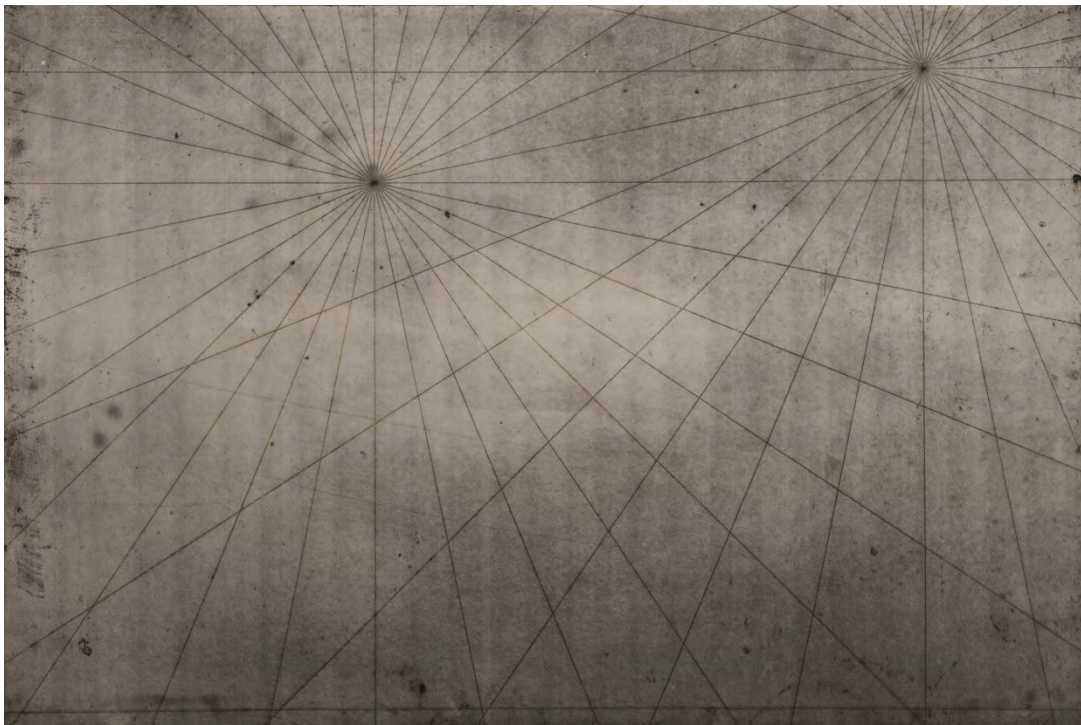


Artist in Focus: Theodore Ereira-Guyer

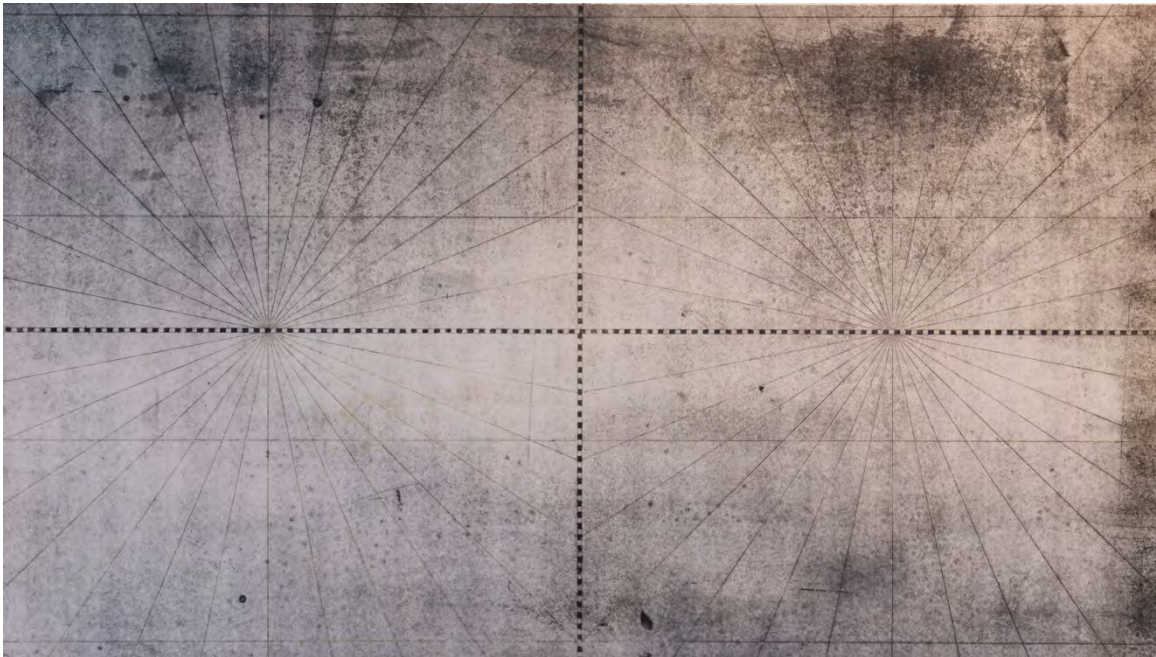
Theodore Ereira-Guyer is a multi-disciplinary artist working predominantly in the fields of print, photography and sculpture. The artist explores what happens when knowledge systems are broken or manipulated activating a form of remembrance and agency. He often starts with atavistic materials thus retriggering what has been dormant. They become a vessel relating back to that which has passed but also bring it into a present and future context.

Such atavistic materials are maps. The artist is interested in the form and process of mapping; how it began and altered as the world got larger during the age of European 'discovery'. Portugal was at the forefront of cartographical techniques until the 1500s. The artist explains, "it was a very interesting moment in time. I am particularly interested by the last maps made of Portugal and the West coast of Europe before the American coast was found. Up until this point, mapping was done with estimated distances from the purported locations. This was the time when longitude and latitude started to be used to describe space in a more objective sense. The 1500s was one of the true beginnings which led to political thought in the early modern era". The artist removes all the information leaving the cartographical lines and the processes that made the map for us to see. Now, a new map is formed. The lines, which are supposed to guide us, are still bound in space by the mapping system but instead become forms that we enjoy and explore with our eyes. As the title suggests, in his work *'For each eye'* the viewer's eyes are drawn to two central points, for example originally one point designated Lisbon, an important port in order to be able to sail to Brazil.



For each eye 2016

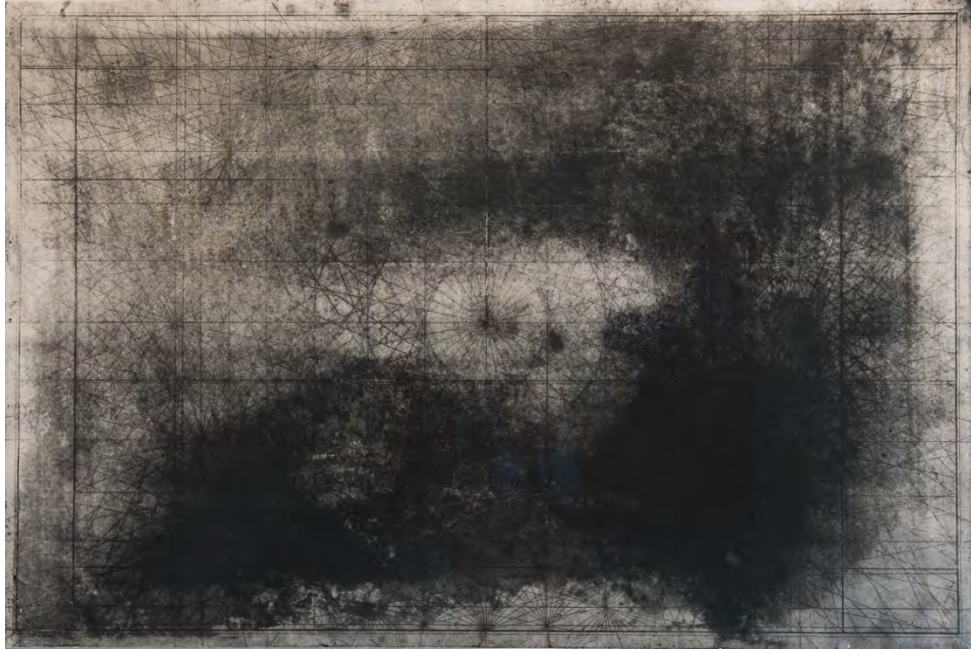
The system which is supposed to guide us is undermined yet remains in a loose framework. One is reminded of past empires condemned now to history but which have shaped our lives and can be seen to exist in a new emergent form today. What becomes mapped is the actual material used to transfer the image; “it starts to map the method of its own production”. We are not simply confronted with a map of somewhere but are presented with a distilled relation with what it means to map and why. Is it to increase understanding, create a shared sensibility of the world for utopian ideals, or by states as a system of control?



Theatrum Mundi 2016

The various areas of serendipitous marks are also mapped. Through the artist's printing techniques, he can promote such activity by using copper sulphate and nitric acid causing small explosions to take place. The metal plates are treated to repeated etchings, submerging the metal again and again in the acid. Such sustained physical and chemical processes lead to the metal beginning to wear away. This promotes the buildup of a network of marks, which in turn become mapped by the mapping system already etched into the surface of the plate.

“Etching allows one to alter the object, the image, allowing it to become part of something else, to extend beyond its original perimeters”



Overlapping routes 2016

In '*Spitting Distance*' 2015, the artist has added UV light emulsion as well as layers of wax to the etching plate. In a technique called spit biting (a process involving painting with acid directly onto the plate), nitric acid and copper sulphate react with sugar and salt granules stimulating bursts of marks. What is left after the printing process is a rich and undulating surface capturing these energetic processes in time.



Spitting distance 2015

“There is a kind of moment of revelation when you take the paper off the press...one is allowing the material, the process and another kind of intelligence to come through”

Due to the emphasis on process and the erosion of the metal etching plates, many of the artist’s works cannot be printed again. This results in the work being unique, subsumed by the very investigative processes that forms the image. Ereira-Guyer prints in a closed edition of two, fulfilling the idea of the unique but also the latent potential of print to exist in multiple contexts.



Where bandits hide (mountains, desert, forest) 2016

‘Where bandits hide’ is a series of prints with very clear painterly qualities formed not by an additive process, such as the building up of an image through multiple printing methods, but by a subtractive process and taking away layers. It is another example of the artist removing elements from an image.

This intriguing technique incorporates an erosive process enhanced by the systematic adding of acid to varnish on the etching plate which outlines the image. The artist remarks, “it is a process of painting and using the acid but I like to allow the resist to wear away. The varnish wears down and starts to get eaten by the acid, the disappearance of the intentional mark begins to get swallowed up by the very process that attempts to make it present or permanent”. Again, there are opportunities for uncontrollability through small eruptions leaving behind intriguing marks; “depending on how much metal is exposed at any one moment you get these unrestrained explosions when the acid heats up”.

“Sometimes you can learn things through your experience or your description of it, or by deconstructing its form and idea”

The artist shows just the essence of the original image but we will never see this original. The remnants of the printing process start to act as the physical qualities of the scene; rock strata, clouds, earth et cetera. Such rich textural qualities make the work especially haptic where one feels not with touch but through visual perception with their eyes.



Where bandits hide (desert, mountains, forest) 2016

“I was thinking about the architecture of the desert, forest and mountains as places to escape and where normal rules might be suspended”

The artist has a detailed experience of such landscapes. During a project in Jordan, he explored the desert wilderness of Wadi Rum.



Like somewhere else 2016

“This place seems to activate a sense of intelligence; perhaps at the site of a transcendental limit beyond language”

This vast area, often described as the place on earth that looks most like Mars, is almost beyond mapping. It is mostly featureless, with regards to how we normally map and describe places topographically, with very few inhabited areas and the seemingly endless repetition of geographical form.

However, it has a rich, mostly silent, history of intrigue and mystique with ancient lost languages carved onto walls, and in modern times as a filming location for the 1962 film *Lawrence of Arabia* as it was reported that T E Lawrence allegedly passed through several times during the Arab Revolt.

There is a curious juxtaposition between the local and the universal in *‘Like somewhere else’*, which was taken with a large format camera on to 4x5 inch colour negatives. The rock strata in the foreground has an uncertain level of depth but this is nothing compared to the vast and colossal backdrop.

“With a forest you select a few trees to study rather than the whole forest...I find it interesting when they clash. As, if you select too few trees the sense of a forest is lost but the forest as a whole is too vast to be studied. This process of selection is one solution to capturing a landscape so vast but there always remains a tension between the singular tree; that of the specimen, the specific, the local and that of a desire to form larger more expansive thought in the form of universality. This is a large topic that has recently been explored greatly by likes of the French Philosopher Bruno Latour”

‘The warmth of visibility’ are works which were inspired from original woodcuts from the *Book of Martyrs*, first published in 1563. Fire was at once the conveyor of light and it was these woodcut images of fire that were produced during the period of Enlightenment but it is also the same fire that burnt to death protestant martyrs. The artist has taken the same fire images from the book but has removed the martyrs through his reproductions. Now, they become single images of a fire or a flame. Furthermore, the artist has reverted back to the same woodcutting technique. Yet, rather than using paper the artist has printed onto reflective self-insulating material, often used to keep heat in during medical emergencies.

“The really exciting aspect of the woodcut technique is that it was one of the first mediums that allowed us to create multiples and has been with us for so long, since around the second century AD; it has a vast history as a medium to create and share ideas through books and mapping with the capacity to increase the circulation of images. I find that shared experience and depiction that could have existed from village to village and even family to family incredibly fascinating”

“I am interested in the price paid for light...at the time of the English Enlightenment when sources of knowledge were being challenged. Whether that was with the advent of Protestantism and the reformation or the scientific revolution of Francis Bacon”

“I am also thinking of that moment where enlightenment comes from today; the idea of the self with the self-insulating material...now enlightenment seems to be inextricably linked with and expected to come from the individual”



The warmth of visibility 2015

“What I enjoy about obsolete mediums [in the sense that they no longer fulfil their purpose outside of the arts] is that I am no longer printing my etching and multiples in order to proliferate far and wide - instead one would choose the internet or digital printing. But it allows me to really look at the medium and see what was missed in its capacity to encapsulate ideas as well as the special histories it contains. Printing can fill a zone that exists partly between fine art and also the everyday life of the newspaper, books and of course mapping”

The artist has edited these atavistic images over 423 years later. Combined with the historic yet also renewed methods he aligns himself within the context of the world history of Enlightenment and continues its discourse; questioning what it means today and in the future; “it is a search for the threads that run through history, uncovering a deeper critique of our contemporary thinking, notions of progress and its historical aberrations. On whose shoulders are we standing?”. Could we now be the martyrs reflecting in the flames?

Theodore Ereira-Guyer is an artist based in London and Lisbon, he studied at Central Saint Martins, NUA and the Royal College of Art in London. He is currently undertaking a PhD at the Colégio das Artes at the University of Coimbra in Portugal. During his studies, he won the acclaimed Helen Chadwick Award. He has had international solo exhibitions in England, Romania, Jordan, Hong Kong and Belize and group exhibitions in Spain, Hong Kong and several in England. His artworks are in the collections of the British Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, the Royal College of Art Archive and The Lookout Collection as well as in private collections around the world. The artist’s work was sold at the Asia Contemporary Art Fair and Multiplied at Christie’s South Kensington. The artist has also exhibited at the Clifford Chance postgraduate printmaking exhibition in London.

The artist Theodore Ereira-Guyer was in conversation with Edward Sheldrick in September 2016 during Elizabeth Xi Bauer’s group exhibition *Coated in Pre-Existence*