



DAMIAN LE BAS . MAPPING RESISTANCE

An exhibition on the occasion of the World Roma Congress Berlin 2023

18th of May to 17th of June 2023 . Th – Sa: 4-7 pm and after agreement

Opening: Tuesday 17th of May, 7.30-10 pm

Damian Le Bas was a flower seller, graduate of the Royal College of Arts, artist, DJ, Romany and visionary of a free world. When he died in 2017, he left behind an impressive body of work. For the Kai Dikhas Foundation, Damian Le Bas is central to its program and collection. Le Bas tirelessly confronted the often hostile world with his art. Together with his artist colleague, the French gitano Gabi Jiménez, he coined the term "Gypsy DaDa", which, in accordance with the anti-bourgeois Dadaism of the twentieth century, aptly opposed racism and the forms of oppression with its own humour. Damian Le Bas had a penchant for collecting objects and maps, from which he made his now famous great collages. While maps are mostly created to show borders, defining territories and countries over which bloody battles have often been fought for centuries, for Le Bas they become the background for his collages. Faces, figures, ideas and found objects overlaid his maps. In his art and in the joint installations that the artist created with his wife and artistic partner Delaine Le Bas: large room-sized installations, stage sets and also performances such as "Safe European Home?" or "Frontier de Luxe", his "Gypsyland" becomes reality. His art shows a possible world: without conflicts, borders or the illegality of people. Painting over maps with his seemingly playful approach manifests political aspirations. Le Bas shows us that the whole world is Gypsyland, which is an important insight for a people who cannot call a territory their own. Le Bas's art is both: simply art and also activism. His maps do not document a found territory, they create a new land. It is this inspiring power of his art that makes Damian Le Bas a role model for many Roma activists and his works icons of a movement. The exhibition takes place on the occasion of and in collaboration with the World Roma Congress 2023, which will be held in Berlin for the first time. It will bring together Roma representatives from all over the world in the city. Art and culture have always closely accompanied the Roma political movement as a means of resistance. This time, again, it will be the incentive, motivation and manifesto of the congress.

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