

Bernhard Schobinger

B.S. Kosmos

50 years of creation

21.SEP-1.DEC.2024

PRESS CONTACT
MAX HAURI
PRESS@FRIART.CH

[→ IMAGES](#)



Exhibition view, Bernhard Schobinger, *B.S. Kosmos*, Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, 2024. Photo: Guillaume Python. Courtesy Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg and the artist



Bernhard Schobinger, *Tutti Kabutti*, 1980/1981. Photo: Guillaume Python. Courtesy of the artist and Martina Simeti Gallery

EXHIBITION TEXT
GROUND FLOOR

50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT CREATIVE WORK

From his connections with Concrete art in Zurich to punk rebellion, from postmodern eclecticism to the smallest of zen-influenced touches, Schobinger's work testifies to constant formal experimentation.

Schobinger is an independent artist who fashions always-unique pieces of jewelry from scratch, upholding a vision in which there is no separation between art and life. Sonja, the artist's daughter, serves as a model in the series of images that make up the artist's book *Devon Carbon Perm* (Schobinger + Štrba, 1988). She is photographed by her mother, the artist Annelies Štrba. Developed in a kitchen, these shots have an intimacy and togetherness impossible to recreate in the professional, commercial world of fashion. In the work *Nasses Schaf II* (2002), a chessboard is transformed into a jewelry box. Inside, a child's figurine representing a sheep is encrusted with diamonds symbolizing drops of rain. The piece inspires tenderness and attachment. Drawing on conceptions originating in Japanese crafts, the beauty of the forms transcends individual expression.

CONCRETE BEGINNINGS

Inspired by the Concrete art of Richard Paul Lohse and Max Bill, Schobinger applied their principles to jewelry (ground floor, small room). The rejection of subjective expression, the driving force of ideas and the principles of economy and concision made a profound impact on the up-and-coming artists' aesthetic approach.

AN AESTHETICS OF EXISTENCE

A new paradigm established itself at the end of the 1970s. Reaffirming the animus of the avant-garde, the punk movement, New Wave and the Neue Deutsche Welle infused music and fashion with a vital energy. Emancipating himself from the dogmatism of concrete rationalism, Schobinger now founded his practice in an aesthetics of existence. Its intensity manifests itself through the use of fragments, twisting and cuts. Plastic, metal, debris and precious stones form equivocal accumulations. In a portrait filmed for television, the artist evokes a poetics of the industrial environment, a reversal of values that opens the way to a 'democracy of materials', in which each lays claim to an equal place. His artist's book *Eiszeit Juwelentraum* (self-published, 1981) bears witness to this plurality. In the piece *Icecreamlyric* (1983), popsicle sticks assembled as necklaces serve as a support for gold and zinc shavings. Far from the capitalist conception of value and its hierarchy of metals, this anthropological vision of culture puts the consumer society into perspective.

COMING BACK TO THE SURFACE

From his very first creations, the artist has made jewelry from found or recycled materials. Bakelite fragments were assembled to make a necklace (*Restverwertung*, 1985). In the forest, the artist came across the remains of a luxury hotel on a neighbouring landfill covered in vegetation on the edge of the Melide woods in Ticino. He assembled the necks of bottles he found there into a red-stained necklace (*Flaschenhals-Kette*, 1988). A marvelling on chance encounters with the earth's infinity has often triggered the inspiration for a piece of jewelry. Such inspiration sometimes only finds form on the maturing of a collection, as with the small cars retrieved from the bottom of lakes during a series of dives (*Under Water Car Collection*, 2023). Finding, unearthing, bringing back to the surface, the metaphorical dimension of these activities stirs memories, the past, history. From abandoned homes to construction sites of the new, from family jewels discovered at the back of drawers to misplaced personal effects, the artist transforms things that already bear the mark of time.



Bernhard Schobinger, *Form aus zwei geviertelten Kreisringen*, 1974. Photo: Guillaume Python. Courtesy of the artist and Martina Simeti Gallery



Installation view, Bernhard Schobinger, *B.S. Kosmos*, Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, 2024. Photo: Guillaume Python. Courtesy Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg and the artist

EXHIBITION TEXT
1ST FLOOR

BERLIN PROJECT

On the first floor, the artist presents a new ensemble of pieces on which he has been working for several years. In summer 2018, tracing a trail he was first alerted to by a saleswoman at a Berlin flea market, Schobinger has put his hand to a collection of pieces of porcelain representing, for the most part, exploded figurines. These fragments are taken from the rubble from the city of Berlin that was in large part destroyed during the Second World War. Previously they had been gathered together and buried in the craters made by the bombs by the *Trümmerfrauen*. These 'women of the rubble' made a major contribution to the removal of the five hundred million cubic metres of rubble that had accumulated in Germany.

Jewelry holds fragments together without trying to breath new life into them. By grouping objects by type, combining them closely, and emphasising their forms with lacquer, stones or pearls, the artist seems to be indicating the fundamental otherness of the source materials. These works have a particular affinity with the literary devices employed by W.G. Sebald and his intertwined use of psycho-geographical drift and the document. In his latest work, *On The Natural History of Destruction*, Sebald meditates on the unassimilable dimension of the trauma of destruction. He presents allegory as a poetic form that responds to this particularly charged cultural memory.

B.S. KOSMOS

'The whole universe is one bright pearl. What is to be understood?'

Zen Master Dôgen

Schobinger's works offer a vision of daily lives saved from oblivion. Fragments are projected onto a cosmic plane, a space that contains everything. Two pairs of Japanese scissors, a small pair and a big one, are set off with a pearl. They form an asymmetrical circular flock (*Japanese Scissor Birds*, 2024).

A jewel condenses space into a single point. The smallest of *objets d'art* is also the most powerful. Technique is expression, accident intention. In opposition to any reflection on formal approach, it's the practice that counts. A nail pierces a carved stone (*Nagel-Ring*, 2011).



Exhibition view, Bernhard Schobinger, *Berlin*, Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, 2024. Photo: Guillaume Python. Courtesy Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg and the artist



Bernhard Schobinger, *Two Broken Baby Faces*, 2024. Photo: Guillaume Python. Courtesy of the artist and Martina Simeti Gallery

BIOGRAPHY

Bernhard Schobinger (1946, CH) lives and works in Richterswil. He has been fascinated by stones since childhood. He studied at the Zurich Applied Arts School (KGSZ), where he was influenced by the discovery of modern art. After an apprenticeship with a goldsmith, he opened his own workshop and gallery in 1968 and has worked independently ever since. Marked by the punk movement in the 1980s, he exhibited and lived in Zurich, London and Berlin. His work has received international recognition, notably in Japan, a country the artist has been visiting on teaching secondments for thirty years. Bernhard Schobinger's oeuvre was recently the subject of an exhibition at Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich (2024). He is represented by the Martina Simeti Gallery in Milan.



Bernhard Schobinger, *Swiss TV Portrait*, 1981

CURRICULUM VITÆ

Education and awards

1962/63	Studies at the Zurich School of Arts and Crafts
1963–1967	Goldsmith's apprenticeship in Zurich
1968	Opens his own studio and gallery in Richterswill (ZH) Begins freelance work
1971	Diamonds-International Award, New York
1972	Deutscher Schmuck- und Edelsteinpreis
1998	Françoise van den Bosch Award, The Netherlands
2007	Swiss Grand Prix of Design, Federal Office of Culture, Switzerland

Teaching

1994	Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Art, London
1996–2003	Visiting Professor at the Hiko Mizuno College of Jewellery, Tokyo Visiting Professor at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam
1999	Lecturer at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
2000/01	Visiting Professor at the Haute Ecole d'Arts Appliqués, Genève
2011	Visiting Professor, Kanazawa (JP)

Exhibitions (selection)

1978	<i>Schmuck Schmuck</i> , Museum Bellerive, Zurich (with Franz Eggenschwiler)
1981	Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau
1991	Annelies Štrba/Bernhard Schobinger, Grassi Museum, Leipzig
1995	Kunsthauus Glarus (with Annelies Štrba)
1999	Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
2003	<i>Jewels Now!</i> , Museum Bellerive, Zurich
2011	<i>Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970–1990</i> , Victoria & Albert Museum, London
2014	Personal exhibition at the Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester
2023	<i>Gimme Danger</i> , Martina Simeti Gallery, Milan
2024	<i>Against Method</i> , Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich

Publications (monographs)

Eiszeit – Juwelentraum, 1981, self-published, 500 printed copies, including 50 gilt and coloured copies out of print

Landscape with Diamonds, 1983, self-published, 300 printed copies out of print

Devon-Karbon-Perm: 62 ausgewählte Objekte, 1984–87, 1988, self-published, 500 printed copies. Photos: Annelies Štrba.

Model: Sonja Schobinger out of print

Objekte, 1993, Verlag Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, 1200 printed copies. Photos: Annelies Štrba

Feuer über Wasser, 1997, Verlag Museum Baviera, Zurich, 1000 printed copies out of print

Jewels Now!, 2003, ARNOLDSCHHE Art Publishers, Stuttgart

Bernhard Schobinger. The Rings of Saturn, 2004, ARNOLDSCHHE Art Publishers, Stuttgart

Collections

Bernhard Schobinger's work can be found in a number of important public collections, including Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; LACM, Los Angeles; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; Rotasa Collection Trust, California; National Museum of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Pinakothek der Moderne, Die Neue Sammlung, München; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Palais du Louvre, Paris; mudac, Lausanne; Museum Bellerive/Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich; Kunsthaus Zug; Schweizerisches National Museum, Zurich and the Museum für angewandte Künste, Cologne.



Bernhard Schobinger, *Japanese Scissor Birds*, 2024. Photo Guillaume Python. Courtesy of the artist and Martina Simeti Gallery



Installation view, Bernhard Schobinger, *B.S. Kosmos*, Kunsthalles Friart Fribourg, 2024. Photo: Guillaume Python. Courtesy Kunsthalles Friart Fribourg and the artist

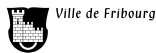
PRESS CONTACT
MAX HAURI
PRESS@FRIART.CH

ART EDUCATION
MEDIATION@FRIART.CH

KUNSTHALLE
FRIART
FRIBOURG

PETITES-RAMES 22
CASE POSTALE 294
CH-1701 FRIBOURG
+41 26 323 23 51
INFO@FRIART.CH
WWW.FRIART.CH

♥ **THANK YOU**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

20.SEP.2024, 18:00
OPENING

24.SEP.2024, 11:00
PRESS VISIT

12.OCT.2024
15:00-19:00
FRIART'S FLEA MARKET

17:00
GUIDED TOUR WITH THE ARTIST AND THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

9.NOV.2024
MUSIK FOR FUNICULAIRE RELEASE PARTY
ABLETTE RECORDS, ÉTAT DES CHOSES, RABABOO RECORDS, SMEM,
TRNSTN RADIO

30.NOV.2024
FRIBAR

COMPLETE PROGRAM
WWW.FRIART.CH

OPENING HOURS

MO-TUE BY APPOINTMENT
WED-FRI 12AM-6PM
SAT-SUN 1-6PM

FREE ADMISSION