



HANS SCHABUS

THE SHAFT OF BABEL

Opening: 2/26/2003, 6 p.m.

Duration of exhibition: 2/27/2003 - 3/29/2003

Parallel opening of the one-man exhibition **Hans Schabus "Astronaut (I'll be right there)"** at the Secession, Vienna, 2/26/2003, 7 p.m.

Press release

(Below the top layer) >Hans Schabus is in the tunnel < said a voice on the other end of the receiver. For weeks it's always been the same answer. People assumed that the artist was on to something hot or was at least on some hot trail. In any case, since he went under Schabus had not made sent any news, and people began wondering whether it wouldn't make more sense to simply send some information back into the shaft while it was till possible. People were wondering how to understand the artist's silence without having to ask him about it. It seemed as if the only option left was to close the hole into which he had vanished with the earth he had used to fill bags with in a orderly way – to close it so that no one, apart from him and the few initiated who had to be there when the hole was being repaired, could recognized the hole anymore. (The paper-like eye) Meanwhile tons of earth have accumulated up on top of the dark hole, equally distributed in red bags entirely covering the former studio with undulating plastic. Hanging on the walls, over the bags, were some plans with thinly drawn sketches, like those used for the construction of buildings. These plans showed street-like lines that passed through the inside of the buildings like a thick string of nerves. Presumably, they are supposed to mark the path that Schabus followed. On one of the large sheets of paper one could recognize the outlines and the ground plan of the Secession – but instead of a street the Wiener Kanal flowed by the entrance to the building. And did one actually reach the main room of this building by way of a wide, labyrinthine underground path? A narrow dark shaft of tunnel which the artist apparently found in a finished state and only had to photograph, had been pasted around a wooden spiral staircase, on a different sheet of paper depicting different views. (A fall as light as a feather). It seemed as if the sketches and collages were leading their own, non-transferable existence which had been delineated by the format of paper used by the artist to arrange his thoughts while making preparations for his journey. As if not he, but the journey had packed his bags and as if not the plan but rather a loose board on the floor of his studio had marked the beginning of his journey. (Above the lower level) Meanwhile, on the upper floor of this studio located in the center of Vienna, one was studying the irregularly sieved fabric of the sky.