

# Radenko Milak

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Radenko Milak, 2020 All over the world. Watercolors, exhibition view, Photo Mareike Tocha, courtesy PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne

How does the deluge of images we experience in the digital age affect our consciousness? How does the mass dissemination of images influence how we perceive the world? And how do they shape our collective memory? These questions are central to the artistic works of Radenko Milak. Priska Pasquer is exhibiting a selection of the Bosnian artist's latest pieces.

Radenko Milak approaches his highly topical subject matter through the traditional medium of painting. He is a master of watercolour and even creates works of monumental proportions using this technique. Milak takes his motifs from the wide range of picture sources we have at our fingertips today: in newspapers, archives and documentaries as well as in social media. In his painting, he frequently refers back to concepts and techniques from art history such as abstract painting or collage.

In his latest group of works "Sideratio", Radenko Milak tackles the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. He has filtered out motifs from the relentless flood of digitised information, from countless press reports and photos – all of which illustrate the global state of shock following the outbreak of the global epidemic. Using black pigment, he has transformed these snapshots into small-scale watercolours.

The images show the life of a society – right down to its most intimate elements – that has been turned on its head: abandoned cityscapes, churches and holy sites devoid of people, hospitals and mortuaries, closed cultural sites, airports and railway stations that have been brought to a standstill. Radenko Milak's watercolours seek to document and organise the global catastrophe in aesthetic terms. Whereas his earlier work groups achieved this with the benefit of historical distance, "Sideratio" is a direct reaction to the current situation.

Milak's ongoing series "Anthropocene" takes a broader approach. This new era in which humans have become one of the most important influences on the Earth's biological, geological and atmospheric processes has many facets: overpopulation and environmental destruction are just as much a part of the picture as new scientific discoveries. Milak weaves both aspects into this series. Alongside pictures of microplastic pollution of the world's oceans, it contains astonishing motifs that are only visible using nano-microscopes as well as images of the endless expanse of the universe supplied by the Hubble space telescope.

In his pictures, Radenko Milak aims to capture and document the unimaginable and to come to terms with his own sense of horror and amazement. However, his main focus is to reflect on and analyse the role of contemporary image production in the formation of our historical and cultural memory.

**Radenko Milak** was born in Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1980; lives in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Radenko Milak studied at the Art Academy in Banja Luka and at the University of Arts in Belgrade, Serbia. In 2014, the Kunsthalle Darmstadt exhibition hall held the first major individual exhibition of his works in Germany. In 2017, MILAK developed the multidisciplinary project "University of Disaster" for his individual exhibition in the Bosnia and Herzegovina pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale. The centrepiece comprised four large, complex watercolour compositions depicting various human-induced disasters. Today, they are part of the collection of the Museum Folkwang, Essen. In 2019, MILAK's work was exhibited in the large-scale show "Hyper! A Journey into art and music" in Hamburg's Deichtorhallen exhibition hall. In autumn 2020, the Marta Herford museum will feature works by Radenko Milak in the exhibition "Deceptive Images – Playing with Painting and Photography" (30 October 2020 to 28 February 2021).