

Ingrid Wiener,
Martin Roth

From far away you see more

Space01

10.02.–21.05.2023

Martin Roth and Ingrid Wiener did not know each other. They started from different places, their materials and techniques can hardly be compared. A whole generation lies between them, which is relevant for their biographies, opportunities and the issues they explore. Ingrid Wiener was born during World War II. She was not allowed to graduate from high school and her education followed a path defined by others. Martin Roth was born during the oil crisis of the 1970s and found his way while studying in New York, where he lived, worked and died very unexpectedly, far too young. What connects them is their clear, unobstructed view from a distance—their art allows us to sharpen our perception of the world as the whole of the environment.

Domesticated

A small, aesthetically shaped tree grows from a plinth, elevated and isolated. The Japanese word *bonsai* means 'planted in a pot' and refers to the Chinese tradition of creating miniature landscapes to reflect the harmony between humans and nature. The lonely tree is surrounded by animal voices that converge in a soundscape from loudspeakers. They come from stick insects, finches, fish and other creatures that can be bought in pet shops to be kept at home or to feed to other animals. Harmony is artificially produced and commercially dependent. The natural state is fundamentally undermined, however. Animals kept to be fed to other animals, and plants pruned to be pleasing to the eye. To what extent should culture—and so each individual—be allowed to make use of animals and plants?

The View

This view from the window is the first work that Ingrid Wiener realised alone in an exploration of technique and her own surroundings. Previously, collaborations with Dieter Roth and VALIE EXPORT had influenced her work, which developed in strong dialogue. The picture of the street is fragmented, yet its weave becomes denser with each weft

and at the same time returns to the loom as it becomes part of the work. At this time Ingrid Wiener was living in Canada, deliberately close to nature and away from the intense Berlin nightlife where she had been a restaurant owner and well-known cook.

The 'loneliest bird' looks out of the window of Martin Roth's car as he takes him across America from the pet shop to the freedom of a bird sanctuary. Who's driving who? Whose perspective on the world are we following? By the end of the journey the two have made friends. The bird has begun to imitate the navigation device and will not leave the artist's side.

Waste

The expanse of rubble in the middle of the exhibition space contains the abandoned fragments of old buildings, which are held in the frame on the free exhibition area and become a vivid pictorial quotation. As the scene is overgrown and reclaimed by nature, will time heal over the wounds of this apocalyptic landscape? 'The master is outdated', says Martin Roth—the age of the old male narrative of the victorious hero has outlived its purpose before our eyes, global crises cannot be beaten in human conflict, they can only be overcome by communities. In the exhibition space,

the 'dust of conflicts' becomes a memorial to territorial power grabs and catalysts of destruction. Ingrid Wiener sought allies to weave her pictures in the dialogue of warp and weft. Her gaze falls on the tangle of cables under a friend's table, or on the 'flat waste' that conceptual artist Dieter Roth sent her by post for their collaboration. She processes this alternately with her own views of everyday life on her travel loom, weaving them into a chessboard of life. What attracts her attention is the inconspicuous, the overlooked, the trivial. The work is hung in open space as a special presentation that allows us to see her work from both sides.

Preserved

Display cases from the founding years of the Graz Natural History Museum contain the dream drawings of Ingrid Wiener. In the 19th century, these cases were used to organise 'nature'. Animals, grasses, minerals—everything was collected, documented and researched. Animals from the region or even from 'exotic' overseas territories were hunted down to be collected and made accessible. Today, many species need to be protected in their own habitat, otherwise in the future we will only be able to marvel at them in museums. Martin Roth saw

animals and plants as his collaborators, and actively 'caring for them' as part of his work. Time, closeness, nurturing and patience play a role here, but also the improvement of so-called civilised (humane) conditions. Ingrid Wiener's dreams process what she has seen and remembered—personal introspection becomes a questioning of her own perception.

Distance

Ingrid Wiener took these pictures of the Canadian landscape from above while flying over it with her husband—the artist and linguist Oswald Wiener—in their own plane. From a distance, the landscape is revealed as a fabric of shifting transitions, a myriad of patterns. The leather jacket was a gift and once belonged to the polar explorer Lincoln Ellsworth, in whose footsteps they explored the Arctic landscape from above in their Cessna. Martin Roth flies a drone over the monotonous landscape of plastic greenhouses in Spain. The surface of the Earth is wrapped in packaging like the vegetables delivered to us from there every day. Production conditions and consumer behaviour, which can be captured in countless price tags, are also the subject of Martin Roth's work when he has 'beautiful' landscape

pictures painted in China from his own photographs. The price tag, which Ingrid Wiener weaves into the chessboard and Martin Roth uses as material for his paintings, becomes a symbol of the two generations—from the economic boom to the affluent society and the struggle for oil as the fuel for reckless profit orientation. What is our price?

Time

The Persian carpet often symbolises an image of the garden that is placed in the living room. Martin Roth uses it as a *hortus* (garden) and grows grass on it. His artistic approach aimed to change the reality of the viewers. Since its existence can only be cultivated and not controlled, art also eludes conservation. It vanishes as time elapses and can only be preserved as an idea. However, the woven work of Ingrid Wiener also eludes a full overview while it is being created. Only when the last weft is completed and the work can be taken off the loom and unrolled does the result become visible. Martin Roth sows the idea and leaves everything else to biological processes, such as the need to care for a meadow, plants or animals generated by human dependence. In Ingrid Wiener's work, warp and weft are patiently blended over long periods of

time to form object-like pictures, which, nailed to frames with their loose fringes, show the finely differentiated weaving from close up. Organic and artificial are interwoven in Martin Roth's temporary works of art. They create a distance that clarifies our view of what is closest to us and ties in many connecting thoughts.

Martin Roth
The work of Martin Roth (Graz 1977 – New York 2019) is defined by the direct connection between creating and caring for his living environment. Animals and plants are a central element.

Ingrid Wiener
Ingrid Wiener (* 1942 in Vienna) combines her adventures and experiences and processes them in her tapestries, films, photos and dream drawings.

Accompanying programme in English language:

Thur, 23.02., 4–7 pm
KoOgle: Ritual Dance of the gardener
Material experiments with Margo Sarkisova

Guided tours through the Kunsthhaus Graz: Sunday, 2–3 pm, holidays, 11–12 am.

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Opening: 09.02.2023, 6 pm

Curated by Katrin Bucher Trantow,
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This text is published as an
accompanying booklet to the exhibition
as a format of art education.

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