Francis Alÿs, *Le temps du sommeil*, 1996–ongoing, oil, encaustic, crayon, collage on wood, 4.5 x 6 inches [courtesy of the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich]

almost missable gesture, Echakhch seamlessly transposed a tradition, in which poor children of her native Morocco decorate homes with woven threads before they are embroidered into finished garments, onto a distant landscape. Her remnants appear anonymous, almost *swayambhu* (or self-manifest, in Sanskrit), yet they simultaneously speak to global issues of urbanism, production, even ornamentation, and not least the implications of displaced memory. The latter narrative re-emerges in Sirous Namazi's sculpture of a nonfunctioning refrigerator—a reification of an object from his plundered childhood home in Iran—and in Desmond Lazaro's paintings, which trace his family's migration from Burma to the UK. It is at such points of divergence and confluence that Shetty's aims to "inspire a series of questions and propositions about the various forms and approaches to knowledge performed as part of the Biennale, are themselves most manifest."

During the exhibition's opening week, the buzzword around town was "process biennale," which cleverly accommodated noticeable installation delays for many works. (The government's recent "demonetization" and subsequent labor protests were cited as the cause.) I was not terribly surprised, and found delight in the irony of envisioning the configuration of Alicja Kwade's mirror and concrete structure, *Out of Ousia* (2016) (*ousia* meaning "being"), which was intended to make imperceptible "verifiable objects and their makeshift doubles." The concept of "process" aptly contextualized the projects of Daniele Galliano and C Bhagyanath, each of whom set up open studios for the 108-day duration of the Biennale (108 being an auspicious number in Dharmic religions, as well as Judaism). Galliano incorporated portraits of the audience into his over-paintings of found pictures, while Bhagyanath executed a series of charcoal self-portraits on translucent paper, then layered drawings atop one another. In both instances, the audience was granted access to the agency of the artist's hand and the mechanics of mutability. In the same compound, theater-maker Anamika Haksar presented *Composition of Water* (2016). During scheduled performances the cast invoked texts by revolutionary Dalit (aka "Untouchable" or "Scheduled Caste") writers, to charge their improvised actions. When the set was unpeopled, it depicted a dystopian landscape of undulating dirt mounds, remnants of a fire, strewn tombstones, and a sculpture of the Buddha—the figure that served as emblem of the mid-20th-century Dalit movement, symbolic of the attempt to transcend the historic and religious shackles of caste. A far too familiar reality of the Indian terrain was evoked by the dissonance between two proximate water features: a cascade of clean water and, next to it, a rusted drain-pipe, sputtering liquid refuse.

Mining a phenomenon more specific to Kochi is Amsterdam-based Gabriel Lester's *Dwelling Kappiri Spirits* (2016). The work consists of a life-size room tilted, as if floating in the gallery; inside the room rests a sole table topped with a lit cigar, lace curtains hang outside the windows frozen mid-billow, "capturing a nonexistent breeze." The work's title refers to *Kappiri Muthappan*, the name given in local mythology to the ghosts of enslaved Africans. According to legend, before the Dutch conquest of Kochi in 1663, the Portuguese hastily buried their treasure and killed the people they had enslaved with the hope that the lingering spirits would guard their spoils. Today *Kappiri* are regarded as benign protective forces, beings that wander the night while smoking cigars, drinking toddy (palm wine), and helping lost travelers. On the road to Mattancherry is an icon-less shrine, sprinkled underneath with offerings of candles, flowers, coins, and the occasional cigar. Such encounters would have charmed even the most jaded, globe-trotting biennale-goer into returning to Kochi.

Attempting to take in the Biennale as a whole, Bose Krishnamachari, co-founder and director of KMB, suggested that viewers surrender to "the concept of the river as philosophy." The river, like creativity in all its manifestations, is an ultimately unknowable, yet decidedly generative force; that power was palpably felt throughout Kochi this year, with its potential to flow through the global south and into the world. *Forming in the pupil of an eye* demonstrated a remarkable openness in its attempt to grasp the totality of so many voices—and signaled the shared urgency of trying to do so.

—Pujan Gandhi

Francis Alÿs

Secession, Vienna

The title of Francis Alÿs' *Le temps du sommeil* (*The Time of Sleep*)—which refers to a recent solo exhibition at the Vienna Secession, and the central work shown within it—alludes to Marcel Proust's sprawling seven-volume tome, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*), published between 1913 and 1927. Memory, sleep, time, and allegory are central issues for Proust, as they are for Alÿs; insomnia, for instance, is a disorder that Alÿs has confronted with his work—one conducive to a temporality that is radically out of sync with everyday reality. Yet even time spent asleep opposes contemporary economies of time, according to which endless productivity and ceaseless acceleration structure our sphere of action and interaction. The Vienna exhibition [November 18, 2016–January 22, 2017] focused on an ongoing series of 111 postcard-format paintings (begun in 1996), and brought into question the temporal experience of Alÿs' oeuvre as a whole—as well as how recent works relate to the performances for which the Belgium-born artist became famous in the 1990s, after he moved to Mexico City and started strolling its streets.

In the upstairs gallery at the Secession, two videos, *Paradox of Praxis 1 (Sometimes making something leads to nothing)* (1997) and *Paradox of Praxis 5 (Sometimes we dream as we live, and sometimes we live as we dream)* (2013), documented the artist's performative practice. In the first work, Alÿs slides a melting block of ice through Mexico City; in the second, he walks a fireball through Ciudad de Juárez at night, "illuminating" a border city known for its socio-economic and geopolitical tensions.

The Secession's main gallery featured a thin rope, meticulously knotted and hung from the ceiling to fall into a pile on the floor below. Three framed drawings explained the work's significance: each knot represents an action—such as "I jump" or "I turn back"—and, in this way, the rope serves as a spatial mnemonic device, to aid in the memorization of the path Alÿs has carved out through a cityscape. Ropes, cords, and lines were guiding threads throughout *Le temps du sommeil*, and they worked in tandem with wall panels and an exhibition catalogue—an inventory of paintings the artist has been working on and over continually for two decades, creating a "palimpsest of time"—to provide a visual lexicon, a glossary, or a key to the artist's evolving body of work.

The panels, hung in a torso-height horizontal line, were interrupted by short texts printed directly on the gallery's white walls. These aphorisms were descriptive yet did not relate to the paintings next to them; rather, they evoked Alÿs' vast performative oeuvre. The medium of painting may at first seem unsuitable to an artist and a practice concerned with psychogeography in the fashion of the situationist *dérive*. Yet the small panels of *Le temps du sommeil* share formal similarities with the artist's walks, registering as ephemeral marks on a picture plane. Whereas Alÿs' performances expose the vertical, hegemonic strategies that are imposed on people who inhabit and use urban spaces, his paintings flatten this subversive dimension, as though to map an imaginary romantic cosmos.

Following Michel de Certeau's seminal book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980), walking and, more specifically, the type of experiential strolling that Alÿs performs, is a practice of temporary inscription in space and can engender a subversion of the laws that govern it. In 1995 Alÿs walked with a leaking can of blue paint through São Paulo, a performance he repeated in green in Jerusalem almost ten years later (*The Green Line*, 2004), when he used the paint to make reference to the historical Green Line drawn in 1949 to demarcate Israel's post-war border. This performance was referred to at the Secession both in painting and in a wall text that read: "Sometimes doing something poetic can become political and Sometimes doing something political can become poetic." An earlier version of the work showed the silhouettes of human figures and a dog painted in white, whereas the painting at the Secession was reduced to a brick-red color background, with a green island that supported a human figure hovering atop it. Time stamps on each painting show how they have been reworked at different stages (e.g., "09 FEB. 1997"); an additional stamp that read "le temps du sommeil"—faintly, as though partially erased—marked the paintings. These time stamps, and the works' serial format, give form to the conceptual logic of the bureaucratic or archival regime; this seemingly tight framework contrasts with the works' imaginary dimension—with the "time of sleep"—which suggests a reading of the paintings that defies the very logic that produced them.

Alÿs' small plates have a seductive force, and thus risk becoming fetishized as hand-crafted miniatures—material objects of desire instead of mere documentations or storyboards. The paintings' mesmerizing intimacy, and the neatness of their aesthetic, are in friction with the artist's performative practice: when out in the open, Alÿs wanders through very real urban landscapes; Alÿs' paintings, however, refuse a relationship with the real: they are from the other side of the tradition of the modernist flâneur, withdrawn into the realm of imaginary memory.

—Christoph Chwatal

Vostell Concrete 1969–1973

Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, IL

Concrete Poetry, Concrete Book: Artists' Books in German-speaking Space after 1945

Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, Chicago, IL

Fantastic Architecture: Vostell, Fluxus, and the Built Environment

Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, Chicago, IL

What distinguished Fluxus from the surrealists before them was not a lack of militancy—George Maciunas, in the *Fluxus Manifesto*, called for artists to "Purge the world of bourgeois sickness." Yet the two groups seem to diverge in their apparent unwillingness to identify as an avant-garde movement—an elitist strategy, to artists working in the post-war context—and in their views of poetry, which was crucial to the practice of art-making for both groups. For the surrealists, poetry was a means of blending the conscious and unconscious; the concrete poetry of the Fluxus artists was a means of inducing the revolutionary actions of the people, while simultaneously performing its own indexicality.

The University of Chicago's Concrete Happenings [September 2016–June 2017] comprised several exhibitions that demonstrated the genesis of a range of contemporary art phenomena, including performance-based and ephemeral works that emphasized the image of the artwork rather than the art object, the arrangement of convivial social relationships in a space for a limited duration, and an unflinching embrace of a variety of media that marks an artist's toolkit. Chief among those media, here, was concrete, as it was notably deployed by the German interdisciplinary artist Wolf Vostell (1932–1998), known as a pioneer of the Happening and Fluxus communities. Produced to mark the "return" of Vostell's monumental *Concrete Traffic* (1970) to the university's campus after having endured decades of exposure to the elements in a long-forgotten patch of grass on the university's Midway Plaisance (and several years in storage), Concrete Happenings provided a comprehensive viewing of the artist's *Einbetonierungen* ("concretification")-based works, as well as an opportunity to admire the university library's collection of German-language artist's books and objects that demonstrate the range of publishing activities which have come to mark contemporary artistic production.

Vostell Concrete 1969–1973 [January [illegible]–June 11, 2017] presented a series of silkscreens and prints on plywood and chipboard, assemblages, planning notes, film, collage, artist's books, and "event sculptures," with each category prominently featuring concrete among its media. Given the coldness of the ostensibly unwelcoming material, these concrete works, when presented together, revealed an unexpected warmth of character. The whimsy (and pathos) of concrete reveals itself through works made over a number of years: first as a cloud encased in concrete drifting over the ocean liner that Vostell takes from Genoa, Italy on his way to Chicago (*T/N Rafaello*, 1970); then as a cloud encased in concrete seen floating above Chicago (*Betonwolke über Chicago*, 1970), and later seen hovering peacefully over Zürich (*Ankunft der Betonwolke aus Chicago in Zürich*, 1972). The wall text reveals Vostell's insurmountable fear of flying, which condemned him to long transatlantic voyages. These concretifications become modes of transport and means of protection not only for Vostell himself, aboard the *Rafaello*, but also for the civil rights activists who were subject to police brutality during the Bloody Sunday events in Selma, AL, in 1965, depicted in *Proposal for Concrete Cadillac* (1970), wherein the artist figuratively immobilizes an Alabama State Trooper's vehicle by covering it in concrete. *Vostell Concrete* offers an intimate psychic portrait, cast in concrete, of an artist consistently concerned with the quotidian violence of his time, as it played out in the American Deep South, in Vietnam (if 52 in