

SWISS INSTITUTE / CONTEMPORARY ART
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SI

Jean-Frédéric Schnyder

November 23 2011 to February 26 2012

In 1969, legendary Swiss curator Harald Szeemann invited 24-year old Jean-Frédéric Schnyder to participate in the seminal group show *When Attitudes Become Form* at Kunsthalle Bern. Three years later, Szeemann also included him in *Documenta 5* in Kassel. During this time, Schnyder shifted from object-based art to painting. As a self-taught artist he always envied painters for having a proper job. "Coming home with rosy cheeks after painting en plein air makes you entirely happy," states the artist with a chuckle. But he also appreciates painting as a form of expression, which for many people is a synonym for art.

For the series *Wanderung* (Hike) exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 1993, he hiked along the entire Swiss national highway from East to West and painted 119 vistas of the traffic, portraying Switzerland in a previously unseen manner. Schnyder knows how to challenge painting through a conceptual approach and with ironic distance. He deliberately undermines traditional positions with a tongue in cheek attitude.

At Swiss Institute, Schnyder exhibits *Landschaft (Landscape) I-XXXV* (1990/91), a typical example of his vision of painting. After finding a subject, he usually examines every possibility in his imagination without doing any preparatory drawings. The common denominator of this series is the archetypal small house treated in 35 small-sized oil paintings. From the hut of Hansel and Gretel to suburban architecture with a Swastika-lit sky, the modality of a small world is investigated by painting. "I do not care which associations my paintings provoke. Swastika, cruxifix and sugar cubes are just motives which are interesting to paint. To apply color—this is what painting is about, right?—is for me the common thread." Schnyder's manifesto is purely nonchalant, a balancing act between humor, kitsch and a persiflage about Western art.

Also on view is *Corso Schnapsparade* (Liquor Parade, 2009) an animated film featuring a highly eccentric procession. Small wooden horses pull trailers loaded with miniature versions of Swiss liquor bottles. The horses and trailers are cut in wood by Schnyder himself with painstaking craftsmanship. The scenery has a childish or almost naïve element that is instantly contradicted by the presence of hard liquor. The soundtrack from the well-known film *Sissy* further enhances the grandeur of the parade. Schnyder's *Liquor Parade* at once celebrates and ridicules festival culture and its rituals.

Solo exhibitions include Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich (2010); Kunstmuseum Basel / Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel (2007); Centre Culturel Suisse Paris (2004); Ikon Gallery Birmingham England (2002); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (1993); Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (1993); Biennale di Venezia/Swiss Pavillon, Venice, Italy (1993).

Curated by Gianni Jetzer

On the occasion of the exhibition, SI has published the catalog *Landscape*, by Jean-Frédéric Schnyder. The hardcover book features an introduction by exhibition curator and SI Director Gianni Jetzer, 56 pages, 35 color plates, \$20, ISBN 978-1-884692-10-9.

THIS EXHIBITION HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH PUBLIC FUNDS FROM KANTON ZUG, THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS, AND THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS. MAIN INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS ARE PRO HELVETIA, SWISS ARTS COUNCIL AND LUMA FOUNDATION. MAIN GALLERY SPONSORS INCLUDE SWISS RE AND UBS. EXHIBITION SUPPORTER INCLUDES EVA

PRESENHUBER, ZÜRICH.

Worklist



Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, *Landscape I-XXXV*, 1990/1991

Oil on canvas

Each work 8.3 x 11.8 inches / 21 x 30 cm

Courtesy Aargauer Kunsthaus Aarau and Swiss Confederation, Federal Office of Culture, Bern.

DOWNSTAIRS

Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, *Corso Schnapsparade*, 2009

Three-part projection

Courtesy the artist and Eva Presenhuber Gallery, Zurich

Events

January 24, 2012

7PM

Philipp Kaiser on Jean-Frédéric Schnyder

February 7, 2012

7PM

Ugo Rondinone on Jean-Frédéric Schnyder

New address

18 Wooster Street New York NY 10013

New opening hours

Wednesday to Sunday, noon–6PM

www.swissinstitute.net

Please note

We are closed *December 24th and 25th 2011*, as well as *December 31st 2011 - January 1st 2012*.