

## Francis Alÿs

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### Francis Alÿs in Antibes

After two shows devoted to the history of walking in twentieth-century art, the Musée Picasso in Antibes is concluding its “Century of Surveyors” series with the first solo show in France of Belgian-born artist Francis Alÿs. Alÿs studied urbanism and architecture prior to his career as an artist, and has lived in Mexico City since 1987. Since then, he has made his adopted megalopolis a source of deep inspiration for his work and thought. For a 1994 project *Magnetic Shoes*, Alÿs walked through the city wearing a pair of magnetic shoes, picking up loose change, pins, bits of metal—intimate souvenirs of his promenade. In Antibes, he presents *Bottle*, 1997, a video in which he follows the adventures of a plastic bottle on Mexico City’s Zócalo. Blown around by the wind, kicked by tourists and children, flattened by passing cars, in the end, the bottle becomes a self-portrait of the artist in his haphazard tours through the city. For Alÿs, Mexico City is a place where modernism runs into many obstacles, where a host of secondary economies arise to produce a subsistence society that is parallel but alternate to the clean, efficient vision of modern urbanism. Thus, Alÿs has asked street painters to paint and sell images based on images he’s conceived, blending the artisanal with the language of contemporary art, and reintroducing art back into the living fabric of the city and into another, far less narrowly drawn economy. The adventures of Francis Alÿs are only beginning, it seems.