

**in the epoch of waves | haroon mirza**

**27 April – 2 Juni 2022**

Haroon Mirza's *in the epoch of waves* is a multi-sensory presentation that reveals connections between technology, nature, humankind and the universe. His multi-layered work-cycle *The Wave Epoch* - consisting of video, music and performance - is complemented by wall works made of solar panels automatically generating electricity and representing the dynamic system of light, electrical signals and complex circuits.

The central installation *The Wave Epoch* incorporates references from club culture, future archaeology, central belief systems as well as social rituals and was developed as a collaboration between Haroon Mirza and Jack Jelfs with musicians GAIKA and Elijha as part of the Collide Residency at the European Organization for Nuclear Research Center CERN, Geneva. The core question of this immersive work cycle, which includes archival footage, artifacts and electronic components from previous experiments at CERN, is as following: if the Large Hadron Collider (particle accelerator) were to be unearthed a few thousand years in the future and if its original purpose had been forgotten, how would people archaeologically interpret it? Based on this scenario, *The Wave Epoch* is an audiovisual sci-fi exploration of truth and belief, matter and consciousness, ritual and practice, and the existential human longing for pattern and order.

In conjunction with the suspended ceiling piece *Wave Chandelier* (2021), a multi-layered multimedia installation is created, with a coordinated composition of image, music and light. The curved lines of a bundle of hanging red and black cables are reminiscent of antique chandeliers, spread out from the star-shaped center. The impression is intensified by prismatic crystal spheres hanging from the cables themselves like water drops. Haroon Mirza combines ritual and technology by referencing patterns and shapes from ancient mandalas and combining them with technoid elements. In *Wave Chandelier*, the outer floral form intersects with the star in the center and forms a geometric diagram that, like the original mandala as an object for meditation, triggers a physical-sensory effect through the pulsating light.

In the second room, Mirza's *Solar Powered LED Circuit Compositions* series combines solar panels, electronic circuits with light and pigments to create unique wall pieces that are able to preserve the rawness and aesthetics of the materials used while at the same time developing a painterly presence. In the footsteps of Isa Genzken's aesthetic sensibility and Gerhard Richter's process-related approach, Mirza creates in his own sensitive vocabulary: compositions of technoid components paired with symbolic elements, evoking images of the aurora borealis and interstellar landscapes; similar to the serial candle paintings and canvas smudgings. The intensity of the LEDs is directly dependent upon the light incidence of the solar panel, allowing the external influences to become part of the *Solar Powered LED Circuit Composition* - the candles of the LED matrix only flicker when the light is very bright. Mirza interrogates the merging of energy and electricity of heterogeneous components, creating a closed circuit that can be understood on a conceptual and metaphorical level as an analogy of human social systems.

The minimalistic light drawing *Light Work xliii* (2022) is a wall piece made of red, blue and green glowing LEDs. Their electromagnetic waves combine to form a white light within the space. The respective lengths of the LED strips are defined and proportioned to each other depending on radiance or RGB color intensity. Using reduced, geometric shapes by connecting the individual LED strips with cables and copper tape, Mirza investigates the presence of light and its interaction with spatial structures. The artist reduces line drawing to electricity and the RGB color space, referring to the works of Minimal Art from the 1960s, such as Dan Flavin's light works or

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Fred Sandback's geometric spatial sculptures of cords. In *Light Work xliii*, Mirza uses electricity in the form of light to address the connections of human existence: "I use electricity as a medium (which can be rationalized as waves), which in simple terms is reality – or more particularly, our conscious relationship to existence."

The work *07:31 (Matter & Stuff)* (2021) is composed of an enclosure panel of a control cabinet from the European Organization for Nuclear Research CERN and other ready-made elements. In *07:31 (Matter & Stuff)*, the artist combines elements from the music industry - to which he himself has a strong connection - such as a microphone and headphone cable with copper tape, wire, and PCBs to create a circuit that causes the LEDs attached behind the board to glow. The orange and blue light mixes and spreads on the wall, referencing the colors of the rising sun. The title *07:31 (Matter & Stuff)* refers on one hand to the time of sunrise on the day the artwork was completed, and on the other hand to the exploration of matter at CERN, describing Mirza's interest in interweaving technical and cosmic references.

In the basement there is another work that shows Mirza's interest in cosmic references: *After The Big Bang* (2014) is a sculptural assemblage of a digital photo frame standing on a guitar amplifier, running a video of a waterfall. The hissing from the cranked amplifier initially leads to the false assumption that the sound is from the recording. However, the title *After the Big Bang* indicates that this audible white noise originated from recordings of the Big Bang. Haroon Mirza connects objects and interferences and creates a situation in which he intentionally plays with the recipient's perception. Mirza asks us to reconsider the perceptual differences between noise, sound and music, challenging the categorization of cultural forms and thus re-creating sensory connections.

British-Pakistani artist **Haroon Mirza** (\*1977 in London, UK) views himself as a composer and utilizes sound, video, electronic circuits and everyday objects to develop a complex body of work in which he examines the function of the components used while changing the significance of their cultural and social code. Mirza challenges the categorization of artistic expression with his strong collaborative approach and draws on diverse scientific, historical, art historical, pop cultural as well as spiritual influences. In his multi-sensory installations, he explores the interplay and dissonance between sound, light and electricity, challenging the viewers to abandon their individual perception of noise, sound and music. He forces the viewer to evaluate the relationship between the elements and the surrounding space to be experienced in an unusual way. In doing so, he formally refers to fundamental strategies of minimal art and allows for contemporary technologies to merge with environmental issues.

In 2011, Haroon Mirza received the Silver Lion at the 54th Venice Biennale as well as the Nam June Paik Center Prize in 2014. Solo exhibitions of the artist were a.o. shown at the New Museum, New York (2012), the Museum Tinguely, Basel (2015) and the Australian Center for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2019).

max goelitz  
maximilianstrasse 35  
entrance herzog-rudolf-strasse  
80539 munich

maxgoelitz.com  
+49 89 89063944 | gallery@maxgoelitz.com