

“Francis Alÿs, Museo Tamayo“
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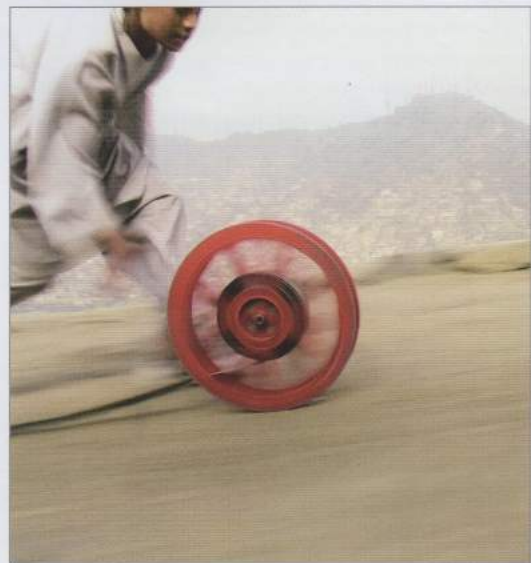
The exhibition “Story of a Negotiation” explores the last fifteen years of Alÿs’s artistic production manifested through a close relationship between painting, video and action. The curatorship by Cuauhtémoc Medina conceives the exhibition as an inquiry into Francis Alÿs’s parallel performance and painting practices based on three extensive groups of projects. The title of the exhibition addresses the dialogue established by Alÿs between painting and actions in several of his projects, where he questions the relationship between the staging and the recording of his artistic actions. In this show, videos, actions, testimonies, publications, documents and objects interact with the paintings to convey a holistic view on a variety of subjects and scenarios.

Don’t Cross the Bridge Before You Get to the River, (2008) is the result of a series of works that began in 2005 with the project *Puente* (Bridge), in which the intention was to build a bridge between Cuba and Florida with a string of fishing boats across the Gulf of Mexico. The work was eventually completed but in the Strait of Gibraltar, where children from Tarifa and Tangiers created a bridge between Spain and Morocco made with toy boats.

Highly symbolic as a metaphor, the work generates a physical and emotional bridge that joins two key territorial points today that, while not actually too far apart geographically, they are nonetheless somewhat different and alien.

Tornado (2000-2010) is one among the works exhibited that are based on experimental observation performed from inside a tornado. In Milpa Alta, Mexico City, Alÿs, who developed this project over a period of ten years, recorded this phenomenon in an analogy about living in chaos, particularly in connection to the turmoil in a country where violence has escalated in recent years. In addition to the reflections that the social and political context generated in him, aesthetically speaking

Francis Alÿs. (In collaboration with Julien Devaux and Ajmal Maiwandi).
Reel-Unreel, 2011. Single channel video projection. 19:28 min. Color, sound.



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Francis Alÿs
Museo Tamayo

Throughout his career, Francis Alÿs (Antwerp, 1959) has established an interdisciplinary dialogue in which painting is a symbolic and recording medium like video. His actions usually address issues of an ethical, political, aesthetic and social nature.

he approached the tornado through a monochromatic painting process, as he imagined that being inside meant observing an absolute painting.

In the series titled *Afghanistan* (2011-2014) Alÿs accompanied British troops to the southern Asian country to learn about the Afghan people's way of life and to develop a personal vision and understanding of that nation in conflict without the filters of mass media. One of the works included in this group is *Reel-Unreel*, a project developed for Documenta 13 that consisted of a video recording of two children shown as they endeavor to maintain a reel of film in constant movement with the help of a stick. The camera follows them running after the reel that rolls downhill through the mountains of Kabul. As viewers, we get to appreciate a tour that allows us to observe the people, the urban environment and the landscape; in other words, a reality that reaches beyond the constant imagery about the war that the media feeds us on a regular basis.

In addition to these three projects that form a very complete body of work that includes videos, documents, paintings, sketches and objects, there is also the works *Silencio* (Silence), created with several rugs, and *The Leak*, which evidences the manner in which Alÿs associates painting and action throughout his work. He connects with a drip of paint that draws a line from the Museo Tamayo de Arte Contemporáneo, where the exhibition is housed, to the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, where he will present another of his recent projects on the imaginary of Ciudad Juárez: *Hotel Juárez*.

The dynamic of recording actions and generating reflections from apparently simple facts has been the way in which the artist negotiates between different artistic disciplines and even the manner in which he carries out negotiations at a personal level—given that Alÿs conceives the projects from an Ethical perspective when confronting the geopolitics surrounding any of his works. The three main projects are different latitudes and problems that are united through the particular vision of a constant traveler. Alÿs is a great spectator of the surrounding reality. His critical and transforming gaze is driven by ideas and actions.

The Museo Tamayo accompanies the exhibition with a catalog and a comprehensive public program of educational activities such as workshops, guided tours, talks and seminars.

Organized by the museum, this exhibition will be presented at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires (Malba), Argentina, and then, in 2016, at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana, Cuba. The traveling exhibition will conclude in 2017 the Art Gallery of Ontario.

ISAURA RUIZ