

ALBRECHT SCHNIDER

September 14 – November 02, 2024

For the third solo exhibition in Madrid, Mai 36 Galerie is pleased to announce a presentation of works by Albrecht Schnider (*1958 in Lucerne, Switzerland). The exhibition unveils works from over 20 years, with the recently completed series of 14 landscapes taking centre stage.

Albrecht Schnider's artistic interaction with nature and landscape has remained a constant in his multifaceted oeuvre since the late 1980s. Known for his meticulous attention to a precise formal language, that roots in a profound exploration through drawing, Schnider's latest works continue his tradition of pushing the limits of contemporary art, seducing the viewer into recognisable yet foreign worlds.

The exhibition is built around Schnider's conspicuously small scale landscape works which can be seen as a masterful synthesis of 'observation', imagination and construction: On closer inspection of the 14 paintings, it becomes evident that, although Schnider observes landscapes with an analytic eye, he does not try to portray them in his paintings. Instead, he constructs and configures it, omitting any sign of human activity, natural details, or weather conditions, practicing total reduction. What remains are puzzle-like color fields joined together to generate a neutralized, platonic, "pathless" landscape – a reflection of the inner eye. Each piece, no longer rooted in reality, transcends the literal, transforming seemingly familiar scenes into meditative compositions that oscillate between the figuratively legible and the abstract.

Through the subtle interplay of light, color, and form, the artist creates a tension that is both distantly beautiful and disorienting. His use of soft, muted palettes contrasts with the precise, almost geometric lines that define his compositions, resulting in works that feel both timeless and modern. These landscapes evoke a sense of stillness and quiet contemplation, yet they are charged with an underlying energy that speaks to the complexity of the natural world and our relationship with it. They reflect Albrecht Schnider's deep engagement with the tradition of landscape painting, while also offering a fresh perspective that is uniquely his own. The works challenge the viewer to look beyond the surface, to experience the landscape as a space of memory, emotion, and thought. At the same time the vacant artificiality of Schnider's scenes is filled with a sense of loss and an ominous barrenness, perhaps premonitions of human absence. On the one hand the artist appears to confront conflicting feelings of infatuation with landscape painting at odds with its futility today. Moreover, he conflates the lasting beauty of the Alpine sceneries with the looming destruction of nature brought on by human activity. As much as he associates the process of making these works with his own grappling to bid landscape painting farewell, he also struggles with coming to terms of the subject of those paintings ceasing to exist one day.

Albrecht Schnider is a renowned Swiss artist whose work spans painting, drawing, and sculpture. Born in 1958, he has exhibited extensively across Europe. Important institutional solo exhibitions include Kunstmuseum Thun (2021), Helmhaus, Zurich (2014), Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2011), Kunstmuseum Solothurn (2011), Aargauer Kunsthaus (2006), daad Galerie, Berlin (1999), Kunstmuseum Luzern (1994). His works are represented in numerous private and public collections, including the Kunsthaus Zürich, the Kunstmuseum Bern, the Kunstmuseum Luzern, the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, the Kupferstichkabinett Berlin & Basel and the Schering Foundation, Berlin. Albrecht Schnider lives and works in Hilterfingen, near Thun, Switzerland.