

## MIRKO BASELGIA

### *LES ETOILES NE SONT PAS SEULES (THE STARS ARE NOT ALONE)*

Private viewing, Thursday, 6 June 2019

Public exhibition from 7 June to 24 August 2019

Observing a starry sky is one of life's most precious moments. In the silence of night, our thoughts range far and wide, to the vastness of the universe and the depths of our own inner lives, causing existential questions to arise spontaneously. The exhibition "Les étoiles ne sont pas seules" is inspired by these magic moments to create a journey through a set of drawings made by Mirko Baselgia over the past decade or so. It's a selection made from numerous possible works in his immense graphical oeuvre, conceived with the aim of highlighting the man behind the art and approaching themes that are particularly relevant to him.

With a few rare exceptions, Baselgia is not well known for his drawing. Nevertheless, it is a medium he has worked in since a very young age, a faithful companion to his travels, daydreams and reflections. Due to the spontaneity and immediacy of this technique, we find ourselves transported to the artist's "inner world" and can explore its hidden corners. For Baselgia, drawing is a tool to truly see, to deconstruct reality to understand it better, as well as a key to access his unconscious, his deepest questions and desires.

The wide variety of subjects, techniques and styles characterising the displayed drawings is a testimony to Baselgia's diverse uses of this medium and its development over time. Nevertheless, certain recurrent motifs and themes emerge, creating an imaginary thread connecting all the images. Birth and death mark the beginning and end of this course, but also punctuate all of its stages. The traditional genre of "memento mori" – a Latin phrase meaning "remember that you will die" - reminding the viewer of the mortality, fragility and brevity of human existence, is revisited by the artist, who draws on some of the most typical subjects: skulls, hourglasses, candles, fruits and flowers. Recalling the fragility and brevity of existence is simultaneously an invitation to savour every moment; a hymn to life.

The exhibition opens with an alignment of images representing themes related to the idea of beginnings: birth, female and male, encounters, fertility, balance, light, faith, growth, roots. The mystery at the origin of life conceals two primordial questions: what is the relationship between space and time? What is our relationship with everything around us and with the universe? In the continuing course, these questions are revisited regularly. The essential interdependence linking humans and their activities to the rest of the natural world is a constant concern in Baselgia's work, which observes the dynamics and structures shaping our reality to re-interpret them in personal and often unexpected ways. His drawings bear witness to his observations, reflections and research, which often leads him to cross not only the mountains and woods that surround him, but also the most distant lands. Journeys occupy a central role in his life and work, and the exhibited images invite us to join him on his travels. Along the canals of Venice, the Zen temples of Kyoto or the deserts of Egypt, we join the artist in his discoveries of other civilisations, cultures and philosophies. We enter his capsule hotel cabin or contemplate the beauty of a landscape with him. However, we not only accompany him in his earthly

adventures; he also shares with us his spiritual journey, his literary and philosophical encounters and his existential reflections. We discover his fascination with the phenomena of birth and growth, his interest in alchemy and Buddhism and his deep love for nature in all its forms. The table on the ground floor is both a summary of his physical and spiritual journeys and a true meeting point where you can sit, watch, chat, drink tea, read, reflect and take a break. Then, we go after a little rabbit; the journey, the quest, the questions continue underground. The pace gradually slows down, we leave room for contemplation, the spirit rests and night falls. The moment of eternal rest has come. The circle closes, but this is only the beginning.

Laura Giudici

Mirko Baselgia (born 1982, Swiss, lives and works in Graubünden) graduated from the Zurich School of Fine Arts (Bachelor and Master in Visual Arts). He has been awarded the Kiefer Hablitzel Scholarship (2012) and the Manor Cultural Prize (Chur, 2013), among other accolades. His recent personal exhibitions include *Pardis* (Curzoin) at Bellelay Abbey in 2018 and *Habitat* at the Urs Meile Gallery in Lucerne in spring 2019. His work can currently be seen at Muzeum Susch, which opened its doors this year in the village of the same name in Graubünden and at the 6th Weiertal Sculpture Biennale (Winterthur) titled *Paradise, Lost*. His works will also be exhibited in 2019 and 2020 at the Villa Datris Foundation in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue (France) and the Bonn Künstlerforum (Germany). His works form part of many public collections such as those of the Swiss National Bank, MUDAC, Kunsthaus Olten, Graubünden Art Collection, Credit Suisse, Roche, Ricola, Altana Stiftung, Burger Collection, Zürcher Kantonalbank, Graubündner Kantonalbank, etc.