

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present a new solo exhibition by Swiss artist Jean-Frédéric Schnyder. The show features *Apocalypso*, a large-scale work done on canvas in 1979, accompanied by 106 sketches that preceded the accomplishment of said piece, as well as twelve recent sculptures.

It was, among other things, with a cycle of 119 paintings titled *Wanderung* (Hike) shown at the 1993 Venice Biennale that Jean-Frédéric Schnyder became known to a wide international audience. Yet, it was a decade previous to Venice, with a complex of more than 100 works called *Berner Veduten* (Bernese Vedute), that he laid the foundations for his perception as an artist who, as if taking an inventory, devotes himself to the serial reproduction of a given reality. *Berner Veduten* was followed by other quasi-documentary projects, such as the 90-piece *Wartesaal* (Waiting Room) series dating from 1988/89, a 163-part body of works titled *Sonnenuntergang am Zugersee* (Sunset at Lake Zug), which was displayed at the Kunsthalle Zurich in 1998, or *Baarerstrasse/Zugerstrasse*, a work comprising 1000 photographs that were taken between 1999 and 2000.

Due to the bodies of work mentioned above, Schnyder has found himself labeled as an artist-archivist, while also being often noted for his ironical attitude towards his own work. Such characterizations tend to be inadequate, if not misleading. Schnyder's oeuvre ranges from early conceptual works, wooden sculptures, and fantastical objects made of tin, plastic resin, clay, or Lego bricks to photographic works and, primarily since the 1980s, numerous highly disparate paintings. Central to all of these works is the artist's reflection on the world surrounding him, whereas the choice of medium and style appears secondary.

A case in point of the diversity of Schnyder's work, in terms of both form and content, is a monumental piece titled *Apocalypso*. Measuring 2,75 meters in height and twelve meters in width, the work unfolds a peculiar story of images, which is divided into three principal scenes. During their making, the canvasses, now sewn together, used to cover three walls of a room entirely. The original intention was to paint a palm grove that, from right to left, merges into a pine forest; all but one palm tree has eventually been left of the idea. This fact illustrates just how deeply the painter must have been immersed in his work as he was developing, through images of grandeur, the plot of a story to be told to himself and future viewers. Skeletons standing by a railing, gesticulating, watch colorful planets pass by, while in a circus scene, a black nude lifts a curtain, revealing a staggering tropical scenery.

If his *Berner Veduten* from 1982, by paying reverence to the historical meaning of the motif, are, on the one hand, depictions of a given reality and thereby significant to the artist's reception, Jean-Frédéric Schnyder's versatility, on the other hand, manifested itself in a rather impressive manner

three years earlier in his narrative work *Apocalypso*.

The twelve sculptures made of wood and iron that are shown in the gallery's anteroom and main room for the first time have trivial titles such as *Bett* (Bed), *Kommode* (Chest of drawers), or *Uhr* (Clock, watch). They are thus another example of Schnyder's intensive artistic concern with his personal living environment.

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