

From the Collection

Adrian Schiess

Fetzen, 1982–89 and 1991–2000

6 October 2018 – 10 March 2019

**KUNSTMUSEUM
LIECHTENSTEIN**

Introduction

Adrian Schiess (born 1959, Zurich) considers 1980 as the starting point of his activity as a painter, in which questioning the reality of painting plays a continuous role. Fetzen (Scraps) are among the artist's most radical works, created in a lengthy, continuous process, mainly in the south of France in Mouans-Sartoux, where Schiess lived for many years in close contact with nature. In his process-based work his aim is to avoid over-determinacy and, accordingly, he lets an element of chance play a part in his works, for example in the form of tearing or light.

At the same time, his scraps and fragmented objects can also be seen as signs of rebellion – Schiess also played in a punk band – against the prevailing artistic positions at that time. Denise Frey of Kunstmuseum Luzern wrote: 'He paints in opposition to the mentality (akin to that of 1968) of the Junge Wilde [Wild Youth], whose expressive painting caused a furore in the art market. Their conceptual positions demanded perpetual constraints on discussion and legitimation to which [Schiess] refuses to submit; he finds their sprawling, affected gestures of painting – "They paint all sorts of mythologies and stuff like that by the square mile" – simply too illustrative, too verbose. ... Being non-objective and serial, the work should "disperse the meaning", pointing to nothing and never referring to itself.' Schiess himself expressed this in the following terms: 'I am a painter who since the mid-1980s been painting a work in progress, one big, endless, constantly changing and dispersing picture. A picture that consists of a growing number of mostly colour-painted, pixel-like parts and also coloured light.'



Studio Adrian Schiess, Mouans-Sartoux

He soon came to question the individual image, creating constantly growing series of works. A constitutive factor of this work is not only the tremendous quantity of the scraps (more than 1,000), pieced together one by one, but also the spatial character of their arrangement, which allows the viewer to discern the artist's movement: the performative meaning. These fragmented, painterly, layered scraps also give tangible form to the process of painting itself, that is created layer by layer. In this we see the penetration of the surface and the immersion in time and space. Ultimately, it is all about time. Together, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen and Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein have purchased this extensive and important body of the artist's work. This is the first exhibition of this joint acquisition. Schiess himself designed the presentation of the space-embracing work in the skylight gallery, embedded in a presentation of paintings from the Rolf Ricke Collection that he curated. A milestone in the history of Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein is the joint acquisition of the Rolf Ricke Collection in 2006 in cooperation with Kunstmuseum St. Gallen and Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt.

Schiess selected works from all three institutions. With works by Urs Frei, Matthew McCaslin, Thom Merrick, Steven Parrino, David Reed and Jessica Stockholder, his choice remains very much in the period in which Fetzen were made. An important aspect for Schiess is allowing viewers to experience his own artistic position, his personal field of relations, in which he seeks to find a practice of painting that breaks away from traditional notions of painting.

Biography

Adrian Schiess is among his generation's most important exponents of non-objective painting. He participated in the Venice Biennale (1990) and documenta IX (1992) in Kassel; solo exhibitions have been presented internationally, including Musée du FRAC PACA, Marseille (2014); Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur (2012); Musée d'Art Moderne, St. Etienne (2010); Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis (2007); Kunstmuseum Solothurn (2004); Neues Museum, Nuremberg (2001); Kunsthaus Bregenz (1998); Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz (1996); Kunsthalle Zürich (1994); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1993).

Schiess has explored the appearance of colour extensively in his oeuvre, from the large scale of his numerous public art projects (with architects including Gigon/Guyer, Herzog & de Meuron and David Chipperfield) and the expansive installations with panels and video projections in museums to the intimately scaled scraps and the small-format books of watercolours. Between the appearance of colour and material nature in space, Schiess is constantly redefining painterly presence, always attaching special importance to the instability of the constellations.

Checklist

All of his works, except *Fetzen* by Adrian Schiess, are works from the former Rolf Ricke collection, which was acquired by Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen and Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main.

Adrian Schiess

* 1959 in Zurich

1

Fetzen, 1982–89 and 1991–2000

Acrylic and acrylic lacquer on semi-cardboard, cardboard, panels, foil

Various dimensions,

approx. 1000 single pieces, Six tables

Donation Adrian Schiess (1 table), and

acquisition of Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein and Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

2

Flache Arbeit (Flat Piece), 1990

Enamel on metal sheet

109 × 298,7 × 3 cm

Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main

Jessica Stockholder

* 1959 in Seattle

3

#323/1999 (no title), 1999

Photograph, plastic sheet, paper, pins, metal, case boards, threaded bars, garbage can,

wooden beam, brushes, strings, acrylic cord, acrylic and oil paint

156 × 200 × 127 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

David Reed

* 1946 in San Diego

4

#313-2, 1992-95

Oil and Alkys on canvas

71,5 × 366,5 × 5 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

Thom Merrick

* 1963 in Sacramento, California

5

Blindgänger, 1993

Car tires, electric cables and light bulbs

Various dimensions

Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

Urs Frei

* 1958 in Zurich

6

A4, 1988

Enamel on metal slides and metal cans

36 × 91,5 × 16 cm

Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

Steven Parrino

* 1958 in New York, † 2005 in New York

7

Spin-out vortex, 2000

Enamel on canvas

183 × 183 × 19,5 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

8

Untitled, 1990

Acrylic on canvas

183 × 123,5 × 13 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

Matthew McCaslin

* 1957 in Bay Shore, New York

9

Dilemma, 1992

Electric cable and light bulb in plastic fitting with
basket protection

approx. 14 × 95 × 250 cm

Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

Guided tour

Thursday, 29 November 2018, 6 pm

From the Collection

Adrian Schiess:

Fetzen, 1982–89 and 1991–2000

(in German)

Curators

Adrian Schiess, Christiane Meyer-Stoll

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