

MEDIA INFORMATION

Albrecht Schnider: Pathless Landscape

Kunstmuseum Thun, 29 May – 15 August 2021, Opening: 28. May, 6:30pm

Press previews on request

The Kunstmuseum Thun is proud to present works by one of the leading protagonists of Swiss painting: Albrecht Schnider, who was born in Lucerne in 1958 and today lives and works in Hilterfingen near Thun. The solo exhibition features mainly recent paintings, some of them produced expressly for the show, providing an overview of the artist's current practice. A particular focus is on the theme of landscape – a subject that Schnider has returned to again and again, and which is revisited here in light of his return to Switzerland in the spring of 2018.

The search for the moment of discovery

Sketches and drawings are of vital importance to Albrecht Schnider, because they represent the moment when he “discovers” the right composition and thus lay the groundwork for the look of the later painting. Whereas drawing is primarily about line, form, and the structure of the picture, in painting the artist must also choose the right colours to enhance the desired expression of the picture.

Schnider is always searching for the moment when the picture, as he says, “looks back at him” and will thus be able to trigger something similar in the viewer. This searching and finding proceeds both through repetition and by chance as well as in a final artistic decision that is reinforced by the subjective feeling of having “found” the right composition. Despite the clean and reduced formal language that underlies Schnider's works, and their immaculate surfaces betraying no trace of brushstrokes, his paintings conjure profound depths and evoke an unusual sense of intimacy. This impression is not least the result of the artist's own personal process of discovery.

The interplay between drawing and painting forms a thematic focus of the exhibition, demonstrated here by way of some of the artist's sketchbooks. The sketches appear like thoughts put down on paper, opening up for the viewer a more in-depth engagement with Schnider's art.

“Pathless Landscape”

Contradictions pervade Schnider's landscape paintings. The ever-green hills and mountains might exist anywhere or nowhere – and the viewer is denied any natural feature that would suggest a specific place. Are the green areas in the pictures meadows or rather forests covering these gentle mountain ridges? The vagueness of the landscape suggests that these are blurred views, and yet each area is sharply delineated, allowing a landscape to emerge plane by plane. This approach has a way of distancing the landscape image we at first seem to recognise from all reality. How can a landscape appear at once so familiar and yet so foreign?

The title of the exhibition conveys the timeless appearance of Schnider's landscapes. Viewers can discern no path or way leading into them. They instead find themselves hovering over the unreal, even supernatural landscape and must allow themselves to be enveloped by it rather than walking into it – until they are

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ultimately fully immersed. The word “entwegt” (meaning roughly “stripped of all paths”) emphasises this impression of an untouched landscape that betrays neither tracks nor brush marks. Moreover, the etymology of the word, a Swiss-German coinage, alludes quietly but unmistakably to Switzerland as the artist’s homeland. The solo show is the latest in a series of monographic exhibitions of Swiss artists at the Kunstmuseum Thun whose work displays local ties and deals with the theme of landscape.

Emptiness as stylistic device and metaphor

Another characteristic of Albrecht Schnider’s work is his use of voids in his compositions. The artist alludes in this way to the difficulty of making pictures and the question of what constitutes a picture in the first place. The empty canvas as the starting point of each work becomes as a subject in its own right, challenging the meaning and necessity of each brushstroke. At the same time, the artist leaves room for reflection and, in view of the voids that leap out at them, invites viewers to fill the canvas with their own thoughts and ideas.

Albrecht Schnider CV

Albrecht Schnider was born in Lucerne in 1958. After studying at the School of Design and the University of Bern from 1982 to 1987, he spent time in Follonica, Rome (Membro dell’ Istituto Svizzero) and Florence. Schnider moved to Brussels in 1993 and to Berlin in 1998. Since 2005 he has been a lecturer in painting at Bern University of the Arts (HKB). The artist moved back to Switzerland in the spring of 2018 and now lives and works in Hilterfingen near Thun.

Schnider has received multiple awards, including (selection) the Aeschlimann-Corti Scholarship, Bern (1989); the Exhibition Award of the Lucerne Art Society (1989); the Swiss Art Award (1989/90/92); the Istituto Svizzero di Roma Fellowship (1990–92); the One-Year Working Grant of the City and Canton of Lucerne (1991); the Manor Prize, Lucerne (1994); the Prize of the Cantonal Commission for Art and Architecture, Bern (1997); and the Promotion Prize of the Foundation for Graphic Art in Switzerland (1999). He is represented by renowned galleries at home and abroad: Galerie Mai 36, Zurich; Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin; Marc Jancou Contemporary, New York, Geneva, and Rossinière; Leylâ Akinci Gallery, Amsterdam; Bernhard Knaus Fine Art, Frankfurt am Main; Galerie Kornfeld, Bern.

Solo exhibitions (selected): Helmhaus, Zurich (2014); Kunstmuseum Solothurn (2011, 1998); Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2011); Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau (2006); Kunstmuseum Luzern (1994).

Group exhibitions (selected): Musée de Pully (2020); Kunstmuseum Bern (2019); Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau (2019); Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal (2018); Kunstmuseum Solothurn (2018); Kunsthalle Bern (2016); Kunstmuseum Luzern (2016); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Bremen (2015); Kunstmuseum Luzern (2015); Bonnefontenmuseum Maastricht (2012); Stiftung Situation Kunst, Bochum (2010); Kunsthalle Krems (1997).

Catalogue: The exhibition is accompanied by a publication (D/E) focusing on the subject of landscape. With a foreword by Helen Hirsch and texts by Angelika Affentranger-Kirchrath and Susanna Koeberle; published by the Kunstmuseum Thun and Edizioni Galleria Periferia, Lucerne, 2021.

Photo material

Downloadable images are available on the website: <http://www.kunstmuseumthun.ch/de/medien/>.

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Tue–Sun 10am–5pm, Wed 10am–7pm, closed Mon.

For opening hours on holidays see www.kunstmuseumthun.ch.

Admission: CHF 10/ 8. Free admission for children and teenagers aged 16 and under, advance registration is required for groups.

Special tours on request: T +41(0)33 225 84 20 or kunstmuseumt@thun.ch

Food and drink: Café Thunerhof, www.fruitpower.ch, info@fruitpower.ch

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