



Pieter Schoolwerth

Petzel

Pieter Schoolwerth's wide-ranging and layered practice is bound together by a spirit of restless experimentation that often explores how the human body is represented in a constantly mutating world. From minimal and expressionistic reinterpretations of Old Masters paintings to NFTs created from purchased and wildly retooled 3D figures and backdrops, Schoolwerth's distinct bodies of work are united in their resolve to push the craft of art-making forward with investigations in form and technology. His paintings, sculpture, films, collages, and music are often created using multi-stepped techniques that weave together different materials and processes, both analogue and digital. Though forward thinking, Schoolwerth creates pieces that have an acute understanding of historic visual movements and has referenced Bruegel, Caravaggio, Hans Arp, and Louise Nevelson.

In 2021, the Hannover Kunstverein opened the largest survey of Schoolwerth's work to date: *No Body Get a Head, 1991- 2020*. In conjunction with the exhibition, a catalogue is forthcoming.

His work has been exhibited at Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Whitney Museum, New York among others. He has taught at Bard MFA, Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Columbia University, New York; Cooper Union, New York; Princeton University, New Jersey; School of Visual Arts, New York; Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut among others.





Born in 1970 in St. Louis, Missouri, Schoolwerth from a young age was fascinated by magicians and illusionists, and closely followed the popular performers Harry Blackstone Jr. and Doug Henning. Music has also always been an important part of Schoolwerth's life; while in high school, he began DJing under the name Astrid.

In the early 90s, Schoolwerth attended the California Institute of the Arts, embracing the atmosphere he describes as recoiling from the commercialism of the 1980s. He studied under Michael Asher and Mike Kelley, and continued to DJ throughout college and graduate school where he became interwoven in the punk and DIY cultures. One of his first works during this time was the creation of an alternative English alphabet. This body of work notably set the tone for his practice's consistent themes of superimposition, compression, and wordplay.

Off the Grid #00, 2016
Mixed media and collage
65.7 x 50.4 cm / 26 x 19.8 inches



After graduating in 1994, Schoolwerth relocated to New York. Shortly thereafter his first solo exhibition took place at Thread Waxing Space – a legendary non-profit alternative space in Soho. He quickly became involved in the downtown community of artists and musicians.

From 2003 to 2013, Schoolwerth ran what would become a formative component of the underground music scene of the Lower East Side in New York: Wierd Records. Wierd was an independent record label with weekly music performances and parties that platformed dozens of musicians and artists from around the world. The endeavor was rooted in the same punk and anti-commercialism approaches of his artistic practice.

The 2008 manifesto for Wierd Records, co-authored by Schoolwerth, “The Analogue Synthesizer as a Folk Instrument of Humanist Resistance” highlights the ways the internet was shifting society and art. Of that time Schoolwerth writes, “Embodying more than ever our simulant era, the virtual has obscured the visceral relationship... with the instrument, the material, and the process of creation.” This idea permeates his personal perspective.



Thee 83 Altered States ov Americicka,
Greene Naftali, New York
1996

American Fine Arts,
New York,
2001





The Z-axis Cycle,
Miguel Abreu, New York,
2009

Portraits of Paintings,
Miguel Abreu, New York,
2010



After Troy,
Miguel Abreu, New York,
2012





Shifted Sims,
Petzel Gallery, New York,
2020



No Body Get a Head, 1991- 2020,
Hannover Kunstverein,
2021



Rigged,
Petzel Gallery, New York,
2020



Between pixel and pigment,
MARTa Herford, Germany
2024

Public Collections

Aïshti Foundation, Beirut
Denver Art Museum
Deutsche Bank Collection, New York
Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig
Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont & Derneburg, Germany
Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida
Orange County Museum of Art, Costa Mesa, California
Phoenix Art Museum
Pinault Collection, Paris
Sammlung Boros, Berlin
Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Sigg Art Foundation, Le Castellet, France
Stavanger Art Museum, Stavanger, Norway
Xiao Museum of Contemporary Art, Rizhao, China



Detail of *Portrait of "Musical Group by Candlelight"* (after Van Honthorst), 2010