



The Brant Foundation
ART STUDY CENTER

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THE BRANT FOUNDATION ART STUDY CENTER PRESENTS

JULIAN SCHNABEL

NOVEMBER 11–MARCH 2014

The Brant Foundation Art Study Center is pleased to present *Julian Schnabel* – a comprehensive survey of almost fifty works including paintings, drawings, and sculptures from the mid-1970's to the present.

“It is a pleasure to open Julian Schnabel's exhibition following our Andy Warhol show. This is a great opportunity to show a contemporary master painter and to review his oeuvre. I have known Julian for close to thirty years, spent a great deal of time with him in his studio and have collected his work continuously. It is clear how important Julian is to the landscape of contemporary art, and remains a pivotal figure and a huge influence to the younger artists of today.”

- Peter Brant

Since his first solo exhibition at Mary Boone Gallery in 1979, Schnabel has forged a singular pictorial language that embraces unconventional methods and materials. Beginning with his earliest works, Schnabel broke with the prevailing paradigm of Conceptual Art by forging a unique artistic practice that embraced figuration, personal narratives and references to history and mythology. Challenging the notion that there is any difference between figurative and abstract painting, Schnabel has founded his work on an infinite exploration of different ways of putting paint on a pictorial surface.

As Schnabel explained in his monograph *CVJ* (1987), “I don't think the battle between figuration and abstraction is even an issue. Anything can be a model for a painting – a poplar tree, another painting, a smudge of dirt.”

The “Big Girl” paintings are emblematic of Schnabel's radically un-hierarchical approach. Based on a small painting of a blonde girl by an unknown artist that he found in a Houston thrift shop in 1987, Schnabel drew inspiration for this iconic series in 2001. Two examples of this well-known series will be on view at The Brant Foundation. Alongside the “Big Girl” paintings will be two paintings on Kabuki theater backdrops from 1987; a 16 square foot painting, *E o OEN* (1988), recalling the name of Andy Warhol's estate in Montauk, Long Island where Schnabel lived and worked and painted the painting; *El Espontaneo*, a 22 square foot painting from 1990; and a recent “Goat Painting” (2012), where Schnabel painted on a transposed image of a stuffed goat with a rabbit on its head over 19th century Dufour wallpaper depicting George Washington accepting Cornwallis's surrender.

One of the main tropes of this survey exhibition is Schnabel's poetic use of found materials, his embrace of chance operations, and his sui generis inventive mark-making. Whether dragging a canvas on the ground, allowing a drop cloth to absorb environmental stains, or using printed images as supports for his paintings, Schnabel's formally and conceptually wide-ranging work can be connected through the notion of the palimpsest. With this dense layering of cultural signifiers and imagery that drives his work, Schnabel forged a groundbreaking practice that can be seen echoed in the work of a subsequent generation of artists, including Joe Bradley, Dan Colen, Urs Fischer, Wade Guyton, Nate Lowman, Sergej Jensen and Mark Grotjahn among others.

The Brant Foundation exhibition will also feature rarely exhibited early works from 1975 onwards, including drawings and studies for his first mature bodies of works such as his “Wax Paintings” and “Plate Paintings” that would follow. Examples of these early wax paintings, such as *St. Sebastian - Born in 1951* (1979), will be featured in the exhibition. In these works, Schnabel cut holes into the surface of the canvas and made ridges out of canvas and modeling paste in order to make them look and feel like found objects (as though he was painting on a garage door or a brick wall).

Schnabel's “Plate Paintings” are perhaps his most distinctive contribution to twentieth century art. While these are arguably Schnabel's best-known works, these plate paintings have not been exhibited in New York for decades. At the Brant Foundation one will have the opportunity to engage with some of the most important plate paintings being exhibited together for the first



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time. The exhibition will feature Schnabel's first plate painting, *The Patients and the Doctors* (1978), *Divan* (1979) as well as other important works such as *The Mud in Mudanza* (1982) and *The Walk Home* (1985). In the monumental tableau entitled *The Sea* (1981) Schnabel used shards of broken Mexican vases to evoke an allegory of death and to suggest an image of cultural upheaval. These themes of death, time, and immortality are a common thread in all of Schnabel's oeuvre. In addition to these more abstract plate paintings, the exhibition will also feature a selection of his portraiture executed on broken crockery such as *Portrait of Jacqueline Beaurang* (1984), *Portrait of Tina Chow* (1987), and *Portrait of May Andersen* (2013).

A plate portrait of Ryan Brant (2011) holding a copy of William Gaddis's 'JR' accompanies two paintings from Schnabel's "Recognitions Series" (1987), itself an ode to the great writer and friend William Gaddis, alongside Schnabel's monumental, haunting painting, *Mutant King* (1981).

In all of Schnabel's paintings, there is a method that opens up to many different kinds of appearances. While these appearances might seem disparate, they congeal into an undeniable thread that makes up the authenticity of the mark of a Julian Schnabel painting.

Julian Schnabel was born in New York City in 1951. In 1965 he moved with his family to Brownsville, Texas. He attended the University of Houston from 1969-73, receiving a BFA, and returned to New York to participate in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. In 1978 Schnabel travelled throughout Europe and in Barcelona was particularly moved by the architecture of Antoni Gaudí. That same year he made his first plate painting, *The Patients and the Doctors*. His first solo painting exhibition took place at the Mary Boone Gallery in New York City in February 1979. Schnabel's work has been exhibited all over the world. His paintings, sculptures, and works on paper have been the subject of numerous retrospective exhibitions at museums including: The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1982; Tate Gallery, London, 1982; Whitechapel Gallery, London, 1987; Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, 1987; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1987; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1987; Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, 1995; Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Bologna, 1996; The Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, 1997; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt/Main, 2004; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2004; Palazzo Venezia, Rome, 2007; Rotonda della Besana, Milan, 2007; The Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2010; and Museo Correr, Piazza San Marco, Venice, 2011.

In 1996 Schnabel wrote and directed the feature film *Basquiat* about fellow New York artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, produced by Peter Brant. Schnabel went on to receive great acclaim for *Before Night Falls* (2000), *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007), *Berlin* (2007), and *Miral* (2010).

His work is included in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Guggenheim Museum, New York and Bilbao; Tate Gallery, London; Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Kunstmuseum, Basel; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Fondation Musée d'Art Moderne, Luxembourg; and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Julian Schnabel currently lives and works in New York City and Montauk, Long Island.

The Brant Foundation Art Study Center has a mission to promote education and appreciation of contemporary art and design, by making works available to institutions and individuals for scholarly study and examination. The Brant Foundation Art Study Center presents long-term exhibitions curated primarily from the collection. The collection is remarkable in that scores of artists are represented in depth, including works from the earliest period of their practice through their most recent works. Currently, The Brant Foundation, Inc., established in 1996, lends works to more than a dozen exhibitions per year. The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, is located at 941 North Street, Greenwich, Connecticut, and is open Monday through Friday by appointment only. The exhibition will remain on view through March 2014.

To schedule an appointment, guests may email: info@brantfoundation.org.

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