

galleria
raffaella
cortese

via a. stradella 7-4

t. j. wilcox

PRESS RELEASE

may 26 – september 2, 2023
opening thursday, may 25, 6–8pm

Galleria Raffaella Cortese is delighted to present the fourth chapter of its collaboration with T. J. Wilcox. The exhibition, which unfolds across two spaces, presents a number of recent drawings by the multidisciplinary artist centered around his latest video work. This is the first presentation of this body of work outside of the United States.

In via Stradella 4, the video *Trace of Life* (2022) features the artist's renowned assemblage of several different motion-picture techniques: time-lapse cinematography, Super 8 film, live-action shots, archival footage and photographs, as well as his signature narrative method of text laid over the imagery. The work, which evokes different perceptions of time and mark-making, is split into three acts that delve into the vestiges of events that have occurred from millions of years ago to the recent past.

The first act of the film, which Wilcox realized throughout and following his experience of the pandemic in New York, is devoted to glacial erratics, large boulders that are found on the coast of Long Island. These rocks, due to their massive size, intuitively appear to be symbols of stability amidst the waves and natural elements that affect the coastline, but are instead revealed to be wandering travelers, displaced from the Arctic Circle by the movement of glaciers during the last ice age.

As often is the case in T. J. Wilcox's practice, the second act of *Trace of Life* is an exploration of the life and legacy of a historical figure, Edie Sedgwick (1943–1971). The American actress and model, who rose to fame as a Warhol superstar, has been an indelible presence and had a profound impact on New York's downtown scene, acting as a beacon of glamour and desire until her tragic death. Wilcox's discovery that a close friend of his now resides in the same apartment where Sedgwick once lived was a revelation that triggered the artist's investigation into a hidden trace of Sedgwick's existence: an iconic image of her from the August 1965 issue of *Vogue* magazine, where she poses on an ottoman in front of a large drawing of a horse she had sketched directly on her wall.

This very photograph is the starting point for the installation of drawings in the via Stradella 7 space, *Edie* (2023). In these works, Wilcox crops and redacts the image, leaving only the monochrome walls of the apartment and the stallion to symbolize Edie's presence after her tragic passing. Covering her figure in silver leaf, Sedgwick is transformed into a sylph-like vestige, accentuating the whimsical lightness of the scene while also imbuing it with the fleeting nature of memory.

In the final chapter of *Trace of Life*, Wilcox delves into notions of mark-making through a fleeting exploration of the boardwalks and footpaths that wind through Fire Island. Once a sanctuary for New York's queer community and a symbol of carefree indulgence before the devastating AIDS epidemic, Fire Island still retains its slatted wooden walkways, which serve as the primary means of travel. Wilcox's lens zooms in on these weathered boards, breathing artistic vitality into the accumulation of footprints that have graced them. Through these intangible traces, Wilcox infuses life with a palpable sense of the past, where the echoes of those who came before linger in the memory of their footfalls.

BIOGRAPHY

T. J. Wilcox was born in Seattle, WA, in 1965. He lives and works in New York, NY and Milan, Italy.

Wilcox has presented his multi-disciplinary art work internationally since the late 1990s. His installation work has often been composed of film and video mediums, which take as their subject complex intersections of historical narrative, personalities, and cultural events interwoven with personal memory, myth, and anecdote. The artist's moving image work incorporates archival photographs, found footage, as well as original Super-8 and 16mm film, live-action digital video and various forms of animation, resulting in lyrical, collage-like narratives, underscored by poetic, subtitled texts, which accompany the imagery. The subjects and themes of his film and video work appear in different forms, including photographic prints and lightboxes, works of collage and drawings in many forms.

T. J. Wilcox received a BFA from The School of Visual Arts in New York and an MFA from Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. He is represented in the collections of institutions such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; National Portrait Gallery, London, UK; Tate Modern, London, UK; Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, Switzerland, among many others. He has had solo exhibitions at Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI (2015); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2014); Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford, Ireland (2012); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2007); Kunstverein München, Munich, Germany (2005) and participated in group exhibitions including *Natural Wonders: Sublime Artifice in Contemporary Art*, Brandywine River Museum of Art, Chadds Ford, PA (2018); *House Style: Five Centuries of Fashion at Chatsworth*, Chatsworth House, Bakewell, UK (2017); *J'aime les Panoramas*, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, Switzerland (2015); *La vie moderne*, La Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France (2015); the 47th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (1997), and the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (1997, 2004).