

“The ancients built Valdrada on the shores of a lake, [...]. Thus the traveler, arriving, sees two cities: one erect above the lake, and the other reflected, upside down. Nothing exists or happens in the one Valdrada that the other Valdrada does not repeat, [...] and the Valdrada down in the water contains not only all the flutings and jottings of the facades that rise above the lake, but also the rooms’ interiors with ceilings and floors, the perspective of the halls, the mirrors of the wardrobes.

Valdrada’s inhabitants know that each of their actions is, at once, that action and its mirror image, which possesses the special dignity of images, and this awareness prevents them from succumbing for a single moment to chance and forgetfulness. [...]

At times the mirror increases a thing’s value, at times denies it. Not everything that seems valuable above the mirror maintains its force when mirrored. The twin cities are not equal, because nothing that exists or happens in Valdrada is symmetrical: every face and gesture is answered, from the mirror, by a face and gesture inverted, point-by-point.”

Simon Iurino has a practice of collapsing layers. The history of a place might very well come up in the form or material of his work. The title may reflect the concept. The place may inform the aesthetic just as much as material or spacial necessities. The motives for his installation “Out of the Blue” showing cyanotypes (the old technique of blueprinting used for architectural drawings i.e.) are traces of bubble wrap and tape. By using packaging materials as motive the artist collapses not only layers but also moments in time of interaction with an artwork.

His new installation for the space O.T. run by Max Lust in Vienna combines the results of several previous processes and develops them further. Precisely by using altered mirrors for the installation he makes his method the motive of his work.

His recent installations are simultaneously walk-through structures, architectural elements, sculptures and displays. The elements forming the object are run-of-the-mill aluminum profiles for construction purposes. Construction companies or the EU or the MOT association standardized them just like the wooden beams Simon Iurino chose to use, subsequently accepting all possibilities and limitations the material dictates. The structure functions as a display for his new works on mirror. The mirror itself as a material is already loaded with implications: From trivial associations with the beauty obsession of our times and a need for disruption (of the surface reflecting us) to Lacan’s theories of the mirror stage in the development of children. The opening quote from Italo Calvino’s “Invisible Cities” suggests some of the thoughts evolving around this subject. Due to the form of the display structure every shown flat work is always visible from both sides, the “front” side and the “back”. Before aluminum was used for mirrors a layer of metal or silver on glass, was protected by a layer of lacquer. By way of laser cutting, Iurino uncovers or removes single layers and adds additional ones with UV prints or etching on the glass. In his character of working with language he translated the mere fact of the backside - frontside visibility into a motive by using anticlimaxes like “loop-line” or “riot-rule”. The words appear in the different layers of the mirror objects. In the case of the sentence “be on my side or be on your side” (taken from song lyrics) the backdrop captures the moment of a surfer thrown from his board on the peak of the wave leaving it ambiguous if the board will fall down the front of the wave or slide down the back of it. The words are simply fit to occupy the whole surface of the mirror without any more layout decisions being applied. Last but not least, one of the works is mirroring the title of the exhibition space it is shown in “O.T.”. If you think this merely is a blunt way to pay tribute to a closing exhibition space, you are wrong. Over the years Iurino has developed a grid he calls language pattern. Starting with the pattern of ‘x’ repeated without line spacing, which inverted (erasing the language character of the sign using it rather like Wade Guyton), became a pattern he used repeatedly in his artistic language; a pattern that changed with each chosen font or letter. Invitations to his last show used the pattern of the letter ‘E’. Now the ‘o’, which inverted only leaves a dot, is playfully tempered with in its legibility. Many different patterns overlap and can be distinguished by the viewer who chooses to read the laser-cut, the engraving, or the UV-print or the negative spaces of those or even, his own fragmented reflection of what is left behind of the original mirror.