

HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

Guillermo Kuitca

Hauser & Wirth Zürich
11 June – 27 August 2021



Informed by the worlds of architecture, music, theatre and cartography, Guillermo Kuitca's paintings seek to incite the potential for a theatrical experience. This summer, the celebrated Argentine artist returns to Hauser & Wirth Zürich with an exhibition of new and recent work exploring these long-standing motifs. Exhibited across the ground floor of the gallery, the presentation is divided into three distinct bodies of works: paintings from The Family Idiot series first exhibited in Los Angeles in 2019, new works including Kuitca's House Plan series made during the 2020 lockdown in Buenos Aires, and the artist's ongoing Theatre series. The exhibition opens during Zurich Art Weekend's June edition, and coincides with two major museum presentations: Kuitca's curated exhibition of the Fondation Cartier's collection at the Triennale di Milano, and 'Guillermo Kuitca – Dénouement' at Lille Métropole Musée d'art moderne, the first exhibition devoted to the artist in France for more than twenty years.

Since representing Argentina in the 2007 Venice Biennale, the artist has engaged in a unique cubistoid style, merging the Cubist tendencies of Picasso and Braque with his own abstract vocabulary. While this style has dominated Kuitca's practice over the past decade, the new works on view at Hauser & Wirth weave fresh elements of figuration into his preferred themes of domestic and communal spaces, which hold renewed meaning in the context of the pandemic. The works in the exhibition masterfully evoke feelings of isolation and detachment through this distinctive melding of figuration and abstraction and the artist's conceptual treatment of space.

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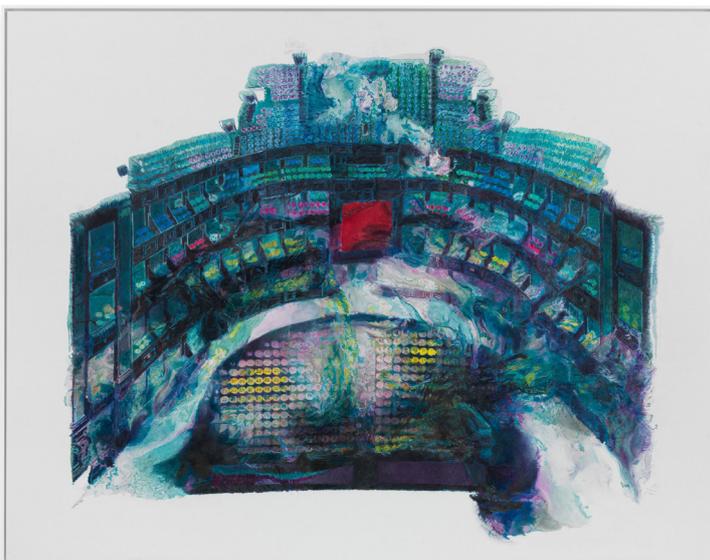


The first section of the exhibition in Zurich presents *The Family Idiot*, a series of paintings and triptychs picturing imaginary rooms. Drawing from Jean-Paul Sartre's three-volume study of Gustave Flaubert, the series expands the novel's core existential question: 'What at this point in time can we know about a man?'. Kuitca's paintings collapse, mirror, and fracture the architectural structures they depict, placing the viewer in spatial and temporal limbo. Although seemingly empty, they do employ a recurring set of motifs from the artist's career, drawing the viewer's eye closer to the canvas. Beds often serve as a sort of stage, suggesting notions of family and the domestic sphere, as seen in 'The Family Idiot (Sleeper in the mirror)' (2019), empty chairs provide a distinct feeling of alienation and disintegration in 'The Family Idiot' (2018), and the appearance of mirrored walls confound distinctions between proximity and distance. The works, disorientating and dark, disrupt the viewer's sense of certainty and in turn, the temptation to take for granted what is real in the world around us.

New paintings and works on paper occupy the main exhibition space, including Kuitca's *House Plan* series. These new works examine the artist's prevailing interest in blueprints and floorplans of domestic buildings, as seen in his mixed media work 'House plans (24 parts)' (2020). Despite working with this subject since the 1980s, these floor plans resonate on a deeper level today: at the time of making these paintings and drawings, Kuitca was locked down in his home in Buenos Aires. Observing that 'diagrams are neither abstraction nor successful representation,' Kuitca employs them to evoke both spatial and psychological experience during a period of isolation. In a number of new paintings, Kuitca layers dramatic landscapes under the floorplans in a bid to bridge two and three-dimensional realms of experience.



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The exhibition will also include a selection of works from Kuitca's Theatre series that build upon his long-standing involvement with the dramatic arts through an idiosyncratic integration of architectural features in two-dimensional space. The intimately scaled mixed media works on view draw upon seating maps from theatres around the world, such as the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, Teatro Real and the Mariinsky Theatre. By modifying found diagrams, Kuitca highlights the universality of illustrative signifiers while undermining their legibility through mixed media. With theatres and opera houses having been closed around the world, Kuitca has thought about the significance of intermissions in these dramatic spaces in relation to the pandemic. 'The idea that there is going to be a new act, where we don't know exactly what is going to happen', Kuitca comments, reflects the state of the world we are experiencing today.

About the artist

Born in 1961 in Buenos Aires, where he continues to live and work, Argentine artist Guillermo Kuitca's distinctive cubistoid style masterfully reconciles abstraction with an illusionist form of figuration. Kuitca first entered Argentina's art scene at the young age of 13 with a solo exhibition at the Galeria Lirloy in Buenos Aires. Today, his work is represented in some of the most distinguished collections across three continents. Kuitca's work has come to international renown through exhibitions including 'Projects' at The Museum of Modern Art in New York (1991); his participation in Documenta IX in Kassel (1992); and his representation of Argentina at the 2007 Venice Biennale. His status as one of Argentina's leading artist has been further confirmed by shows at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London (1995); the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC (2010); the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (2010) and The Drawing Centre in New York (2012). Kuitca's most recent solo exhibition venues include Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles (2019), the Kunsthaus Centre d'art Pasquart (2017) and Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2014). In 2017, Kuitca conceived and curated the show, 'Les Visitants', for the Fondation Cartier in Paris.

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Opening times:

Tuesday to Friday, 11 am – 6 pm

Saturday, 11 am – 5 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy information:

All images: © Guillermo Kuitca
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Planta Mar
2020
Oil on canvas
30 x 24 cm / 11 3/4 x 9 1/2 in

The Family Idiot
2018
Oil on canvas in artist frame, triptych 82 x 177.5 cm /
32 1/4 x 69 7/8 in

Untitled
2020
Oil on canvas
35 x 45 cm / 13 3/4 x 17 3/4 in

Untitled
2020
Oil on canvas
35 x 45 cm / 13 3/4 x 17 3/4 in

Untitled (Teatro Real)
2013-2015
Oil on canvas
195 x 249 x 3 cm / 76 3/4 x 98 x 1 1/8 in