



MALTE BARTSCH
T.I.N.A.
25.10. - 06.12.2024

MALTE BARTSCH

***1984 (Braunschweig / DE)**

Malte Bartsch studied with a number of important artists, including Tadashi Kavamata at the Beaux-Arts in Paris, and Olaffur Eliasson at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK). In 2015 he completed his studies as a master student of Manfred Pernice.

His oeuvre encompasses a wide range of visual media – sculpture, installation, photography, and video. His focus is on the themes of modern machinery and technology, which often present themselves to the viewer in a dystopian manner. More concretely, they are intended to visualize the unclear future of the relationship between man and machine.

Bartsch's art broaches the subject of man by integrating him directly into the production of his (often) ephemeral works. This interactivity is, for example, revealed in *Feuerwehrautomat II* (2018), in which the dramaturgy of a firework display is in the hands of the observer. Such interactivity between viewer and work is also displayed in the works *Insert Coin* (2014) and *Coin Drop* (2015). *Time Machine* (2013) prompts the viewer to press a red button, causing the machine to issue a receipt indicating the duration of the button press, the time, and the location of the machine. The boundary between work and beholder, between machine and man, disappears, opening up further questions about their shared present and future (co-existence).

His works have been shown at Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, Art Space Lemoyne in Zurich, Kunsthalle Charlottenborg in Copenhagen, Kunstverein Bochum, Neue Nationalgalerie as well as Eigen + Art Gallery in Berlin and other venues.

Malte Bartsch lives and works in Berlin (DE).



Margaret Thatcher, the „Iron Lady“ of neoliberalism, earned the nickname „Tina“ for her political slogan „There is no alternative“. Malte Bartsch takes up this phrase in the title of his exhibition at KALI Gallery, but invites us to read it against the grain: In our crisis-ridden present, where not only economic „progress“ has reached its limits, there is indeed no alternative. There is no alternative to finally taking action to create a more social and ecological future.

In his works, Malte Bartsch engages with questions of economic policy and social sciences, positioning himself as a critic of neoliberal societal formations. In the exhibition T.I.N.A., the artist focuses on the relationship between nature and technology. For the development of the series of works shown here, the mythological figure of Prometheus was an important reference point. The Titan Prometheus brought fire to humanity, laying the groundwork for technological advancements and the possibility of human emancipation from nature. With fire, early humans could not only cook their food, increasing calorie intake and promoting brain growth, but fire also extended the day and encouraged people to tell stories in its light. According to anthropologist Polly Wiessner, this storytelling served to reinforce cultural norms, foster empathy, and strengthen a sense of togetherness, even beyond one's own group. The concept of the „Pyrocene,“ coined by Stephen Pyne, extends this perspective further, emphasizing that humanity, through the technology of fire, not only transformed themselves but also radically altered the Earth. In the current era of the „third fire,“ in which we are burning fossil fuels on a massive scale, the historian succinctly observes: „We've begun to cook the planet.“





Malte Bartsch

Tipping Point

C-Print, framed in smoked oak, museum glass

41 x 51 x 3 cm

16 1/8 x 20 1/16 x 1 3/16 in

Edition of 3

2024



Malte Bartsch

Soft Landing (ewige Flamme)

Mouth blown glass, Alucore

27 x 22 x 16 cm

10 5/8 x 8 5/8 x 6 5/16 in

Unique

2024





Malte Bartsch picks up the theme of fire in two works in the exhibition: the glass sculptures *Soft Landing (Eternal Flame)* (2024), whose forms resemble flames, and the cast aluminum sculpture *Macchina del fuoco artificiale* (2024). The „machine of artificial fire“ is inspired by fireworks and market-driven logics. The artist connects these two seemingly different contexts through their shared trait of „creative destruction“: creation and destruction condition each other in an endless cycle. The base of the sculpture recalls a fragment of a Baroque building, referring to the 18th-century practice at European courts of constructing elaborate backdrops for fireworks displays (which often caught fire during the spectacle, whether intentionally or as collateral damage remains unclear). These fireworks were part of grand parades celebrating the king, entertaining the population, and likely also serving to stabilize existing power structures. Yet, they could not prevent the upheaval of the French Revolution. In the upper part of the sculpture, figures in business suits can be seen riding locusts. This locust metaphor refers to corporations that buy up companies, saddle them with debt, and often dismantle them to meet short-term and excessive profit expectations. The fireworks depicted in Bartsch’s sculpture, unlike those of the 18th-century aristocracy, are on the side of the people, hinting that an economic logic based on profit maximization and progress for the few is about to go up in flames. And, as many a phoenix has risen from the ashes, we might hope that something new and better will emerge from this destruction.





Malte Bartsch

Macchina del fuoco artificiale

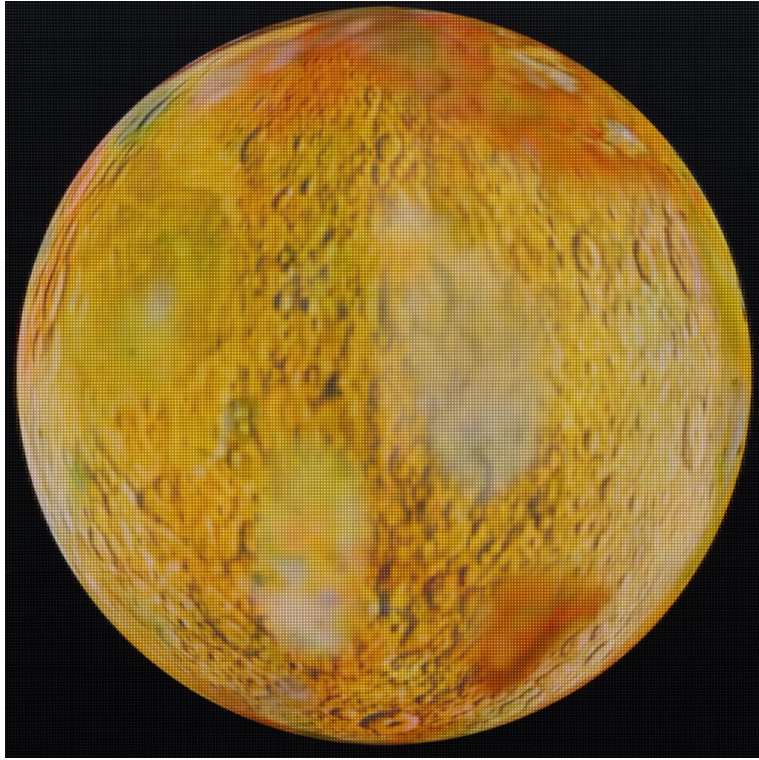
Aluminium

146 x 42 x 35 cm

57 1/2 x 16 1/2 x 13 3/4 in

Unique

2024



Malte Bartsch

IO (Jupiter 1)

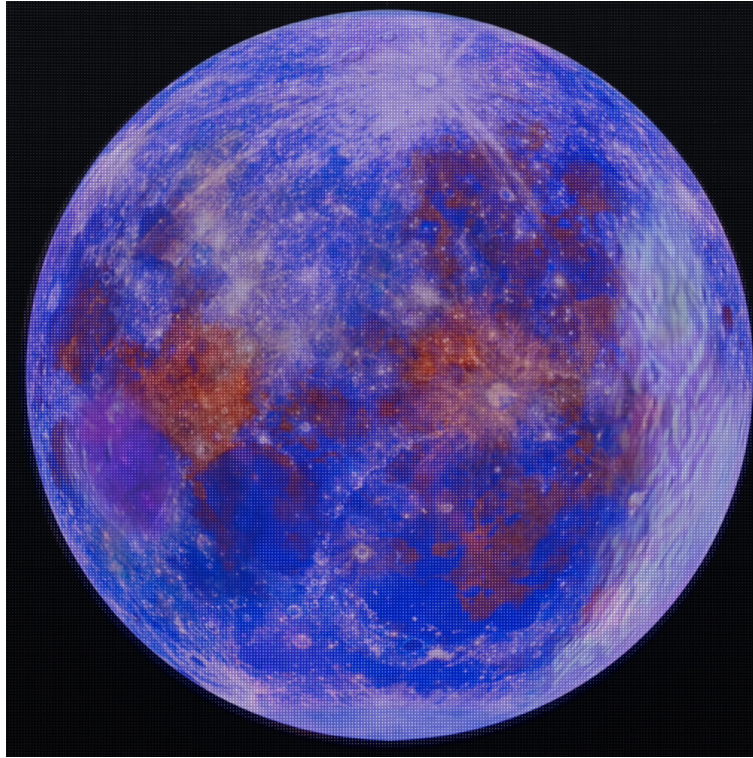
LED, Video Animation 1h Loop

100 x 100 x 10 cm

39 3/8 x 39 3/8 x 3 15/16 in

Unique

2024



Malte Bartsch

EUROPA (Jupiter 2)

LED, Video Animation 1h Loop

100 x 100 x 10 cm

39 3/8 x 39 3/8 x 3 15/16 in

Unique

2024





Malte Bartsch

Time Machine

Thermal printer with paper, cable, plug, time

42 x 31 x 13 cm

16 1/2 x 12 1/5 x 5 1/8 in

Open Edition since 2013



The question of what life can arise from the ruins of capitalism is also addressed by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing in her book *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (2015). In it, the anthropologist develops her concept of „assemblage,“ which proves fruitful for Bartsch’s exhibition, particularly in terms of the dimension of time. Assemblages, as described by Lowenhaupt Tsing, are complex entanglements between human and non-human actors that are polyphonic, loose, dynamic, unpredictable, and unexpected (in contrast to a traditional, linear, progress-oriented view of social and ecological developments). She emphasizes the coexistence and overlapping of different temporalities: the actors of an assemblage follow their own, distinct rhythms. If we let go of our fixation on progress (which, as with Bartsch’s fireworks machine, is on the verge of burning out), we can perceive these diverse temporalities. Thus, the exhibition can be understood as a kind of assemblage where different actors meet, each breathing their own temporal rhythms but also connecting with one another to form something new: fire, trees, artworks, moons, screens, time machines, people, spaces.





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C-Print, framed in smoked oak, museum glass

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2024



Malte Bartsch

Soft Landing (ewige Flamme)

Mouth blown glass, Alucore

23 x 18 x 12.5 cm

9 1/16 x 7 1/8 x 4 15/16 in

Unique

2024



Malte Bartsch

Soft Landing (ewige Flamme)

Mouth blown glass, Alucore

24 x 23 x 13 cm

9 7/16 x 9 1/16 x 5 1/8 in

Unique

2024

In my search for a connection with the works, their materiality—the aluminum, the glass, the impenetrable blue of the photographic prints, the digitally mediated surfaces of the moons—initially echoed back my visual probing. But then I imagined the surfaces becoming permeable, diving into the works, swimming in the molten glass, walking on the moons, riding the locusts, inhaling the fine dust of the fireworks and the scent of pine needles in the fog, immersing myself in their times.

I leave the exhibition space with this assemblage between nature and technology, but not without pressing the red button on the Time Machine (since 2013): for each work, the perceived number of seconds.

For further information or enquiries, please contact info@kaligallery.com or visit www.kaligallery.com

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Photos: Kim da Motta

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