

Jean-Ulrick DESERT

16.09 – 28.10. 2017

caryl* ivrisse - crochemar & [creative renegades society.] are pleased to welcome and present the first solo exhibition in Martinique of Berlin based Haitian born artist, Jean-Ulrick Désert.

Jean-Ulrick Désert is a figure of the Caribbean/Antilles diaspora born in Port-au-prince during the era of the François (Papa Doc) Duvalier regime. The political entanglements of his parents led them to a life in exile in New York where he studied art and architecture at the elite institutions of the Cooper Union and Columbia University. The artist has established his atelier in Berlin since 2002 after several years as an artist-in-residence of the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

Concurrent with the exhibition at espace d'art contemporain 14°N 61°W, Jean-Ulrick Désert will also be featured retrospectively in Krakow Poland in "New Region of the World" at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art, in Brussels in conjunction with the Museum of Europe's "l'Islam c'est aussi notre histoire" and in Los Angeles at MoLAA (Museum of Latin American Art) as part of the Getty Foundation's "Pacific Standard Time" where a variation of the "Waters of Kiskeya" will be exhibited to the public.

The centerpiece of the exhibition at espace d'art contemporain 14°N 61°W is a large map "Waters of Kiskeya" and represents a poetic cartography of the Caribbean territory inspired by the hand-colored maps of 18th Century often found in antiquary dealers today. "Kiskeya" (and Ayiti*) are the native Taíno names for the island of Saint Domingue now designated as Hispaniola. The 275 cm x 183 cm map is rendered in various familiar styles such as flora & fauna atlases like those of John James Audubon (Born in Les Cayes before the Haitian Revolution) as well as the decorative motifs of such artists as Jean Théodore Dupas.

The map notably highlights the fractured and invisible lines of waters and borders between historical allies and enemies of a region tethered to empirical strategies of the past and present. This work reflects echoes of poetry from the cultures of the Caribbean as well as a literary sensibility found in the region from native voices such as Gabriel García Márquez, Maryse Condé and René Depestre.

Jean-Ulrick Désert's oeuvre crosses various mediums and styles the artist invites us to enter through our own illusions and understandings of past and current cultural history. He invites us to explore what may be hidden in plain sight while we are distracted by beauty.

His previous maps have included a 3D sculpture of the "Sky above Port-au-prince Haiti" coinciding with the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and his recent "Terra Nova Afrikæ 新非洲" on Africa and the supernatural incantations of China.

Jean-Ulrick Désert has exhibited since more than twenty years in venues in the USA as well as Europe and the Caribbean – notably at the Grand Palais ("Haiti deux siècle") and the Grande Halle de la Villette ("Kreyol Factory") The Havana Biennale and BIAC (Martinique) commissioned to create a work in the haitian diaspora neighborhood of Terres Sainville in Fort-de-France.

Jean-Ulrick Désert was also selected as the solo-artist to represent Haiti at the 56 Venice Biennale by the curator Giscard Bouchotte who has recently included his work at the fondation Clément's "(In)Visibilité Ostentatoire" exhibition in dialogue with a concept the artist has used in his work for the past several decades.

Jean-Ulrick Désert's work has been published in numerous books, journals and articles including the New York Times. He has lectured about his art practice at Museums and Universities, such as The Brooklyn Museum of Art in conjunction with the seminal exhibition on art from the Caribbean and diaspora "Infinite Islands" by Tumelo Musaka, and Zachęta – National Gallery of Art in Warsaw Poland where he spoke of the unrealized "Invisible" (Haitian) Pavilion of the 56 Venice Biennale.

... In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the

Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

Suárez Miranda, Travels of Prudent Men, Book Four, Ch. XLV, Lérida, 1658; from "A Universal History of Infamy", Jorge Luis Borges, 1935

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