

ARTFORUM

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Nicolaus Schafhausen

NICOLAUS SCHAFFHAUSEN IS DIRECTOR OF THE KUNSTHALLE WIEN, VIENNA, AND STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FOGO ISLAND ARTS, AN INITIATIVE OF CANADA'S SHOREFAST FOUNDATION. HE CURATED THE GERMAN PAVILION FOR THE 52ND AND 53RD VENICE BIENNALES; UPCOMING PROJECTS IN VIENNA INCLUDE AN EXHIBITION OF THE WORK OF TONY CONRAD AND A THEMATIC GROUP SHOW, "POLITICAL POPULISM."



1. GCC, *Achievements In Figures, Figure A: Amalgamated City (detail)*, 2013, digital video, wallpaper, 13' 1 1/2" x 98' 5 1/4". From "Speculations on Anonymous Materials."

1

"SPECULATIONS ON ANONYMOUS MATERIALS" (FRIDERICIANUM, KASSEL; CURATED BY SUSANNE PFEFFER) Announcing a high threshold for risk by giving pride of place to the collective GCC's kitsch sci-fi mural, which loomed over the museum's atrium, Pfeffer inaugurated her tenure as the Fridericianum's director with one of the most thought-provoking exhibitions I've seen in some time. Precisely installed, the show allowed viewers to examine each piece discretely and also to trace a kind of spatial narrative—Pamela Rosenkranz's water bottles, for example, were followed by Yngve Holen's sculptures based on 3-D scans of raw meat, in a graceful segue from commodity form to what might be called commodity formlessness. Pfeffer's decision to investigate postmillennial metaphysics (new materialism, etc.) through the lens of a contemporary art exhibition was a brave and exciting beginning for what promises to be a successful redefinition of the institution.

2

AD REINHARDT (DAVID ZWIRNER, NEW YORK; CURATED BY ROBERT STORR) With comics, drawings, and collages in one room, black paintings in another, and a slide projection of 360 photographs in a third, Storr's distinctive miniretrospective shed light on the links between Reinhardt's pop-cultural interests and his pursuit of abstraction's logical conclusion, while bearing witness to the artist's satiric, critical, and brilliant mind.

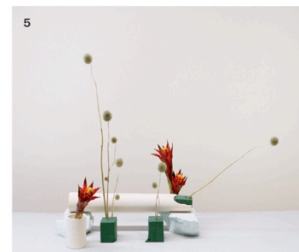


2. View of "Ad Reinhardt," 2013, David Zwirner, New York. 5. Camille Henrot, *Mont Analog, Roman d'aventures alpines 'Pour revenir aux sources, on devait aller en sens inverse' (Mount Analogue, Alpine Adventure Novel 'To return to the source, one should go in the opposite direction')*, 2012, flowers, vase, plaster, floral foam, dimensions variable.

3

WALTER SWENNEN (WIELS CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE, BRUSSELS; CURATED BY DIRK SNAUWAERT WITH CAROLINE DUMALIN) Swennen's seemingly fragile compositions and witty references to everyday life are unfailingly fun to look at but have plenty of substance—they are like absurd allegories, painterly distillations of abstract sociopolitical concepts. The Belgian painter's singular oeuvre has long inspired other artists. It was about time a renowned institution gave him a retrospective.

Co-organized with Culturgest, Lisbon.



4

MICHAEL STANIAK (STEVE TURNER CONTEMPORARY, LOS ANGELES) This exhibition of Staniak's paintings—which at first glance have the disembodied flatness of JPEGs but whose surfaces are actually relief-like expanses of built-up plaster—subtly explored aesthetics, authorship, and image production and circulation in the age of the social network, deftly locating artistic possibilities in the friction between the physical and the digital.

Strife of Love does explore something primal—humans' fear and awe of snakes, as globally manifested in religious ceremonies, in the manufacture of venom antidote, etc. With her fragmentary technique, Henrot apprehends the zeitgeist and its history.

6

MARSDEN HARTLEY (NEUE NATIONALGALERIE, BERLIN; CURATED BY DIETER SCHOLZ) In his "German Paintings," Hartley read a nation through its symbols. An American expatriate in Berlin, he was politically and emotionally invested in Germany's fortunes, and his paintings capture the tensions of 1913–15 in a seemingly playful but grave way. While the exhibition was one of many keyed to the centennial of World War I, the Neue Nationalgalerie stood out with this deeply researched effort to rehabilitate a painter who had almost been forgotten in his adopted country.

Co-organized with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

5

CAMILLE HENROT (SCHINKEL PAVILLON, BERLIN; CURATED BY CLARA MEISTER) Visitors to Henrot's characteristically poetic, unsettling, and beautiful show could meander from the artist's classical presentation of ikebana flower arrangement to a subterranean gallery where her video *The Strife of Love in a Dream*, 2011, was on view. If not quite as elemental as her cosmological *Grosse Fatigue*, 2013, *The*



3. Walter Swennen, *Untitled (La Chute) (Untitled [The Fall])*, 2012, oil on canvas, 59 x 67 1/4". 4. Michael Staniak, *IMG_829 (holographic)*, 2014, casting compound and acrylic on board, steel frame, 63 x 48".

