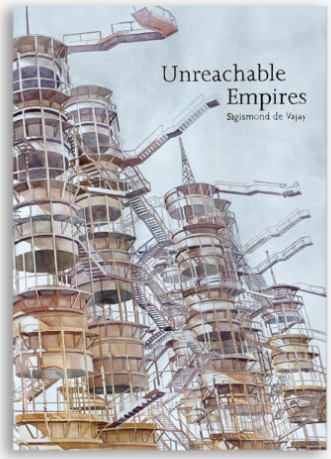
SIGISMOND DE VAJAY

UNREACHABLE EMPIRES



EDITOR(S): François Mussard, Rompo, Sigismond de Vajay
AUTHOR(S): Bruno Jourdain, Elizabeth R. Johnson, Mario Bellatín

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NARRATIVES FOR OUR CHANGING TIMES

Conceived by Sigismond de Vajay, this artist's book combines 70 of his drawings with commissioned essays by Mexican novelist Mario Bellatín, French biologist and glaciology researcher Bruno Jourdain, and geography and biotechnology expert Elizabeth R. Johnson. Together, thanks to their intertwined dialogue around reality, fiction, science, knowledge, and the power of artistic approaches, they express a subjective vision of our changing times.

Vajay's practice emphasizes the systems that govern the planet, irregularities and social differences, power and global control. From a disenchanted perspective, his art oscillates ceaselessly between the human and the machine, the individual and the mass, or between nature and technology. The artist's works have in common a dystopian aesthetic, which allows him to address the condition of contemporary societies in a state of ruin. Through his pencil and watercolor drawings, produced between 2012 and 2017, Vajay explores themes and motifs such as postindustrial landscapes, endangered natural spaces, and lonesome machines, as well as complex human, natural, and architectural organizations. Some drawings are short stories to decipher, while others manage to show, in a single stunning image, the complexity of our times and our future. The authors chosen propose narratives—the adventures of the "Book Man"; "The Amazing Life of a Tiny H2180 Water Molecule"; the "Stories of Life and Warfare Beneath the

Skin of the Earth"—which extend and enhance the drawings, thanks to time-travel, alternative realities, and troubling futuristic tales.

A protean artist, curator, and publisher, Sigismond de Vajay was born in Paris in 1972. He has lived in Vevey, Barcelona, and New York, before settling in Buenos Aires. His works include installations, drawings, videos, interventions in the public space, and sculptures. In 2002 he co-founded KBB (Kültur Büro Barcelona). "Unreachable Empires" is his fourth book of drawings. He edited the two-volume anthology "Of Bridges & Borders" (2009, 2014) for JRP|Ringier.

Published with KBB (Kultur Büro Barcelona).