

CURATORIAL TEXT

Temporary Atlas.

Mapping the Self in the Art of Today

Curated by Alfredo Cramerotti

Temporary Atlas is an exhibition that presents an alternative, complementary idea to mapping as conceived in a traditional sense. We know that there is a map and a map. There is a societally-endorsed, scientifically applied cartography and an individually perceived one – after all, not every aspect of our environment or our life has the same value. Each of us assesses, prioritises and rates things in a different way, and this means that we can distinguish between cartographers-explorers and cartographers-artists.

A map appears real precisely because it is immediate, legible and relevant to our eyes and senses. But if one understands the link between reality and representation, as it exists within a work of art, it is clear that what is perceived as immediate is actually the product of the relationship between experience and means of representation. In a customary mode, the instantaneous interaction between these two elements brings us to decode a chart or diagram – being that of space, time or event – without much thinking of it. This phenomenon, though, understates the complexity and enormity of the neural connections, the bodily and thinking processes that produce it, and the fact that our beliefs, sensitivities and memories affect what we are able to read and make sense of.

The fourteen cartographers-artists of Temporary Atlas do not turn their gaze exclusively on the outside, but rather activate their senses towards themselves, aiming to clarify their experiences, perceptions, identities, emotions and physical and mental sensations. They adopt an approach to orientation that is based on the traditional meaning of map as a representation of reality, but which expands it, complicates it, and challenges it, – developing the concept of cartography along unconventional paths – those of the subconscious, spirituality, thought, identity, feeling, and all the idiosyncrasies that are present and intermingle in each of us.

Walking through the two floors of exhibition in Gallerie delle Prigioni, the visitor perceives with greater clarity that however much an artistic work can engage reality head-on, and reality itself (individual or collective) can be understood or imagined beyond representation, it is also true that much depends precisely on the choice of which criteria are adopted to externalise this relationship, and by what means.

The result of what we want to read in a representation (cartographic or artistic) ultimately depends not on its fidelity to the object or subject represented but on what methods and rules we intend to follow in this reading. Temporary Atlas is a visual, aural and spatial attempt to identify the fleeting border between these two extremes: a transversal, intimate and perceptive reading of the individual situation of the person who, in the midst of a global pandemic yet to be resolved, re-evaluates their own priorities. In turn, the exhibition describes the emotional-political-aesthetic horizon of that public – the visitors – who expect something from art in order to reflexively understand their daily reality.

Biography Alfredo Cramerotti

Alfredo Cramerotti is an author and curator of art and media formats. He is Director of MOSTYN Wales, for which he has curated over 30 exhibitions since 2011, Advisor to the British Council Visual Arts Acquisition Committee and the Art Institutions of the 21st Century Foundation. He has organised international exhibitions, including the Ideal-Types series (Venice 2019 and Amsterdam 2018), Sean Scully at the Hong Kong Arts Centre (2018), Shezad Dawood: Leviathan at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia on the occasion of the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), EXPO VIDEO Chicago (2015) and three National Pavilions at the Venice Biennale (Mauritius 2015, Wales and Maldives in 2013). He also co-curated the biennial Sequences VII in Iceland (2015) and Manifesta 8 Region of Murcia (2010). He currently serves as President of IKT (International Association Curators of Contemporary Art), International Board Member of AICA (International Association of Art Critics), Executive Member of ICOM UK (International Council of Museums) and member of CIMAM (International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art). He has a PhD in Communication Design from the European Centre for Photography, University of South Wales, Cardiff, and is a Visiting Lecturer at several European and American universities. His academic work includes the theory and practice of hyper-imaging, which investigates the slippage of the image from representation to action/performance, and of aesthetic journalism, which addresses the relationship between art and elements of interview, documentary, fiction and reportage. He is editor-in-chief of the Critical Photography book series for Intellect Books and has published over 200 texts on art, media and curatorial practices, contributing to a large number of books, catalogues and monographs. His publications include *Curating the Image: Notebook for a Visual Journey* (2020); *Forewords: Hyperimages and Hyperimaging* (2018); *Unmapping the City: Perspective on Flatness* (2010); and *Aesthetic Journalism: How to Inform without Informing* (2009).