

Hans Schabus

The Travelling Salesman Problem

Exhibition from September 6 to October 12, 2019

Opening on Thursday, September 5, 2019, 6 - 9 pm

The gallery is open from Tuesday to Saturday, from 11 am to 7 pm and by appointment

A new artist publication accompanies the exhibition

A man walks alone and naked through a wintry forest. Is it the artist, Hans Schabus, or one of his twelve avatars that's occupying the gallery space? Each month the artist, who lives in Vienna, assumes a different identity, and his twelve Portraits reveal a different, existential "Monthly Self". The individual figures consist of things from his studio, usually surviving objects from past installations, samples, and materials that failed to make it into the world beyond the artist's environment. Conceptually, the work is structured around three materials per figure as well as the artist's body size of 186 cm.

Hans Schabus is known for his ambitious, site-specific projects in which he incorporates the location and the institution and often comments in a humorous way. "For Schabus, the institution is a medium through which it is possible to gain access to another reality, an epistemological threshold that heightens in the spectator the connection between the intellectual dimension and the physical space, or between the imaginary and experience," writes curator Pablo Fanego.

The sculptural interventions by Schabus intermediate between himself and what surrounds him. His studio is his matrix, a place of exploration, processing and inspiration - a place of an "in-between" with its own temporality in which things undergo continuous change.

The eponymous "the travelling salesman problem" is negotiated in mathematics as a combinatorial problem of optimization: How is a sequence for visiting several places to be determined so that no station other than the first is visited more than once, so that the entire distance travelled is as short as possible and the first station is the same as the last? This problem also arises for the visitors inside the gallery when they want to experience the monthly facets of the artist's self. And perhaps not even he himself knows in which order he is presenting his identity to the world?

The artist publication that accompanies the exhibition may provide some indirect information. Here, the twelve "month-selves" interact with each other and also the reader - in Beckett-like short dialogues, they make reference to basic philosophical questions of an internal and external world as well as to the origins of their individual components: Together they embark on a cycling tour to the "Endless Column".

Hans Schabus was born in Watschig, Austria in 1970. He lives and works in Vienna. Since 2014 he leads the class for sculpture and space at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. He became internationally known through the design of the Austrian Pavilion for the Venice Biennale in 2005. Solo exhibitions include: "Café Hansi", mumok Vienna (2018); "The Long Road from Tall Trees to Tall Houses", Kunstverein Salzburg and Kunsthalle Darmstadt 2016-2017); "Space of Conflict", Culturgest, Lisbon (2011); "Nichts geht mehr", ICA Lyon / Villeurbanne; "Next Time, I'm Here", Barbican Art Gallery London (2008); "Das Rendezvous-Problem", Kunsthaus Bergenz (2004).

Translated from german by Mark Kanak