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TRIP MARKS
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Press release - Tehran/Innsbruck - 14th May 2012

The road to artistic expression
Austrian artist on extreme cycling tour of 19 countries
arrives in Iran

Up until February 2013 an extraordinary cycling tour will see the Austrian artist Wolfgang Burtscher (51) travel across 19 countries. From his home in Innsbruck (Aut.) to Thailand his artistic and scientific journey 'Trip Marks' (tripmarks.at) is to cover a distance of 20,000 kilometres and a total climb of 200,000 metres. As reported by the Austrian Cultural Forum in Tehran (ÖKFT) on Monday, the sporty artist arrived in the Iranian capital and was greeted by Dr. Thomas M. Buchsbaum, the Austrian ambassador in person.

'Having reached Iran according to plan Wolfgang Burtscher has now completed a quarter of his journey. We are delighted to be able to show the man and the very latest works produced on his travels. After all, his 'Trip Marks' project aims at producing a different kind of travelogue - something that can be understood beyond the borders of language - and fits ideally with our many years of successful work in the fostering of intercultural dialogue', enthused the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Thomas M. Buchsbaum and Ulrike Wieländer (Mag.^a), Deputy Director of the ÖKFT. The artist was then invited to dinner at the Austrian embassy in Tehran with Iranian artists and gallery owners, and offered a bed for the night. Burtscher also met a number of interesting Iranian scientists and students at the Cultural Forum and Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University.

A tangible form of travel

In his luggage the Austrian artist also carries the latest works of his tour - both impetus and eponym for the entire project: 'Trip Marks'. Each work is a 21 x 21 centimetre sheet of paper, numerically and chronologically sequenced, featuring the imprint of his tyre. Every day of the one-year 'trip' Burtscher produces a tyre print featuring geographical coordinates of origin and various additional notes. 'The cycle grip imprints or 'marks' are pictorial records of each day. No day is ever identical. Each 'trip mark' is an individual temporal trace produced by the bicycle in its role and a means of transport, and a means of experiencing the world. In an age

of extreme globalisation and virtualisation this plays a super-ordinate role as a genuinely experiential form of travel document, and evidence of the tangibility of the real world', Burtscher explained.

This alternative travelogue featuring 365 traces - 'Trip Marks' - will be on show in the artist's homeland, and on display at various other international exhibitions. Considering the global importance of a means of transport as simple as the bicycle it was a conscious decision to make the mode and result of the project comprehensible to the eye of every beholder, regardless of country or language. The scientific aspect of 'Trip Marks' was similarly direct and practical. Burtscher collected samples of local earth and once a month he sent them off to the Institute for Microbiology at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. Under the supervision of University Professor Heribert Insam the aim was to identify exactly what microorganisms travel unnoticed in the grips of a tyre during such a journey.

Image downloads:

<http://www.tripmarks.at/media>

Information for journalists:

Wolfgang Burtscher will soon be reporting in German on his journey: tripmarks.at

On the 'European Day of the Bicycle' on the 3rd June 2012, Wolfgang Burtscher will be passing through Turkmenistan. We would be delighted to organise opportunities to interview him directly, both here and on the other points of his journey.

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