

## **MARCEL MAYER: “THE TIMELINE PUZZLE”**

### **SOLO EXHIBITION AT THE ARMENIAN CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL ART (ACCEA/NPAK), YEREVAN, ARMENIA**

**17.11. - 15.12.2017**

#### **Marcel Mayer (\*1965)**

#### **Artist-in-residence in Yerevan/ Foundation KulturDialog Armenien**

The Swiss artist and printmaker Marcel Mayer is the fourth artists of the international artists' exchange program initiated by Foundation KulturDialog Armenien and organized in cooperation with Atelier Mondial (Christoph Merian Stiftung), Basel, Switzerland, and the Cultural Affairs Office of the City of Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany. Thanks to this program, he is given the chance to spend six months in Yerevan, Armenia.

Since the beginning of July 2017, Marcel Mayer lives in Yerevan hosted by Foundation KulturDialog Armenien and he works in several printing studios and in various techniques. Additionally, Marcel Mayer is the guest of honor of the “First International Print Biennale Yerevan 2017”. In the context of this biennale, he directed three printmaking workshops. This way, art students could learn and progress in printmaking techniques.



By organizing the solo exhibition „The Timeline Puzzle“ at the Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental (ACCEA/NPAK), Foundation KulturDialog Armenien den Künstler presents Marcel Mayer for the first time in Armenia: The exhibition showcases 28 works executed in 5 different printmaking techniques: Woodcut, lithography, etching, dry point and linocut. Included are works from past years as well as works created recently during Marcel Mayers months in Yerevan as artist-in-residence. Thanks to the ‚pieces‘ of this ‚puzzle‘, illustrating a timeline from 1991 to 2017 with series of works and individual works, the Armenian audience gains an exclusive insight into Marcel Mayer’s artistic printmaking oeuvre, but also gets an impression of the contemporary Swiss printmaking art scene.

#### **Marcel Mayer: About my artistic work**

For many years now, printmaking techniques like woodcut, etching and lithography are my chosen techniques of expression. I love to work manually by using instruments such as the etching needle, burin, wire brush, and the carving knife. This way, I can immerse myself into the surface of a stone, of a copper plate or a wood block. I also like to work with analogue media like color, paper and printing presses of all kinds. The entire printing process is an inspiration for me, as the art work is created in several consecutive steps and might be altered at any moment during this process.



In my personal art works, I am interested in the figurative motive. In the beginning, I spontaneously developed subjects from my imagination and I integrated personal impressions, often inspired by travelling. Thanks to this kind of “narrative description” I probably found the ‘book’ medium, which allowed me to create a series of illustrated children’s books. The stories told in those books were the results of the illustrations I created.

Besides “commercial art”, my interest to do works dealing with questions of contemporary art grew constantly during the last years. So I started to go into motives of photography more closely. Consequently, the starting point for my work can be found in already existing photographs or those I did myself. Whatever has been caught by the (fast changing and evolving) technique of photography, may appear in complex and varied forms, from the first print, to traditional print media and finally to its digitalized version on the internet. To create a contrast to these fast-moving aspects, I use the slow and lasting characteristics of printmaking.

Let’s take the “Press Images” series for instance: These extremely enlarged woodcuts show snapshots and every one of them creates an atmosphere of its own. In the work showing the dismantling of a Ceausescu statue in Bucharest you will find an atmosphere marked by an uncertain, incredulous astonishment in which the nightly scene’s shadowy twilight dissolves the contours of the figures. Or take a look at the sharp daylight contrast of the ‘Gaza’ image with its burka used as a combat uniform. Another example is the image of Aleppo with its seemingly peaceful atmosphere – only a closer look will reveal the battered facades.

In the end, those press images can be interpreted as being only exploited and staged documentations of more or less important historical moments. To openly present them as what they are, I decided to keep the typography and wording of the caption and the references just the way they were published in the newspaper.

Marcel Mayer, March 2017

### **Biographical outline:**

Marcel Mayer was born in Basel (Switzerland) in 1965. After his apprenticeship (industrial mechanic), he studied at the Basel School of Design (Schule für Gestaltung Basel, Fachklasse für Originaldruckgrafik, 1991–94). Since 1994, Marcel Mayer is the head of the professional printing studio “druckwerk” in Basel (letterpress, woodcut, intaglio and lithography). Since 2006, he organizes workshops and in its own artistic practice he focuses on printmaking, book making and poster design.

Works by Marcel Mayer have been showcased in solo and group exhibitions in Switzerland, Germany, and Canada since 1990. His works can be found in private and public collections in Switzerland, Germany, Canada and Japan.