

OSCAR MURILLO**Masses****02.02.2024 – 28.04.2024****WIELS, Brussels**

Oscar Murillo (b. 1986, La Paila, Colombia) is one of the most significant and inventive artists of his generation and after his memorable intervention in the 2017 thematic exhibition *The Absent Museum*, WIELS is proud to invite him back with *Masses*, a solo presentation which includes new and existing works.

The ocean, the sea, or any liquid mass has the capability to create and erase itself with each new wave that surfaces. Oscar Murillo's practice relates in many ways to the oscillating force of water, an infinite flow of conception and undoing, pointing to his interest in the notion of cultural exchange and the circulation of ideas, languages and objects.

Masses establishes a cartography of mass—liquid, material, sonic—across a large-scale installation that opens with a panorama of expansive gestural paintings titled *Disrupted Frequencies*. They are heavily marked in varying shades of blue, resembling a dark tide washing over the space. These new paintings are the outcome of the current juncture where Murillo finds himself, almost a decade after he initiated the long-term project *Frequencies* through which he and his team of collaborators distributed raw canvases across schools all over the world. Affixed to school desks, they were drawn upon, tagged and illustrated by school children for over 6 months and sent back to the artist afterwards. Murillo treats these canvases as analogue recording devices and the sheer volume allows him to tap into a collective consciousness—a cultural and social frequency—away from the anecdotal intricacies of where and by whom the drawings were created. Drawing on a tradition of abstraction, they are grounded by a deep understanding of the material and socio-political realities at present.

“There are several types of frequencies: radio frequencies to tune into, geographical frequencies, economic frequencies. And we have regional differences: in Nepal we talk about altitude, in New York we talk about economy and social issues, in Mumbai there is a clear sedimentation of intensity and time, in Singapore the awareness of a conservative society. In a way these readings are also cliché in relation to how we read or want to believe certain societies are, so the paintings represent my desire to add friction to a project which has been very fluid and organic in its evolution.”

—

Oscar Murillo

Further permeating the WIELS galleries are a large number of mass-produced plastic garden chairs, rock-like sculpture formations made from ground corn and cement, a series of *Flight* drawings and a mesmerizing film shot in the early hours of new year's day in Colombia. They similarly reflect his preoccupation with the late capitalist exchange of people and goods, which includes questions around class, systems of production, and labour.

The exhibition at WIELS marks the termination of *Frequencies* and ushers in a new phase that sees the collection of canvases and the memories they hold flattened into raw material mass, to be stitched together and used as a resource for new works, provocatively disrupting the intellectual project of an archive. Through the splicing of objects from different geographical, social and cultural contexts, Murillo creates friction and unease. It points to his deep-seated urge to obliterate the weight of time and geography and allow a polyphonic stream of consciousness to breach the levee.

Curator: Helena Kritis

Project Partners

With the generous support of: HR One Group

The exhibition is made with the support of Oscar Murillo Studio.

Publication

To celebrate a decade of Murillo's *Frequencies* project, a new publication edited by Alessandro Rabotini will be launched during the closing weekend of the exhibition. The publication will include writings by ex Tate Modern curator, Mark Godfrey; Barbican senior curator, Eleanor Nairne; newly appointed director of Melly Rotterdam, Gabi Ngcobo; and an interview between Alessandro Rabottini and Murillo. The publication will subsequently be available for sale at the WIELS bookshop and online.

Artist Biography

Oscar Murillo (b. 1986, CO) lives and works in Molenbeek, London and La Paila. He earned a BA in Fine Arts at the University of Westminster in 2007 and an MA from the Royal College of Art, London in 2012. In 2019, Murillo was one of four artists to collectively be awarded the prestigious Turner Prize.

Work by the artist is included in museum collections worldwide, including The Broad, Los Angeles; Dallas Art Museum; Tate, London; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, England; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Rubell Museum, Miami; and Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent.

Murillo solo exhibitions have been hosted internationally, including at: Fundação de Serralves, Porto (2023-24); Saint Louis Art Museum, US (2022); KM21, The Hague, Netherlands; Fondazione Memmo, Rome, Italy; Museum of Art of the National University of Colombia, Bogotá (all 2021-22); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2021); Aspen Art Museum, US; Kunstverein in Hamburg, Germany (both 2019-20); K11 Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2019); Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2017-18); Yarat Contemporary Art Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan (2016-17); Performa 15, New York, US (2015); The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, US (2014) and South London Gallery, UK (2013).

EVENTS

Public opening: Thursday 1 February 2023, 18:00

Look Who's Talking – Helena Kritis (NL)

Wed. 07.02, 19:00

Look Who's Talking – María Inés Rodríguez (FR)

Thu. 15.02, 19:00

Look Who's Talking – Emma Enderby (EN)

Thu. 22.02, 19:00

Performance – Echoing Spirits

Sat. 02.03, Sat 06.04, Sat. 27.04

ongoing between 12:00 - 16:00

Lecture – Material witnesses: Oscar Murillo's Masses

Anna Pigott on Oscar Murillo (EN)

Sat. 02.03, 16:00

Look Who's Talking – Oscar Murillo & Zoë Gray (EN)

Wed. 06.03, 19:00

More events & registrations:

WIELS.ORG

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR PRESS

Press conference: Wednesday 31 January, 11:00

Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 11:00 to 18:00

Open every first Wednesday of the month until 21:00

Press contact for interview and image requests:

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Press images + credits:

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WIELS

As one of the leading institutions for contemporary art in Europe WIELS presents temporary exhibitions by national and international artists, both emerging and more established. WIELS is a site of creation and dialogue, in which art and architecture form the basis for a discussion about current events and issues, not only through its exhibitions, but also through an international artist-in-residency, an education and community-oriented programme and complementary activities.

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