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**Kunsthalle
Friart
Fribourg**

Bernhard Schobinger

B.S. Kosmos

50 years of creation

21.SEP – 1.DEC.2024

Exhibition guide

BIOGRAPHY

Bernhard Schobinger (1946, CH) lives and works in Richterswil. He has been fascinated by stones since childhood. He studied at the Zurich Applied Arts School (KGSZ), where he was influenced by the discovery of modern art. After an apprenticeship with a goldsmith, he opened his own workshop and gallery in 1968 and has worked independently ever since. Marked by the punk movement in the 1980s, he exhibited and lived in Zurich, London and Berlin. His work has received international recognition, notably in Japan, a country the artist has been visiting on teaching secondments for thirty years. Bernhard Schobinger's oeuvre was recently the subject of an exhibition at Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich (2024). He is represented by the Martina Simeti Gallery in Milan.

ON THE GROUND FLOOR

50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT CREATIVE WORK

From his connections with Concrete art in Zurich to punk rebellion, from postmodern eclecticism to the smallest of zen-influenced touches, Schobinger's work testifies to constant formal experimentation.

Schobinger is an independent artist who fashions always-unique pieces of jewelry from scratch, upholding a vision in which there is no separation between art and life. Sonja, the artist's daughter, serves as a model in the series of images that make up the artist's book *Devon Carbon Perm* (Schobinger + Štrba, 1988). She is photographed by her mother, the artist Annelies Štrba. Developed in a kitchen, these shots have an intimacy and togetherness impossible to recreate in the professional, commercial world of fashion. In the work *Nasses Schaf II* (2002) (display case A), a chessboard is transformed into a jewelry box. Inside, a child's figurine representing a sheep is encrusted with diamonds symbolizing drops of rain. The piece inspires tenderness and attachment. Drawing on conceptions originating in Japanese crafts, the beauty of the forms transcends individual expression.

CONCRETE BEGINNINGS

Inspired by the Concrete art of Richard Paul Lohse and Max Bill, Schobinger applied their principles to jewelry (ground floor, small room). The rejection of subjective expression, the driving force of ideas and the principles of economy and concision made a profound impact on the up-and-coming artists' aesthetic approach.

AN AESTHETICS OF EXISTENCE

A new paradigm established itself at the end of the 1970s. Reaffirming the animus of the avant-garde, the punk movement, New Wave and the Neue Deutsche Welle infused music and fashion with a vital energy. Emancipating himself from the dogmatism of concrete rationalism, Schobinger now founded his practice in an aesthetics of existence. Its intensity manifests itself through the use of fragments, twisting and cuts. Plastic, metal, debris and precious stones form equivocal accumulations. In a portrait filmed for television, the artist evokes a poetics of the industrial environment, a reversal of values that opens the way to a 'democracy of materials', in which each lays claim to an equal place. His artist's book *Eiszeit Juwelentraum* (self-published, 1981) bears witness to this plurality. In the piece *Icecreamlyric* (1983) (display case G), popsicle sticks assembled as necklaces serve as a support for gold and zinc shavings. Far from the capitalist conception of value and its hierarchy of metals, this anthropological vision of culture puts the consumer society into perspective.

COMING BACK TO THE SURFACE

From his very first creations, the artist has made jewelry from found or recycled materials. Bakelite fragments were assembled to make a necklace (*Restverwertung*, 1985) (display case I). In the forest, the artist came across the remains of a luxury hotel on a neighbouring landfill covered in vegetation on the edge of the Melide woods in Ticino. He assembled the necks of bottles he found there into a red-stained necklace (*Flaschenhals-Kette*, 1988) (display case D). A marvelling on chance encounters with the earth's infinity has often triggered the inspiration for a piece of jewelry. Such inspiration sometimes only finds form on the maturing of a collection, as with the small cars retrieved from the bottom of lakes during a series of dives (*Under Water Car Collection*, 2023) (display case A). Finding, unearthing, bringing back to the surface, the metaphorical dimension of these activities stirs memories, the past, history. From abandoned homes to construction sites of the new, from family jewels discovered at the back of drawers to misplaced personal effects, the artist transforms things that already bear the mark of time.

ON THE 1ST FLOOR

BERLIN PROJECT

On the first floor, the artist presents a new ensemble of pieces on which he has been working for several years. In summer 2018, tracing a trail he was first alerted to by a saleswoman at a Berlin flea market, Schobinger has put his hand to a collection of pieces of porcelain representing, for the most part, exploded figurines. These fragments are taken from the rubble from the city of Berlin that was in large part destroyed during the Second World War. Previously they had been gathered together and buried in the craters made by the bombs by the *Trümmerfrauen*. These 'women of the rubble' made a major contribution to the removal of the five hundred million cubic metres of rubble that had accumulated in Germany.

Jewelry holds fragments together without trying to breath new life into them. By grouping objects by type, combining them closely, and emphasising their forms with lacquer, stones or pearls, the artist seems to be indicating the fundamental otherness of the source materials. These works have a particular affinity with the literary devices employed by W.G. Sebald and his intertwined use of psycho-geographical drift and the document. In his latest work, *On The Natural History of Destruction*, Sebald meditates on the unassimilable dimension of the trauma of destruction. He presents allegory as a poetic form that responds to this particularly charged cultural memory.

B.S. KOSMOS

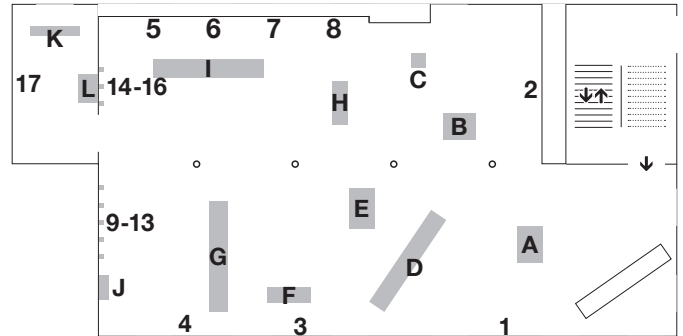
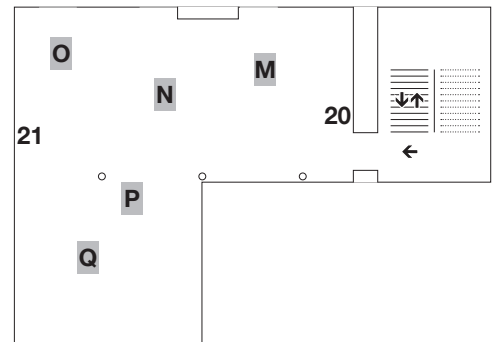
'The whole universe is one bright pearl. What is to be understood?'

Zen Master Dôgen

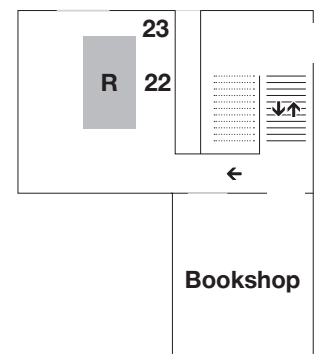
Schobinger's works offer a vision of daily lives saved from oblivion. Fragments are projected onto a cosmic plane, a space that contains everything. Two pairs of Japanese scissors, a small pair and a big one, are set off with a pearl. They form an asymmetrical circular flock (*Japanese Scissor Birds*, 2024) (1).

A jewel condenses space into a single point. The smallest of *objets d'art* is also the most powerful. Technique is expression, accident intention. In opposition to any reflection on formal approach, it's the practice that counts. A nail pierces a carved stone (*Nagel-Ring*, 2011) (15).

GROUND FLOOR: 50 YEARS OF CREATION

1ST FLOOR: BERLIN PROJECT

BASEMENT



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♥ **THANK YOU**



DURING THE EXHIBITION

20.SEP.2024, 18:00
OPENING

12.OCT.2024, 15:00–19:00
FLEA MARKET

+

VISITE DES AMI-E-X-S 17:00
FREE GUIDED TOUR
WITH THE ARTIST BERNHARD SCHOBINGER
AND NICOLAS BRULHART – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

9.NOV.2024
MUSIK FOR FUNICULAIRE AFTERPARTY
PAR EDC, RABABOO RECORDS, TRNSTN RADIO
ET ABLETTE RECORDS

30.NOV.2024
FRIBAR

COMPLETE PROGRAM
WWW.FRIART.CH

KUNSTHALLE FRIART FRIBOURG

NICOLAS BRULHART, ESTELLE NEGRO, SACHA RAPPO, MAX HAURI, VIOLETTE MARBACHER, IKENË RRUSTEMI, VALENTINE YERLY/KOLLEKTIV ORTIE, PIERRICK BRÉGEON AND ALI-EDDINE ABDELKHALEK/EUROSTANDARD, FABIAN STÜCHELI, STEPHAN WEBER, ANNE SUDAN, GUILLAUME BAERISWYL, ANJA DELZ, JACK SIMS, CLÉMENCE DE WECK AND THE COMMITTEE OF FRIART, AMI-E-X-S FRIART, RECEPTION STAFF, CONCEIÇÃO SILVA CARVALHO, ALIONA CAZACU

FRIART THANKS

THE ARTIST, LILIANA HELDNER, MARTINA SIMETI GALLERY (MILAN), FRANCESCA PIA GALLERY (ZURICH) FOR THEIR COLLABORATION; THE FRIBOURG MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, THE GENEVA MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY, THE MUSÉE DE L'ÉLYSÉE FOR THE DISPLAY CASES; MUDAC, KUNSTHAUS ZUG, KUNST(ZEUG)HAUS RAPPERSWIL-JONA, ANNELIES ŠTRBA, PEDRO WIRZ, MADELEINE WITZIG AND PHILIPP ZOLLINGER GALLERY FOR THE LOANS.

THE ARTIST THANKS

ANNELIES ŠTRBA AND SONJA SCHOBINGER FOR THE PORTRAITS (ON THE WALL), LILIANA HELDNER FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, MADELEINE WITZIG, MARTINA SIMETI FOR HER INTENSIVE COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT, AND NICOLAS BRULHART AND HIS TEAM FOR THEIR ENTHUSIASTIC MOTIVATION AND ELOQUENT COLLABORATION