

JULIAN SCHNABEL SUMMER

PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES 1982 - 2007

tabacalera donostia

July 28th – October 21st
11:30 am – 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm – 8:30 pm
(Monday closed)

Press Conference: Thursday, July 26th, 11:30 am

Inauguration: Friday, July 27th, 7:30 pm

Guided tours

12:00 am / 6:00 pm (in Basque)

1:00 pm / 7:00 pm (in Spanish)

Group visits: tel. 677 681547

Visites en français / Tours in English: tel. 677 681547



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We first visited the Tabacalera building with Julian Schnabel in the summer of 2006. Considering his close relationship with the town, he knew the building and was very interested in setting its inner spaces. Sharing such a moment with a powerful artist like Julian Schnabel and to be able to contemplate those spaces, which could then be seen empty and clean for the first time, and all of that through his eyes was a tremendously interesting experience.

Julian was astonished by the big building that still conserves its industrial character and the weight of history, and he proposed we should carry out a collective exhibition with scientists from his generation. In Tabacalera we took up his proposal that we transformed it and invited him to occupy the factory spaces himself with his impressive works. Few are the artists that have the capacity to confront such extraordinary spaces as those in Tabacalera, but we were quite convinced that Julian Schnabel was, without doubt, going to be one of them. His works, because of his force and formats, could well dialogue with the powerful spaces of the building. Besides, the artist himself was especially interested in showing his work in San Sebastian, a town he has a close connection with.

Schnabel had already previously demonstrated his capacity to take up challenges of this kind in the installation he carried out in the Cuartel del Carmen barracks in Seville, in 1987, where his enormous works were placed in spaces that have not been previously prepared for that purpose. In that occasion I was impressed by his wild heart, his astonishing capacity to confront that type of spaces. The exhibition in Tabacalera is a new challenge, both for the artist and his work as it is, of course, for us and for the building itself, which is no doubt going to be one of the beneficiaries of this unique project.

Throughout 2007 Schnabel has carried out various exhibitions in singular spaces that those of the Palazzo Venezia in Rome or Schloss Dernenburg in Germany, and we are convinced that the exhibition in Tabacalera is to become a point of reference in the trajectory of an artist with Julian Schnabel's category. We wish to thank the various collectors who have trusted us with his works and we wish to be a very special thanks to the artist, who has become completely involved in the project, with absolute dedication and generosity, and who has close boosted the beginning of our trajectory as the International Centre of Contemporary Culture.

Joxean Muñoz
Director General of Tabacalera
(Donostia – San Sebastian International Centre of Contemporary Culture)



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SUMMER - JULIAN SCHNABEL

The materiality of a work of art is just parts of a desire, only important as a quality of being, a feeling, a meaning, a recognition which is described by and describes the time it has been made in; something human.

I believe that paintings are physical things that need to be seen in person.

Julian Schnabel

Tabacalera, International Centre of Contemporary Culture in Donostia - San Sebastian, presents the exhibition titled **Summer** by multifaceted artist Julian Schnabel (Brooklyn, New York, 1951). The exhibition, that includes over **sixty sculptures and paintings of a considerable size**, follows a trajectory **that goes from the 1980s** to the present, occupying most of the ground floor of the building.

The artist has prepared the exhibition in a constant dialogue with the building, **still based on the practically intact original spaces of the former Tobacco Factory (Tabacalera)**, which is soon to be restored to become the International Centre of Contemporary Culture. The project is part of a series of exhibitions in the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, in the Rotonda della Besana in Milan and in the Schloss Dernenburg in Germany, where the artist has worked with singular buildings that are laden with memories and symbolism for the local public. As Max Hollein points out in the catalogue for the exhibition, Julian Schnabel *“understand the notion of display and spatial context as an ever changing but integral part in the never ending evolution of a work of art ... (when) exhibiting his works in extraordinary historic places such as the Cuartel del Carmen in Seville... Schnabel likes the changing effect, the interpretation that architecture can give to a painting, the marriage between the painting and location”*.

The exhibition displays the whole range of registers of his work, always conceived from his painter's outlook - *“I see myself as painter even if I make sculptures”*-, his absolute freedom when using different languages - *“I had no hierarchical notions of images and materials that could be or should be paintings. I still don't... Actually, there are no abstract paintings even if there are no figures in them. A painting can have an abstract image, but that doesn't make a painting abstract. Paintings are utilitarian”* as is his continuous research with materials and formats that always refer to his concept of a piece of work as an aesthetical and physical reality for spectators.

On occasion of this exhibition, a book has been published by **Skira**, in Spanish and in Basque, in which there is a follow up of the last 30 years of the artist's work. The book, edited in Basque and in Spanish, can be obtained both in the Tabacalera building itself and in specialised bookshops.

The exhibition coincides with the International Cinema Festival, of which Julian Schnabel is one of the main international ambassadors, and this, in a certain way, joins the artist's two best-known creative facets, painting and cinema. In this latter activity, Schnabel has also been the object of international recognition. He has recently been awarded the Best Director award in the Cannes Film Festival for his film *“the Diving Bell and the Butterfly”*.



SUMMER

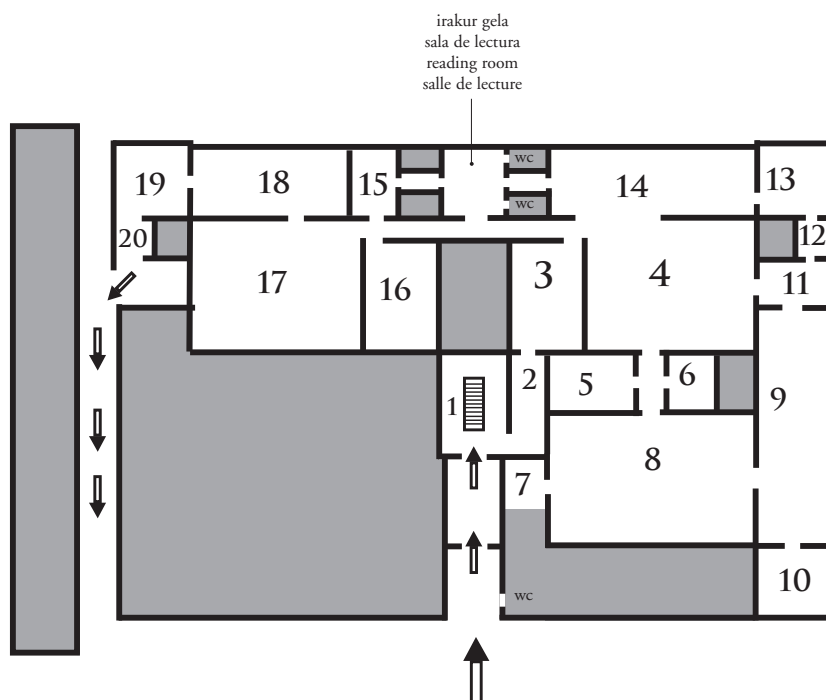
Summer. I make most of my paintings in the summer. I always have since I was a little kid. I can still smell the roses in my uncle Jack's backyard. I like to paint outside. My studio doesn't have a roof on it. I can see better, get further away from the paintings, see them in radically different light at different times of day. The weather affects the paintings too, stains, rain, mildew, bleached by the sun, accidents, blown by the wind, nature, at first a distraction interfering then helping. It is an activated system. Freedom of materials set in water and daylight, every summer.

Julian Schnabel

The title of the exhibition, **Summer**, makes reference to the way of working of the artist. For Schnabel, the summer season is the most prolific of all, as it allows him to work out in the open and introduce nature itself in his paintings.

Schnabel has included a **selection of works from European and American private collections**, amongst which are those belonging to Bruno Bischofberger, Gian Enzo Sperone or Marco Voena, as well as pieces from his own collection. Schnabel has included **hitherto unexhibited works**, which he has conserved in his collection, together with recent works such as the Flaubert's Letters to his Mother or Surfer Painting series, from 2006. It is also possible to appreciate series of works which have never been exhibited, like the 1996 Hat Full of Rain or the 1989 Treatise on Melancholia and sculptures like Oliver Cromwell, Si Tacuisses or Esso Ess. Some of these works were carried out in San Sebastian, where the artist has a house.

The result of his work is exuberant, energetic and changing, with various levels of interpretation



Exhibition plan

SELECTION OF WORKS



To Stella, 1988
Oil, plaster on impregnated canvas
Nina Baier Collection, Zurich



The Red Sky, 1984
Oil, dishes, wood filler on wood
Private collection



Portrait of José Ramón Antero, 1997
Oil, resin, enamel on canvas
Private collection



Untitled (Treatise on Melancholia), 1989
Oil, plaster on impregnated canvas
The artist's collection



Flaubert's Letters to His Mother, 2005
Ink on polyester
The artist's collection

Hat Full of Rain, 1996
Oil and magic marker on impregnated canvas
The artist's collection



Olatz 1, 1991
Oil, plaster, resin, applied on canvas
The artist's collection



Untitled (Girl With No Eyes), 2001
Oil and wax on canvas
The artist's collection



Portrait of Stella Madrid and Lola Montes Schnabel, 1997
Oil, resin on canvas
Jacqueline Schnabel Collection



Si tacuisses, 1990
Bronze with patina and oil
Bruno Bischofberger Gallery, Zurich



THE ARTIST AND HIS WORK

Julian Schnabel was born on 26th October 1951 in Brooklyn, New York. Between 1969 and 1973 he studied Fine Arts in Houston University, where he graduates in Fine Arts, and is then admitted into the Whitney Independent Study Program, in New York. During the first few years of his trajectory he gets to know artists and little by little he manages to introduce himself into the artistic atmosphere in New York.

In 1976 he held his first individual exhibition in the Houston Contemporary Arts Museum, in Texas. That same year he travelled around Europe for several months and in Italy, he paid special attention to the works by Fra Angelico, Giotto and Caravaggio. In 1978 he visited Barcelona for the first time, where the works by architect Antoni Gaudí were his main object of interest. After this trip he executed his first works in which he used the new technique of “painting with dishes” for the first time. **“When I did the plate paintings I wanted to break the surface of the painting and I liked the dissonance between the brightness of the plates and the other parts of the picture”.**

In 1979 he made exhibitions in various galleries in New York with his wax pictures and art critics celebrate his work qualifying it as “the return of painting”. A widespread debate is then initiated on the objective and future of painting, in which Julian Schnabel’s works, among others, are the centre of heated debate.

In 1980 he takes part, for the first time, in the Venice Biennial Exhibition (in which he participates once again in 1982), together with Francesco Clemente, whom he befriends, Anselm Kiefer and Georg Baselitz, among others. A “savage”, gesture painting becomes an important element of Schnabel’s works, which induces certain critics qualify his art as “neo-expressionist”. **“Painting your guts out has never been an interesting idea or made an interesting painting. Feeling cannot be separated from intellect. In that sense, Neo-Expressionism doesn’t exist; it never has”.**

In 1981 he participates in the Whitney Biennial in New York, and also in the collective exhibition “New Spirit in Painting” in the London Royal Academy of Arts, which included works by “classical” painters such as Willem de Kooning, Andy Warhol, Francis Bacon, Cy Twombly, Robert Ryman or Frank Stella, and relatively young European and North American artists like Gerhard Richter, A. R. Penck, Sigmar Polke, Markus Lüpertz, Immendorff and Brice Marden. Schnabel is the youngest painter in the exhibition.

In 1982 key exhibited in the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum and in the Tate Gallery in London, in what were to be his first individual exhibitions in European museums.

The concept of incorporating into his painting objects that have been picked up, used, modified by time and historical becomes a fundamental element of his work. **“Using already existing materials establishes a level of ethnographicness in the work; I mean it brings a real place and time into the aesthetic reality”.** He executes several works using materials such as canvas is proceeding from the Japanese Kabuki theatre or an old covering that used to cover up a boxing ring. He is interested in materials that contain “a history”, scrapes of the news of which provide his work with an undoubtedly unique character.

Between 1987 and 1989 important retrospective exhibitions of Schnabel's work in Europe and in the United States are held in exhibition halls like those of the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco or the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. In 1994 retrospective exhibitions are held in the museums of Monterrey and México City.

In 1995 he writes the script and directs the film titled *Basquiat*, a film that narrates the life of the young painter and shooting star of the New York artistic scene, who died of an overdose when he was 27 years old. This first experience as a filmmaker was to be his first to be successful cinematographic trajectory that comprises, up to now, another two films: *Before Night Falls* (1999) and *the Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007). For this latter film he received the Best Director Award in the 2007 Cannes Film Festival.

In 2007 he has carried out several exhibitions in singular spaces like the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, the Rotonda di Via Besana in Milan or the Schloss Derneburg, in Derneburg (Germany). He has also had an exhibition in the International Art Museum in Beijing, China.

Julian Schnabel currently lives and works in New York, as well as in Montauk, Long Island, and Donostia - San Sebastian.

SUMMER – THE CATALOGUE

On occasion of the exhibition Skira has published a book with texts by William Gaddis (1922–1998), North American writer, all four of *The Recognitions*; Max Hollein, Director of the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt; David Moos, Curator of Contemporary Art in the Art Gallery of Ontario; José Férrez Kuri, Curator of the William Burroughs Archive and Bruce Ferguson, Director of Exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The book, which reviews the artist's work over the last 30 years, has been published in Spanish and in Basque, and can be obtained both in the Tabacalera building and in specialised bookshops.

Extracts from the text by Max Hollein (director of the Frankfurt Schirn Kunsthalle):

Schnabel who is a painter with an extraordinary understanding of architecture and design is looking for the emotional quality of these spaces, their specific moment in history and their continuous existence as a building of memory, substance and unique spatial feel. The architecture that he is most interested in seem to be spaces where time stands still, locations that exhale the time gone by but which are nevertheless of timeless beauty, relevance and contemporary attitude.

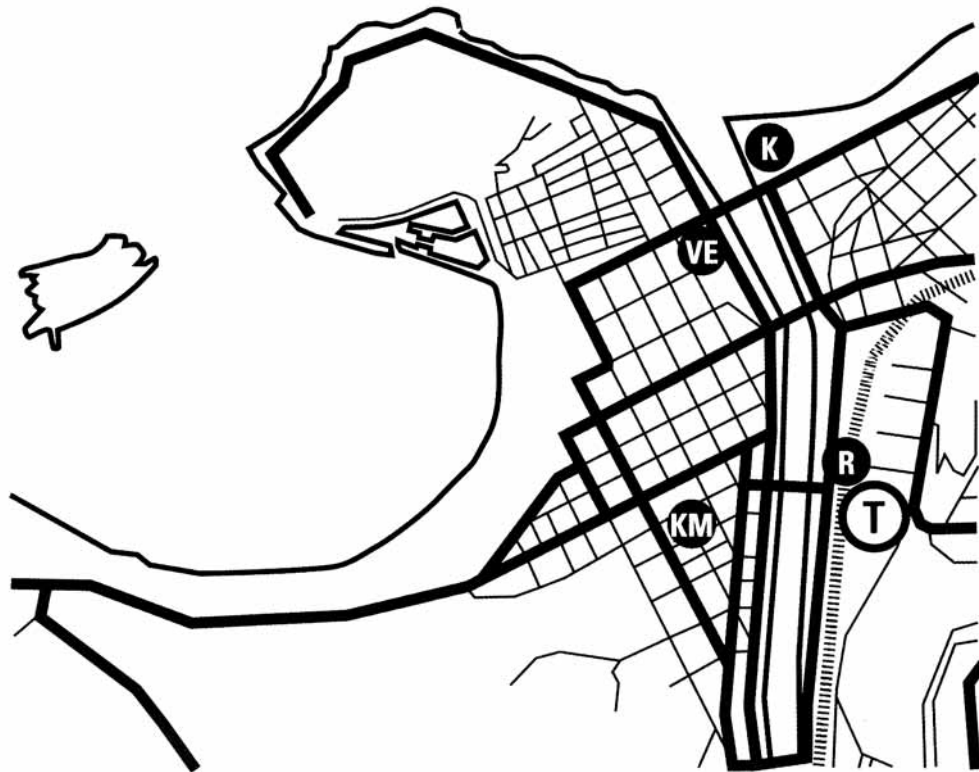
(...)The same way Schnabel uses existing material such as pottery, antlers, pieces of wood or felt as important elements of his paintings, the same way he paints on existing surfaces such as Kabuki theatre backdrops, covering fabric of a boxing ring, tarpaulins or surf boards that have already their own sometimes even troubled history. Schnabel uses the extraordinary and unusual location to install and hence finalize the meaning of his paintings.

TABACALERA

Throughout the 20th century, the Tabacalera building was a tobacco factory. After its closure, the Basque institutions –the Town Council of San Sebastian, the Statutory Deputation of Gipuzkoa and the Basque Government- recovered the building in order to convert it into a cultural centre for the 21st century.

Tabacalera will be an international centre of contemporary culture, specialised in visual culture. In it, contemporary art, cinema, television and the various facets of design will converge. Besides, in it visual culture will establish relations with other key aspects of contemporary culture, like the culture of sound, science and gastronomy. It will become a centre of production, a centre of exhibits that will program exhibitions, projections or performances; it will be a centre for reflection, a forum for debate and exchange of ideas; it will be a specialised open training, for continuous training; and it will be also an archive and dissemination centre. Tabacalera is a cultural installation designed during and for the digital era.

An exhibition of an artist of Julian Schnabel's category boosts the value of the spaces of this extraordinary building, and opens up the world for us to present the Tabacalera.



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