



HANS SCHABUS

All up in Flames

Opening: 10/11/2005, 7 p.m.

Duration of the Exhibition: 11/11/2005 - 11/01/2006

Press Release

On the 6th of November the 51st Biennale of Venice is coming to an end and those artworks that were only temporarily installed are taking leave. Also the monumental mountain sculpture created by Hans Schabus, this year's solo representative of Austria, will vanish with the end of the fair. However, Schabus does not resign himself to the disappearance of his massif and transfers his impressive installation to Vienna, showing sketches, drawings, collages, plans and models of the Biennale project.

His meticulous drawings and models that were created before and during the Biennale are now shown at the Engholm Engelhorn Galerie. Here they document the preceding research and the step-by-step progress of the grand project "The Last Land". Schabus studied the history of the Biennale, its exhibition space and the Austrian Pavilion, he read about the first world exhibitions and the shared history of the adjoining countries Austria and Italy. Not only was the Biennale di Venezia founded in 1895, also the artificial Venice at the Viennese Prater was installed the same year. Both were attempts to call attention and attract tourists after the world exhibitions had already proved the great popularity of artificial paradises. It was those fairs where Austria had already presented the queerest paper-mâché mountains.

For Hans Schabus preceding research takes place not only in his mind, but analysing and "getting closer" is taken literally. He physically approaches his exhibition spaces, and so the Biennale does not begin with the actual pavilion, but his journey to get there is already part of the project. Documenting his travels, Schabus produced the stoic film "Val Canale" that shows poetic aerial views of the Friaul's valleys. The photographic work "Mare Adriatico, Venezia, 13 Maggio 2005" in turn demonstrates Schabus' symbolic arrival in Venice with his self-made boat "forlorn".

In Venice the artist finally erects his mountain. The huge sculpture functions as an Austrian homeland mountain on exterritorial ground and covers the pavilion that was created by Joseph Hofmann in 1934. A new identity is literally imposed on the building; it is not the architecture surrounding the art, but it is the artwork which envelopes the edifice. The former outside becomes the inside and the labyrinthine staircases are reminding of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Carceri": At the summit of the mountain several skylights allow the visitor outlooks over the sea, the city and the competing cultural temples of the nations. Hans Schabus does not have to hide out at the "Songcontest for Intellectuals" in comparison with other countries (Almuth Spiegler, Die Presse, June 10th, 2005). Hanno Rauterberg (Die Zeit, June 16th, 2005) acknowledges the grandness of the mountain even entitling it "the height and the climax of this Biennale". It looks as though if moving mountains actually works sometimes.

Hans Schabus (1970/A), lives and works in Vienna.

Selected solo shows are the 51st Biennale di Venezia, Austrian Pavilion, Venice (2005), „Das Rendez-vousproblem“, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz (2004), „Der Schacht von Babel“, Kerstin Engholm Galerie, Vienna (2003), „Astronaut (komme gleich)“, Secession, Vienna (2003), Zero Arte Contemporanea, Milan (2003) „Transport“, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2003).

For further information about the exhibition please contact Kerstin Engholm or Luise Reitstätter at +431 585 73 37 11.