

HANS SCHABUS

Passager Clandestin

September 13th – November 2nd, 2013

Opening: September 12th, 2013

Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am - 7 pm and by appointment

The dictionary states that a stowaway, *Passager clandestin* is a passenger, traveling illegally with an airplane, a ship or a train, one who usually keeps himself hidden. Hans Schabus is interested in the term because of its political implication as a fugitive. A stowaway implies hiding as well as moving from one place to another without much outside control. Schabus believes that this play of chance along with the vulnerability which being in hiding suggests is part of the creative working process. Perhaps he even identifies with a stowaway himself. Next to the contextual and political references that the works of this exhibition display, Schabus presents a personal vocabulary of images.

The exhibition opens up with *Grenzland*, 2010 a sleeping section from a former caravan. The caravan, cut into different parts and stripped of its wheels, is now motionless. Schabus is referring here to Xavier de Maistre's narrative *Voyage autour de ma chambre*, inferring how sleep is a journey into the unknown. Placed across from an old-fashioned bicycle, which is leaning against a column, the caravan is a motive for movement as well as being moved.

The Sun Highlights the Lack in each, 2012 the chrome-plated bicycle is a rearward refinement of a rusted, old bike and Schabus' attempt to feed back what was once a sign of decay into the societal systems circuit. For his Colombo Biennial exhibition project in 2012, he dismantled a locally bought bicycle into all of its parts, chrome-plated it and then put it back together again. Schabus then cycled from the south of the island to the Biennial in Colombo and parked the bicycle inside the exhibition. This simple action can be seen as being in respectful accordance with the social economic reality of the island, an action which, during the journey, allows the vehicle to blend into the landscape through its reflection onto the chrome-plated surface.

The rear part of the exhibition space shows a series of blind drawings, *Without Title*, 2013 self-portraits executed tentatively with closed eyes. Schabus' gaze seems to have turned inwardly for the drawings correspond to the *Sanniya* 2012 series, wooden objects on the opposite wall. The heads relate to Sinhalese Sanniya masks. The masks are used to heal people in the traditional medical dance ceremony. Each mask represents a demon that is responsible for the medical condition. The Sinhalese carve these masks from wood of the breadfruit tree. Before the mask receives its final form, a first abstract state is developed from the pre-cut of the wooden block. It is this preliminary state that Schabus captures with his heads. Historically, art abstraction evolves from realism, yet here a contrary practice can be noted.

Flora (Artist in Residence), 2012 a column built of paper rolls completes the exhibition. Schabus collected the inner tubes during his three-month long residency in Sri Lanka as a visible time-keeper.

Hans Schabus was born in 1970 in Watchig, Austria.
He lives and works in Vienna, Austria.