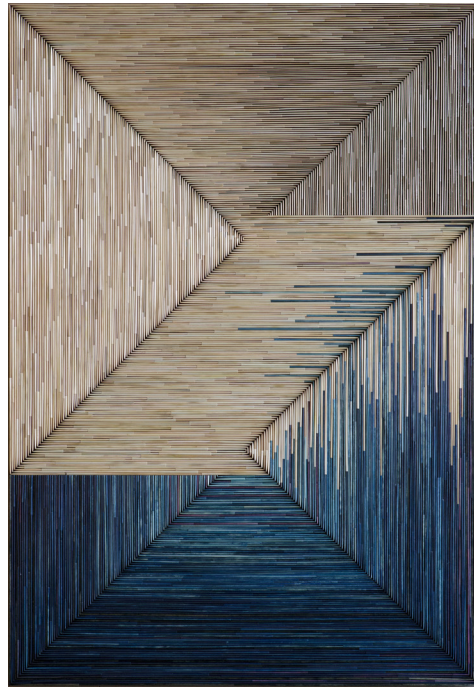


Olaf Holzapfel

Das Gewachsene - Ce qui a grandi

17.03.23 → 29.04.23

Press release



Olaf Holzapfel, 2 *Landschaften in 1 Raum/ früh*, 2023, straw on wood, 145 x 100 cm

Xippas Geneva

Rue des Sablons 6
Rue du Vieux-Billard 7
1205 Geneva, Switzerland

Tuesday to Friday:
10am to 1pm and 2pm to 6.30pm
Saturday: 12pm to 5pm

geneva@xippas.com
xippas.com
+41 (0)22 321 94 14

📍 @xippasgalleries
📱 @xippasgalleriespage
📺 @xippas

Opening March 16 from 6 pm to 9 pm on the occasion of La Nuit des Bains

Galerie Xippas is pleased to present, for the first time in Geneva, the works of the German artist Olaf Holzapfel. Entitled *Das Gewachsene - Ce qui a grandi*, the exhibition brings together his most recent works, some of which were created especially for the event. The artist, known for his work in the fields of sculpture, installation and textile art, is presenting works from three different series grouped together in our two spaces in Rue des Sablons and Vieux-Billard.

Olaf Holzapfel is particularly interested in how history, culture and architecture intersect and interact, and how these interactions can be examined and reinterpreted through art. His work is often characterised by repetitive patterns and organic forms, which are inspired by both nature and human constructions.

Straw, reed, hay, willow, wood or cactus fibre. Natural materials are at the beginning, where nothing has form yet. We see them so often that we no longer pay attention to them, as if they had always been there and that our sight integrated them by default. Yet they are in our homes and cities and therefore also evolve in time and space. These materials circulate with us and are omnipresent in our environment and our existence. They are as close to us as a tailor-made suit. It is these vegetable raw materials that form the basis of the works presented here. – Olaf Holzapfel

In Rue des Sablons, the gallery presents a series of works made of rye straw, a plant that has been cultivated in Europe for 1500 years, here cut and dyed. Rye belongs to that part of our environment to which we are no longer attentive. The German artist has turned to this agricultural by-product that is omnipresent in the province of Brandenburg (Germany). His works echo religious straw artefacts which, while remaining abstract, are concrete representations of the sun, life, death or resurrection. Similarly, his straw images are abstract but address concepts related to the city, such as digital nomadism and the city as a collection of 'signs'. They deconstruct the canons of 19th century landscape painting by injecting the landscape into their work. The works become representations of the latter with the materials that constitute it. On a formal level, they reflect the two-dimensional image and the three-dimensional space as well as exploring the novel representation of landscape space and identity.

In the Rue du Vieux-Billard space, the artist exhibits two other series, one composed of hay and the other of chaguar. Entitled *Lichtbilder*, the first is made with wooden frames filled with tightly woven hemp ropes, which are produced according to a traditional German-Polish method of twisting together dried herbs and wild flowers. The second series consists of works in chaguar (the name of several South American plant species in the Bromeliaceae family) which were made between 2009 and 2022 with Wichis weavers from the Argentine Gran Chaco. Olaf Holzapfel travelled to South America several times, especially to the Chaco Salteño and Patagonia, to understand the landscapes, people and production techniques of these regions and climates. The forms of expression resulting directly from the natural environment appeal to him: whether it be Wichí works, Patagonian wooden fences or, closer to home, handicrafts made of straw from Brandenburg, which also carry the sun that the plants have received.

The chaguar weavings form a special group, if only because of the economic windfall they represented for these women. The first major exhibition of these works was shown at the 2011 Venice Biennale, as well as at the Bicentennials in various South American countries. The works are presented in two groups: on the one hand, *the Paths of Buenos Aires paintings*, a collaboration that developed over more than a decade between Holzapfel and the Gutiérrez family of Misión Chaqueña in northern Argentina. On the other hand, the works in the series *Die Farben des Waldes*, realised with the Thañí group, from the Wichí villages along the Pilcomayo River. These works reflect the materials, colours and elements characteristic of the Gran Chaco, but they are also a bridge to the visual language of metropolises such as Buenos Aires or Berlin.

Indeed, the webs of the city, the rural world and textiles converge, one allowing us to understand the other. These works link urban grid structures with the colours and details of a landscape. They combine a textile grid with artificial tones and details. From another point of view, it can be said that they superimpose contemporary images on ancestral images. The artist's digitally produced textile models, the drawings of virtual urban forms and spaces, including their shadows, lights and colours, are assimilated and diverted by the weavers, who translate them into textiles with their know-how.

Finally, the viewer will be able to discover a video from 2019 that highlights this exchange between the dry forest and the city. The montage is inspired by the urban grid and forest structures. Teresa talks about her work and her situation as a modern nomad. The textiles are the result of an ancient community practice. The know-how is passed on orally from generation to generation. The colours are obtained from tree bark, seeds, roots and fruits. This partnership between the worlds of art and craft brings together very different social and economic environments. It shows that such exchanges between North and South are not only possible, but necessary.

Olaf Holzapfel was born in Dresden in 1967. He lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

After studying Fine Art at the Hochschule für Bildende Kunst in Dresden and at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, India, he received an MFA in 2003. He has been in residence at Columbia University in New York and has taught as a visiting professor at the Kunstakademie Karlsruhe and the Hochschule für Bildende Kunst in Hamburg. Olaf Holzapfel has participated in numerous solo exhibitions, including the Daniel Marzona Gallery in Berlin, the Sabine Knust Gallery in Munich, the Bündner Kunstmuseum in Chur, Switzerland and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Salta, Argentina. His work has also been shown in several group exhibitions, including Unlimited - Art Basel and the Max Wigram Gallery in London. The artist is also represented by the galleries Baronian in Brussels, Sabine Knust in Munich and the Gebr. Lehmann Gallery in Dresden.

Olaf Holzapfel was featured in 2017 during Documenta 14 in Athens, Greece and Kassel, Germany. His participation was widely praised by the public, who remember him in particular for the construction of the Trassen wooden pavilion in the city park of Kassel in Germany.

His work can be found in institutional and private collections such as the Robelin collection and the collection of the Federal Republic of Germany.