's arranged clock hands at eye level that traverse throughout the exhibition. Walking by, the viewer encounters time moving forward and backward, clockwise and counterclockwise, whereby space becomes time and time becomes space.

A dialogue also emerges where both artists work with similar motifs: within the bamboo courtyard three of Kwade's *Principium* sculptures engage with a group of Hildebrandt's vinyl record columns. Spiral pillars, composed of bronze casts of iPhones and portioned to the height of a specific person, evoke the double helix shape of human DNA and serve as a satirical commentary on our society. Hildebrandt's brancusian columns, which appear never-ending and are constructed by stacking corrugated vinyl records, act as spatial representations of an infinite passage of time.

Arguably the most evident manifestation of their convergence through personal connection is Kwade's *Candle Column (Alicja & Gregor)*, serving as a testament to how both artists intertwine. The two bronze columns made from colored candles are cast to each body height challenging the concept of the self by transcending the physical form.

Berlin Skies, produced specifically for the exhibition, is the only collaborative piece. Within MAZ's central courtyard, a monumental twelve-by-six-meter print reveals a disordered gray sky with clouds hovering just above our visual horizon. Resting on the ground are Hildebrandt's monumental bronze chess pawn *Hirte* and Kwade's *Jo's Snow*, composed of marble that evoke the fleeting nature of melting snow while subtly echoing the clouds, adding to the overall sense of the uncanny. The scene is framed by Zapopan's sky above, and upon entering visitors effortlessly transition into an alternate realm, where they embrace a profound duality of existence, conjuring a surreal image that transforms the courtyard's surroundings.