

**GABRIEL  
WICKBOLD  
LONDON**



## GABRIEL WICKBOLD

Gabriel Wickbold, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1984, started his career as a photographer in 2006, after a period in poetry and music. Throughout his career, Wickbold has produced 6 author series, and has had his work exhibited in cities like São Paulo, New York, Stockholm, Lisbon, London and Miami. At present, more than 15 of his works are part of permanent collections in important museums, such as Erarta (St Petersburg, Russia) and MAB (São Paulo, Brazil).

In 2019, in a partnership with BMW, Wickbold had his work exhibited during the opening week at the Paris Photo and in the same year received honors at the Xposure International Photography Festival, in the UAE.

In 2020, he became the youngest artist ever to have his own solo exhibition at the Brazilian Art Museum at FAAP (MAB) and was elected one of the “Men of the Year” by GQ magazine. Today, Gabriel Wickbold is among the most important Brazilian artists.

## MARCELLO DANTAS



Foto: Christian Maldonado

An award-winning curator and artistic director specializing in interdisciplinary practices both in and outside Brazil, Marcello Dantas is responsible for innovating the concept of 'museology' by bringing unprecedented doses of technology, interactivity and multimedia resources together and providing immersive experiences that engage senses and change perceptions. He was the name behind the conception of distinct museums and cultural institutions across South America, such as the Museum of Portuguese Language; Japan House São Paulo and the Museum of Nature in Brazil; Museo del Caribe and Museo del Carnaval in Colombia; and the Telecommunications Museum in Argentina. In 2021, Dantas was appointed curator of the SFER IK Museum in Tulum, Mexico.

Dantas has curated some of the most popular solo shows of the last decade, including Ai Weiwei's Raiz, in Brazil, the largest exhibition in terms of square footage ever staged by the artist. The show was considered one of the top 10 exhibitions of the year, according to DesignBoom, and the third most visited in the world in 2019, according to The Art Newspaper. Dantas was also behind ComCiência by Patricia Piccinini, the most visited contemporary art exhibition in the world in 2016, as well as Still Being by British artist Antony Gormley, which was the seventh most visited exhibition in the world in 2012.

With a career spanning 30 years, Dantas has curated several solo exhibitions with some of the most influential contemporary artists of today, including Anish Kapoor, Laurie Anderson, Erwin Wurm, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Jenny Holzer, Rebecca Horn, Bill Viola and more. Since 2014, he has become part of the curatorial board at the Vancouver Biennale, and in 2020, he was appointed curator of the 13th Biennial Mercosul that will take place in Brazil in 2022.

Among Dantas' most innovative projects as a creative director is NAVE, an immersive experience comprised of a 5,000-square-meter video projection, one of the main attractions of 'Rock in Rio' in 2019. He was also the artistic director of the Pelé Station held during the 2006 World Cup in Berlin, the Brazilian Pavilion at Expo Shanghai in 2010 and the Brazilian Pavilion at Rio+20 in 2012.

Dantas has been awarded prizes for Best Documentary at the Biennale Internationale du Film Sur L'Art, Georges Pompidou Center, Paris; FestRio, the International Film and TV Festival, New York; and the prestigious ID Design Award from Business Week. He is a board member of several international institutions and visual arts mentor at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2018, Dantas was awarded the Order of Cultural Merit by the Ministry of Culture of Brazil.

## SurFace

The path of an artist is the unveiling of their intuition. It's not a defined project, but rather the dialogue process between the gesture and the answer of the artwork which tells what it is. All that remains for the artist is the humility of accepting the work manifestation upon the intuitive gesture.

I was introduced to Gabriel Wickbold's work as a constituted rite, a structured project that is only rarely found as organized as his. The beauty of entering the authorial universe rests in the possibility of detecting a thread left by the artist inside their labyrinth. Life can only make sense in retrospect.

This exhibition encompasses five distinct modules whose productions were conceived over the span of ten years. When we look at these stories united, we see a trail left on the path. This reveals something about the double meaning of the word surface when read in its different forms: sur face (over the face) and surface (regarding to something's uppermost layer).

Wickbold's raw material is the human face and the possibilities of intervening in a portrait as a construction field for a new identity that overlaps the photographed subject, as we see in Sexual Colors and Naïve series. However, by relating face and gesture, the surface shows something that is no longer the face, neither the gesture. The eternal element of the face meets the ephemeral element of the gesture.

There emerges the clear intention of scratching the surface and Wickbold's research doesn't stop there. There's a quest for engaging in a transformation process whose intention is not manageable anymore. Influenced by land fraud's (grilagem) dubious tactics in the North of Brazil, Wickbold hands over pictures to crickets – literally, to the insects themselves - so they co-author the work. By virtue of this process, the artist transforms each portrait in a unique and irreproducible work, and ventures into an artistic interspecies cooperation. Something is rotten in the realm of nature. Sans Tache is Wickbold's detachment from the School of Photography and his approaching to other visual arts expressions.

In everything Wickbold does, there's hidden research involved. A legitimate study that stems from the intuition, almost naïve, that the world can still be invented. And it can. If, on the one hand, digital connections challenge the skin as the human body's largest organ, on the other, we still possess our most powerful antennas on the epidermis. In I Am Online, the artist investigates the friction between the human tissue and the internet tissue, thus revealing layers, noises and some disconnection between what we perceive and how we feel. This is the reverse process to that of I Am Light, in which Wickbold turns into traces the light reflected by glitter on human skin, unveiling the surface by means of its absence.

During the period of social cloister, due to the 2020 pandemics, Wickbold has plunged into the creation of something that could represent this moment of tactile disconnection, something that could translate the craving for physical closeness so present in our minds and hearts during social distancing. Here, he reflects upon contact, touch, isolation, the uncertainty and the darkening of our lives. The works dabble in a hybrid medium between studio photography, digital manipulation and painting directly over the image. It's a process in which there's accumulation and loss. Before the blurred images, we enquire ourselves whether we're missing out on something we know or if we're on the verge of seeing something new.

Anxiety, hidden identity and physical distance are themes enforced by Wickbold on the portraits. This series evokes to me the Buddhist notion of "bardo", which means the state of existence intermediate between death and rebirth. The series aims to epitomize the transient place between the loss of a physical connection and the desire for contact. With it, it brings the melancholy of separation and the energy of friction. What one sees is no longer a studio rite but, rather, a work of abstraction which captures the social moment in which it was conceived. As from SÓMÓŠ, the artist detaches his work from photography and creates a new language.

The great selection factor in life's food chain is the determination of its agents. Wickbold is, unquestionably, a determined creator.



L\_AM\_ONLINE #8 4/5  
148x222 cm  
£ 25.000,00



Sexual Colors #21 2/5  
110x160 cm  
£ 8.000,00



Sexual Colors #51 2/5  
110x160 cm  
£ 8.000,00



Sexual Colors #39 1/5  
70x110 cm  
£ 5.000,00



Sexual Colors #40 1/5  
70x110 cm  
£ 5.000,00



Sexual Colors #42 1/5  
70x110 cm  
£ 5.000,00



Sexual Colors #43 1/5  
70x110 cm  
£ 5.000,00



I Am Light #12 2/5  
70x110 cm  
£ 9.000,00



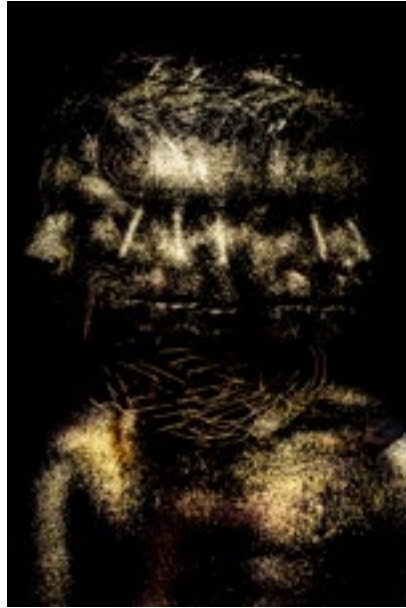
I Am Light #17 2/5  
70x110 cm  
£ 9.000,00



Naïve #58 4/5  
110x110 cm  
£ 11.000,00



I Am Light #26 2/5  
110x160 cm  
£ 10.000,00



I Am Light #6 3/5  
110x160 cm  
£ 11.000,00



Sexual Colors CB #9 2/5  
110x160 cm  
£ 8.000,00



LAM\_ONLINE #31 4/5  
110x160 cm  
£ 11.000,00



I Am Light #16 3/5  
222x148 cm  
£ 16.000,00

Photo London:

Somerset House

Strand, London WC2R 1LA

8–12 September 2021

Opening Hours:

Preview Day: Wednesday 8 September, 1–9 pm

Public days: Thursday, 9 September 1–9 pm;  
Friday, 10 September 1–7 pm;  
Saturday, 11 September 12–7 pm;  
Sunday, 12 September 12–6.30 pm.