

2014. The painting shows a lighthouse—the last structure left standing on the island—toppling into the sea, a serpent’s form lurking in the background. There’s a suggestion of death in the ghostly figure on the lookout deck.

In *Jason* (2014), a whaling ship painted on a vintage nautical map of Cape Cod captures the maritime ethos of the time and place. Notable among depictions of shipwrecks was *Wreck at Wellfleet* (2013), in which a luminous moon hovers on the horizon behind a silhouetted ship. Other paintings, such as *Amos (the Last Inhabitant of the Lost Island of Billingsgate)*, 2013, in gouache on wood, featured the area’s sea-going denizens. In *Razorfish Gang at Central Wharf, 1912* (2014), modeled after a blurry photograph, a group of whalers, their faces devoid of expression, lounge in small groups in front of a clapboard shed. The paintings’ simplicity, flat perspective, and palette of blue and putty tones are reminiscent of work by amateur artists of the period.

Five sepia-tone photographs, staged by the artist as preliminary studies for his paintings, showed individuals costumed and posed to assume different roles, such as the diaphanously draped woman in *Shipwreck Annie* (2001/2010). Their careful composition and vintage look rendered them worthy complements to the paintings. —**Mary Krienke**

Adrián Villar Rojas

Kurimanzutto
Mexico City

Argentine artist Adrián Villar Rojas is known for site-specific sculptures that are both monumental and ephemeral, intimidating in size yet playfully ambiguous in meaning, such as a mammoth clay cylinder he installed in the Tuileries gardens in Paris. This exhibition in Mexico City, conceived as a single work titled *Los teatros de Saturno* (The Theaters of Saturn), suggested a more conceptual and detail-oriented side of Villar Rojas’s impressive body of work, while extending possibilities of that most ancient of materials, clay.

The artist, working with a team of artisans that followed him around the globe, turned the gallery’s entire ground-floor exhibition space into what looked like a tilled farm field. Sprouting up from the red-clay soil covering its three rooms wall-to-wall were melons, pumpkins, and



Adrián Villar Rojas, *Los teatros de Saturno* (detail), 2014, installation view. Kurimanzutto.

various man-made objects. Laid in rows, as if planted and now ready for harvest, the latter included sneakers, concrete blocks, brushes, animal bones, forks, and other random items. Many objects were familiar, even banal, yet were twisted or manipulated into undecipherable forms, such as a bundle of sticks trussed up with gauze strips and topped with a lobster claw. These assemblages had a strange, vaguely surrealist, flavor. One delicate, poetic creation consisting of a sneaker stuffed with an apple, a morel mushroom, a brush, and a bird for example, suggested the work of Gabriel Orozco or Joan Miró’s painting *The Farm* (1921–22). If you didn’t mind getting your shoes dirty, it was intriguing.

An upstairs room featured 48 photocopied images of photographs, comics, diagrams, and notebook sketches of the artist’s own sculptures. The theme seemed to be the process of making art. Identically sized, and arranged on a long shelf at identical intervals, they suggested frames of a film. A few images were abstract, including some beautiful arrangements of shapes, shadows, and colors. Others had a more narrative bent, such as a repeated snapshot of a woman hugging a donkey. As a whole the photographic assemblage had a somewhat randomness, unfocused feel, while the farm installation was far more inventive.

—**Roger Atwood**

Hans-Jürgen Raabe

Istanbul Photography Museum
Istanbul

Though they filled almost all the galleries in this city’s elegant photography museum, the 320 images by Hans-Jürgen Raabe on view represented only the first installment of a vast work in progress titled “990

Faces,” intended to offer an encyclopedic view of humankind. The German artist will spend a decade visiting 33 locations worldwide, making 30 portraits at each site. All of the eight segments of the project completed so far were accompanied, as a kind of prologue, by ten “stills” of resonant details that caught the photographer’s eye—melted candles, a basket filled with glasses, a graffiti-smear wall. Viewed individually, any of these large-format digital prints might seem banal, but collectively they made an eloquent ensemble. It is not just Raabe’s activities as “roving reporter” that gives his work universality, however. He often seeks locations where he will inevitably cross paths with travelers from other cultures, pilgrimage sites such as Lourdes or Myanmar. Art pilgrims have their day, too, in portraits taken at the last Documenta, while international partygoers were captured at Munich’s Oktoberfest and cultural tourists at the Eiffel Tower. Meanwhile, in photos taken aboard an Istanbul ferry plying between Europe and Asia, the ever-present theme of journeying took a concrete form.

Edward Steichen’s celebrated thematic exhibition “The Family of Man,” which Raabe greatly admires, is an obvious antecedent to “990 Faces.” But Raabe embraces a different approach, rooted in the vernacular snapshot aesthetic that began with Kodak’s introduction of the Brownie in 1900. His subjects never have time to strike poses but are captured at the moment they become aware of a camera directed toward them. “In that instant there seems to be a connection between us,” Raabe remarked in a recent interview. The results of that unstructured collaboration are fresh and immediate, if decidedly unspectacular, and the resulting portraits themselves are never retouched or in any way manipulated. Their authenticity lends the whole global project a touching air of familiarity. —**David Galloway**



Hans-Jürgen Raabe, *Face 110/Marrakech*, 2012, fine art pigment print on Hahnemuehle paper, 19" x 23". Istanbul Photography Museum.