

15 January - 5 March 2022



New Amsterdam No. 2, 1993, photoprint mounted on pleated canvas, 142 x 132 cm.

AKINCI is proud to present the second solo exhibition with Miguel Angel Ríos (1943). The title of the exhibition 'deterritorialization' was chosen by the artist and hints at historical demarcations and their elimination and replacement by new ones. In this exhibition we will be presenting Miguel Angel Ríos' 'Mapas', made between 1992 and 2000, for the first time in the Netherlands.

Born in Catamarca, Argentina, Miguel Angel Ríos chose to settle in the USA in the 1970's and lived and worked later in both the USA and Mexico. In the early 1990's Ríos started working on his 'Mapas'. No doubt that Ríos' interest was triggered by the five hundredth celebration of the discovery of the Americas in 1992. The cultural debates about the 'Encounter of two Worlds' have inspired Ríos, as precisely during this year he started to work on his

maps, taking the colonial period as his point of departure. The ideological implications of the cartographic discipline were of tremendous interest for Ríos.

When one looks at cartographic maps of those days, one can see that the territories have been marked according to religious, military or mercantilist ideology of the conquerors. In the case of the first cartographic maps of the American continent it is obvious that e.g. native villages are obliterated while the colonial settlements are being emphasized.

In his 'Mapas', Ríos is actually 'dis-mapping' America. He decomposes the logical cohesion and orientation of the historical cartographic map by scattering the contents, creating new compositions according to new orders and making absent territories present. Some of the 'Mapas' are fragmented by vertical lines, with geometric pleats and folds referring to the surface of a landscape but also to the South-American Quipu-system. This method of encoded knots was used by the Incas to record detailed information, such as tax obligations and military organisation. The rearrangement of Ríos' 'Mapas' weaves this tradition through the colonial cartography, making the 'Encounter of two Worlds' tangible. Other 'Mapas' are deprived of a stable centre and contain multiple points of orientation in their new form, reflecting the multiple perspectives in history, violence and politics.

This body of work by Miguel Angel Ríos from the early 1990's mark an important period in his career, and he has made a name for himself with his 'Mapas' which are in various important collections, a.o. at the MoMA New York. However, his break-through in Europe was marked by his video films of carefully choreographed black and white spinning tops he started to produce in Mexico from 2000 onwards and the three-channel film 'A Morir' that had been shown at Art Basel Unlimited in 2003. In 2008 Ríos made his film 'Crudo': a dancer in an immaculate white suit, who is dancing and swinging humps of raw meat at the ends of ropes while he is being attacked by a pack of hungry and ferocious dogs. Comparable to the circular arrangements in his maps, the whirling dancer swings his lassos in circular movements in order to keep the dogs at a distance, as though he is dancing to save his life.

Ríos always chooses carefully the space of action, be it in his films of the spinning tops, the dancer's realm or the manipulated cartographic maps: it is the space where extremes meet, where existence is at stake, or as Raphael Rubinstein wrote: 'at the verge of chaos where borders burn'. One of Ríos' most recent films 'Endless' (2014/2020) is making borders very visible, almost tangible. The scenario takes place in the wild landscape in Tepoztlan in Mexico where Ríos with his crew has cleaned a territory from the branches of

the huisache (*Acacia farnesiana*) in order to pile them up to more than thirty meters of labyrinthic endless seeming parallel walls, creating a void between them. This work, shot in 2014 and now presented at AKINCI, has a direct political reference. With its strong imagery and soundtrack, 'Endless' is a metaphor for the ongoing South American migrant tragedy at the border between Mexico and the United States.

Miguel Angel Ríos (1943, Catamarca, Argentina) has had solo exhibitions at museums across the world, including Röda Sten Konsthall, Göteborg, SE (2019), Galería Barro, Buenos Aires, AR (2019), MUCEM, Marseilles, FR (2017), ASU Art Museum, Temple, USA (2015), Museum of Fine Arts Houston, USA (2013), Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City (2013), Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, USA (2012), Museo Carrillo Gil, México DF (2011), Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2009), Maison Européenne de la Photographie MEP, Paris (2011 and 2009), Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2008), and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (2005). His videos have been screened during La Biennale de Lyon, FR (2015), Liverpool Biennial, GB (2011), and), the Biennale of Sydney, AU (2010).

He participated in group exhibitions at a.o. Suzanne Dellal Centre, Tel Aviv, IL (2021), Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA (2021), UCCA Dune, Qinhuangdao, CN (2019), Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, IT (2018), The Parkview Museum Singapore (2017-2018), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, NZ (2016), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, DE (2015), Centro del Carmen, Valencia, ES (2014), New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA (2014), Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes, FR (2013), Busan Museum, KR (2012), Tranen Contemporary Art Center, DK (2012), Molaa Museum of Latin American Art, USA (2011), The National Museum in Warsaw, PL (2010), and Daros Exhibitions, Zürich, CH (2009). He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and has received numerous awards including the John Guggenheim Fellowship (1998) for his work exploring the mediums of painting, drawing and collage.

Ríos work can be found in many international collections, a.o. the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, NL, Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich, CH, MoMA, New York, USA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA, and Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, ES, and is included in a large number of private collections.