

ARTFORUM

NEWS



Elisabeth Wild, *Untitled*, 2017, paper collage, 9 3/10" x 9 3/10".
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ELISABETH WILD (1922–2020)

Swiss Austrian painter and collagist Elisabeth Wild—who began her career painting landscapes and still lifes but turned to fabulist collaged abstractions sourced from the pages of magazines in later life—has died at the age of ninety-eight in Panajachel, Guatemala, where she lived with her daughter, the artist Vivian Suter.

Wild was born in Vienna, in 1922, to a Catholic mother and a Jewish father. In 1939, fleeing the Nazis, the family moved to Argentina, where Wild studied painting at Bueno

Aires's Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes and worked as a fabric designer before marrying textile industrialist August Wild, with whom she had Suter in 1949. Much of Wild's art appears to have been influenced by magical realism, the literary style that reached its height in '40s and '50s Argentina. The family returned to Europe in 1962, this time fleeing Argentine president Juan Perón's nationalist regime, and eventually settled in Basel, where Wild opened an antique furniture store.

In 2007, she moved to Guatemala to join her daughter at her home on the volcanic slopes of Lake Atitlán. Together, they were included in an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel in 2014, as well as in Adam Szymczyk's Documenta 14 (2017) and exhibitions at Power Plant, Toronto (2017), and Sterna, Greece (2018). She made an appearance in Rosalind Nashashibi's Turner Prize–shortlisted film *Vivian's Garden* in 2017, and she staged a solo show of her collages at Dubai's Carbon 12 last year (“She chooses the best quality [materials],” gallery director Kouros Nouri said, “like *Vogue* and *Artforum*”). A comprehensive retrospective, her first, is set to open at Vienna's mumok museum in 2021.

“I sometimes wonder if there can be a visual equivalent to labyrinths and cul-de-sacs of one person's mind and memory, and when I look at Elisabeth Wild's collages, I imagine this equivalence very well,” Szymczyk told *Artnews*. “Through her work, I understood something of the way she understood and transformed the changing world that surrounded her during ninety-eight years of her life on this planet.”

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