

ROBERT WILSON

VIDEO PORTRAIT DRAWINGS

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

24 Jul 2011 - 24 Sep 2011



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac takes pleasure in announcing an exhibition in the Annex, of drawings by the American artist Robert Wilson. These works were created before, during and after Wilson's work on a series of video portraits – some of which will also be on show as screen installations – to which he has devoted his wealth of stage and pictorial language since 2004. Some show the final result of the filming process; others focus on a specific stage in the process or on an idea underlying the artistic rendering.

With all his experience as a stage-director and -architect, as a visual artist, designer, choreographer and curator, Robert Wilson continuously creates an innovative variety of portraiture, exploiting all the very latest technical resources for visualisation. Prominent personalities have been his models, including Isabelle Huppert, Brad Pitt, Winona Ryder, Zhang Huan and Marianne Faithfull, as well as completely unknown passers-by or even animals whose behaviour patterns arouse his interest.

Robert Wilson's portrait drawings in graphite pencil and ink are inspired by the precise details achieved in the medium of video in high resolution, supported and verifiable through playback systems. As a reference to his versatile mastery of stage-lighting effects, the original black and white images are backed with coloured foil of brilliant intensity, like that used for changing stage-coloration in the theatre.

Wilson's mises-en-scène are both constructed and authentic, biographic and sociographic, portraits of an individual life or of an epoch. Besides the subject's precisely fantasised appearance and character, the pose sometimes alludes to sources in cultural history – as for instance Johnny Depp in drag, as Rose Sélavy, the female pseudonym of Marcel Duchamp.

Robert Wilson was born in Waco, Texas, in 1941. After studying at the University of Texas, he attended the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. One of the main protagonists in Manhattan's nascent avant-garde scene, he developed his work through significant 1960s artistic stimuli, from performance to minimal art, which were later to play a part in his legendary theatre and opera productions, and subsequently in his installations, environments and object art. In 1976, his work *Einstein on the Beach*, a collaboration with the musician Philip Glass, earned worldwide acclaim, and during the 1980s he was increasingly in demand at theatres and opera-houses in Europe and the USA.

The Watermill Centre he founded on Long Island in 1992 is devoted to creative experimental collaboration in a variety of genres. Works by Robert Wilson are on view in renowned international collections including the Guggenheim Museum/New York, National Gallery/Berlin, Vitra Design Museum/Weil am Rhein and Barbican Centre/London.