

Wilfrid Almendra

The Dog's Sweat

May 24 – July 27, 2024

Opening reception: Friday, May 24, 6–9pm

DOCUMENT is delighted to present *The Dog's Sweat*, Wilfrid Almendra's first solo exhibition in Portugal and inaugural collaboration with the gallery.

In many ways, the French–Portuguese artist's practice is autobiographical, drawing inspiration from his family history. In the late 1960s, Almendra's father left his native Portugal to escape António de Oliveira Salazar's dictatorship and emigrated to France. The artist's experience of growing up in the Portuguese diaspora and community, as well as working alongside his father—who established a business delivering heating oil to homes and workshops—has influenced Almendra's practice, which often engages in an alternative economy based on generosity and exchange. This working–class ethos and custom of bartering are reflected in the artist's materials and his collaboration with artists, artisans, and anonymous individuals to realize his sculptures.

For his exhibition at DOCUMENT Lisbon, Almendra conceived a site–specific installation using large–scale glass sheets to cover and transform the walls that separate the gallery's main rooms. Titled *Labor Day*, this series of works features plants and what appear to be men's tank tops hanging over the edges of the glass panes. These components—like many others in Almendra's oeuvre—are cast metal reproductions of everyday objects and natural elements, meticulously painted to replicate their original counterparts. Throughout the exhibition, a pair of workers' gloves, sneakers, slugs, and figs scattered over rocky surfaces create a mundane trompe l'oeil, freezing time in a cinematic tableau where the actors— notably construction workers—are unseen but leave traces of their presence. These clothes and objects point to notions of desire as well as fragility, challenging traditional notions of masculinity.

In the ongoing series of wall sculptures *Model Home (Sonata)* that he began in 2012, Almendra assembles discarded and found materials into compositions structured with safety bars or railings, referencing the modernist architecture of North American and European suburban developments from the latter half of the 20th century, as well as window security bars. Cathedral glass, floor tiles, marble slabs, polystyrene insulation, and other construction materials gleaned on the road between France and Portugal form the 'notes' of Almendra's pieces. Some of these elements come from the artist's family home in Portugal, which he has been renovating and where he produces olive oil. The works are fragile yet solid, evoking conditions of existence traversed by contemporary flux and personal histories. This collection of *Sonatas* modifies the

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exhibition space, introducing introspective windows that both confront the constraints of modernism and propose “an environmental aesthetics of the working-class¹.”

Wilfrid Almendra was born in Cholet, France, in 1972.
He lives and works in Marseille, France and Casario, Portugal.

Almendra has presented solo exhibitions in France and internationally, including *Adelaïde*, Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Marseille, France (2022); *So Much Depends Upon A Red Wheel Barrow*, Atlantis Lumière, Marseille, France, as part of Manifesta 13 (2020); *Light Boiled Like Liquid Soap*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2017); *Light Boiled Like Liquid Soap*, Fogo Island Arts, Canada (2016); *Between the Tree and Seeing It*, Les Églises, Chelles (2014); *L'Intranquillité*, Centre d'art Passerelle, Brest (2013); *Matériologique*, Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris (2013). He has also taken part in a number of group shows, including *Sors de ta réserve #1*, Frac Île-de-France, Komunuma, Romainville, France (2022); *100 Artistes dans la ville - ZAT 2019*, MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain, Montpellier, France (2019); *Singing Stones*, DuSable Museum of African American History, Chicago, IL (2017); *Flatland / abstractions narratives #1*, MRAC, Sérignan, France (2016); *L'Esprit du Bauhaus*, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, France (2016); *Let's Play*, Galerie du cloître, Rennes, France, as part of the Biennale d'art contemporain (2014); *Parapanorama*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2014); *Vue d'en haut*, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France (2013); *Skyscraper: Art and Architecture Against Gravity*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA), Chicago, IL (2012); *Zones arides*, Lieu Unique, Nantes, France, and Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris, France (2007), traveled to Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson, AZ (2008); *L'Histoire d'une décennie qui n'est pas encore nommée*, Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France (2007). He was nominated for the Prix Meurice and the Prix Maif for Contemporary Art in 2010, and was awarded an Audi Talent Award for Contemporary Art in 2008.

1 Lemos, Sofia. “Adelaïde: Naming an Environmental Aesthetics of the Working-class.” In *Adelaïde*, by Wilfrid Almendra, 7–15. Marseille, France: Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, 2022.

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