

TRANSEUROPA | Ce Jian & Yuzheng Cheng

Curated by Hannah Beck-Mannagetta & Lena Fließbach

Opening: Wednesday, July, 19, 2017, 7 pm | Exhibition: July 19 – 29, 2017

Europe on trial. The refugee crisis, terrorist attacks, nationalist parties gaining traction in elections, Brexit. And all of a sudden, the European Union project is called into question. Based on a political map of Europe, the Berlin-based artists **Ce Jian** and **Yuzheng Cheng** played a game of Chinese Whispers in order to create 60 maps in 60 days using acrylic paint on paper.

With the initial intent of creating a mimetic image of the original map, the artists proceeded to alternately use the map last received from the other artist as a model to create the next one. With this a joint diary developed, blurring the lines of individual authorship. Ce Jian grew up in Germany, Yuzheng Cheng in China, together they are familiar with the inside and outside perspective on Europe. The current upheavals in Europe and their media coverage, in which maps of Europe are omnipresent, inspired the artists to realize this project.

In “Transeuropa” Ce Jian and Yuzheng Cheng rearrange Europe. They react to the unpredictable dynamics of refugee routes, Frontex’s border management programs and continuous displacements of national barriers and within the EU with lapidary, ironic visions of the future. The full view of all 60 paintings is almost overwhelming. The map paintings, meandering through the exhibition space, render the chronological sequence and the gradual shifting of colors, shapes, and with them borders visible.

Every political map has an element of subjectivity, it cannot possibly be neutral, and is simultaneously always an ideological instrument that reflects hierarchical structures. This installation metaphorically visualizes historical expansion, current instabilities and potential change within the EU as well as the numerous debates about its identity and form. The further the project advanced, the more monotonous the disciplined transfer of information in the process of painting—performed as faithfully as possible—proved to be. Following rational rules, the daily routine developed its own momentum out of exhaustion. This led to a spontaneous, increasing loss of control, infected with an anarchistic element. The deviations and “mistakes” made by each of the artists progress from map to map. Taking turns painting amounts to a discourse in which one party takes up the other’s prompt, yet also modifies and contradicts it. By and by, the primary information is mutated and distorted—although this process inherently questions “right” and “wrong”—until finally only quasi-abstract color fields remain, and the material takes on a life of its own.

The additional pieces that the artists created parallel to the installation oscillate between a summary, essence and progress chart of the project. They take up elements of the working method; in the “Map Cuttings,” they condense these into collages of amorphous patches of color, abstracted from the depictions of individual countries. Their overpaintings on two found romantic landscape paintings, titled “Territorium,” expand the conceptual idea of work in the sense of art history and ideology. This genre of old European painting is closely linked to the idea of a homeland, as well as the passionate glorification thereof. Out of fear of those who were forced to leave their homelands, Europeans now imagine their homelands to be under threat. These artworks bring home the discrepancy between the external perception of Europe and its current cultural self-perception as a union.

On the occasion of the exhibition, a limited-edition **artist book** will be published, featuring all of the paintings in chronological order; a flicker book of the EU map's transformation. Enclosed between an abstract color palette as the front cover and a coloring book image of the EU as the back one, the maps form a narration without words.

TRANSEUROPA, 120 pages, softcover, limited edition of 150, published by A Book Edition;
Book release: Miss Read, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, July 14 -16 2017

Supporting Program:

Wednesday, July 26, 2017, 6:30 - 7:30 pm

TRANSEUROPA - Walk the Talk

With **Dr. Willem Flinterman** (Cultural historian, Arabist, alumnus of the Eurasian Empires Research Group, University Leiden and Amsterdam, involved as organizer in Pulse of Europe, Berlin)

and **M. Walid Nakschbandi** (Afghan-German journalist, jurist and political expert, AVE Publishing, Berlin/Düsseldorf)

Due to current political events, the concept of Europe as a union is being put to the test. Through an artistic investigation of the subject of the map, the installation by Ce Jian & Yuzheng Cheng questions the status of the European Union and its individual member states in relation to domestic and foreign policy. What is the significance of the visual representation of countries, borders, routes of migration in the media from a political, ideological perspective?

The two specialists from different fields will draw on their scientific backgrounds to discuss the themes of the exhibition in dialogue with the artists and the audience. The talk format "Walk the Talk" is moderated by the two curators Hannah Beck-Mannagetta and Lena Fließbach.

Following the talk we have reserved a restaurant table at 9 pm. Please RSVP to join us for Walk the Talk Dinner to: lenafließbach@gmail.com and hannahbeckmannagetta@gmail.com

About the artists

Ce Jian (born 1984 in China) moved to Germany in 1988 and graduated from the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) in the master class of Georg Baselitz, Daniel Richter and Robert Lucander in 2008. She also received her M.A. degree in Art History and Philosophy after studying at the Humboldt University and Freie Universität, Berlin/DE and at the Goldsmiths College, London/UK. She received her PhD degree in Art and Visual History in 2017 at the Humboldt University Berlin. Currently she works and lives in Berlin and Beijing. Her works were shown in exhibitions in Berlin (Peres Project), Beijing (White Space), Dusseldorf (Galerie Philine Cremer) and Slovenia, among others.

Yuzheng Cheng (born 1977 in China) has been living and working in Berlin since 2000. He studied at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) with K.H. Hödicke where he graduated as Meisterschüler in 2006. His works have been exhibited in Germany (Galerie Antje Wachs, artMbassy, Berlin), Galerie Thomas Levy, Hamburg) and Greece (Gallery Eleni Koroneou, Athens), among others.

About the curators

Hannah Beck-Mannagetta studied arts management, art history and cultural studies in Potsdam and Berlin. 2007 she was co-founder and until 2016 chairwoman of the art association JungeMeister.net. From 2008 till 2013 she was co-director of the Galerie Metro, Berlin. Since then, she has worked as a freelance author and curator with a focus on interdisciplinary exhibition and mediation formats. Among others for DDB Stockholm (2013), Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weißensee (2014), Leinemann Foundation for Education and Art (2015), "The Impossibility of Being", Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna (with Lena Fließbach) (2016), "Never shown On Purpose ", CIRCLE1, Berlin (2016/17).

Lena Fließbach studied art history in Berlin and Granada. In 2010/11 she supervised the photography archive as well as exhibition projects for Donata and Wim Wenders. In 2011-2013 she was director and curator of the municipal gallery Galerie im Turm, Berlin and worked in the Kunstraum Kreuzberg / Bethanien on thematic group exhibitions. Since 2014 she has been working as a freelance curator and author in Berlin. Together with Hannah Beck-Mannagetta, she develops interdisciplinary mediation formats, among others for the Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weißensee and the Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna. She worked as lecturer at the Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule Halle and at the University of Potsdam.

About the gallerist

Nicole F. Loeser is an independent curator and art manager with over ten years of experience in working with institutions and companies across Europe. With great passion she realized numerous projects with international artists, curators and collectors. In 2009 she founded WHITECONCEPTS focusing on projects that introduce diverse and forward-thinking perspectives. Since 2017 she has been working also for the Institute for Art and Innovation and holds the position as Artistic Director. As an art critic, she is a regular author in catalogues, journals and art publications.