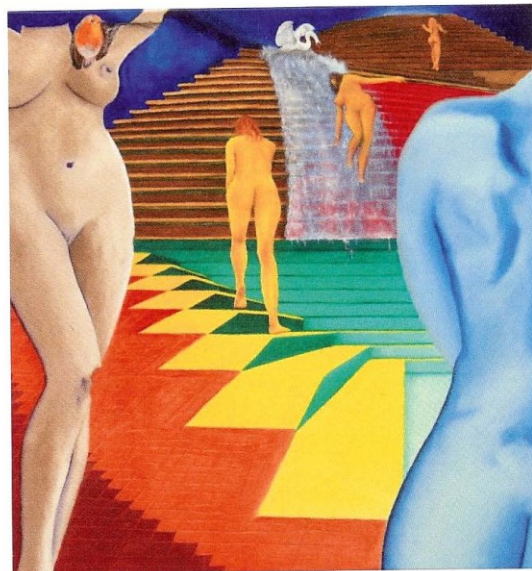


ANDRÉ SCHOOTS



André Schoots is a multifaceted artist known for his dramatic and ambitious expressionist works. Reminiscent of styles as diverse as the geometrical expressionist paintings of Piet Mondrian, and the profound compositions of Titian, Bosch, and Jan van Eyck, to the Surrealism of Dali and René Magritte and the cinematic tension of Edward Hopper, Shoot's work contemporizes these aesthetics through his subtle reinterpretation of art historical and contemporary cultural references. Using a fresh and modern palette, the artist investigates the mechanics of these aesthetics through his subtle reinterpretation of art historical and contemporary cultural references. Employing these paradoxes, he skillfully applies a use of geometric shapes elicits a vocabulary of the nuance. A brilliant colorist with a penchant for vibrant shades of crimson, emerald and cobalt, he stands as an art enigma—a Surrealist artist whose subject matter is anything but surreal. Schoots is an artist who inhabits the discreet space of the in-between, a logic of the a-logic, where essential orders or arrangements speak to the viewer.

While artist Shoots' paintings have the swirling energy of many Neo-Realist/Surrealist works, they also suggest something quite different: the murmuring of numerous voices beneath each layer. The artist's work has changed greatly over the years, evolving to its current dynamic vocabulary. He courageously goes beyond the given and familiar, pioneering new techniques, approaches and ideas in order to expand his own vision, and that of the viewers. Informed by his own accomplished academic background as not only an internationally collected, published and exhibited artist, but also a doctor of mathematics and science, his works spell out a classical theme, time, and place of observation and relationships.



The results often suggest nature and humanity—and the extremes of that in between. “I like the narrative element and the realistic approach to the engagement of human consciousness and emotions”, he notes, and indeed, his use of vibrant and spatial colors alone suggests a positive sense of humanity, an effect that is uncompromising and thought provoking for the viewer.

Although recent works appear to have evolved toward a whole new territory for the artist, they actually represent a distillation of themes and ideas that were already evident from the beginning of his artistic career. Key to his work is the tension created between description and the desire to suggest or evoke narrative. His works represent a confidence and maturity in the artist’s handling and evocation of his subjects. Schoots’ ambition for painting as a carrier of meanings that are accessible to all is evidence of his own immersion in the culture of painting, print, and its potential for transformation. While retaining a prolific consistency to his work it far from implies repetition of the same, varying lines and shapes, overlapping edges, and variations in shade, emphasize the unique. Space contracts and expands in all of his painting compositions; random juxtaposition, anomalies, and irregular shapes introduce patterns and relationships that are unpredictable. Each work, each line and form becomes an inscription of the temporal moment of creation. Discreet, colorful geometric forms in shades of orange, red, and blue or fleshy pinks, eggplant, and gray—emerge like organic accidents from saturated monochromatic grids. Deep ebony, midnight blues, and shades of green offer parallels between art and nature, or art and nature as a work of art, their illusionism is tempered by viscous light and color, in the case of “The Up Keep”, for example it is a shock of spatial stairs in shades of jade and acidic ginger that dominate the painting’s left side. The composition suggests an ominous presence or happening that culminates away from the viewers’ gaze. The composition of all Schoots’ works suggests an artist who has always blended a proclivity for visual drama with a keen interest in the physicality of paint.

Employing the physics of multi-dimensional perspectives and angles, Schoots deftly produces works that play on illusory perception. From his innovative angular narratives to architectural landscapes and intimate quasi-surreal portraits, his enigmatic visions radiate and glow off the surface of the canvases itself. Creating visualization and narrative that morphs and pulsates before the viewer, the works are not just visually stimulating and intellectually satisfying; they are utterly compelling. Like Kandinsky and Ozenfant before him, Schoots works to move beyond the merely technical to get at an understanding of how the materials, aesthetics, and concepts he engages with, actually work—exploiting their properties to get at what he is most interested in: meaning, ideas, and concepts. Ultimately, Schoots says, “I make colorful enigmatic food for thought”. Challenging social and cultural conventions he seeks to “show that they are what they are, but with many snags and not inevitable consequences of their development”. In addition to confronting formal issues related to color and space, such works seem to speak to concepts related to life, mortality, and spirituality as well.

Despite such rich contextual foundations within the history of painting, Schoots is actually a painter whose approach to seems to draw closer parallels with that of conceptual art than painting. Standing alongside Conceptualists and Process Artists like Bruce Nauman and Joseph Beuys, Schoots follows Nauman’s edict that art should be “more of an activity and less of a product.” Like other conceptual artists, Schoots’ art challenges traditional forms of display and assumptions about the nature of art, but more specifically as with Nauman’s art, Schoots has focused less on the development of a specific style, and more upon the ways in which process or creative activity can transform materials and become not just a work of art; but aesthetically, viscerally and psychologically transformative.

Answering Allan Kaprow’s call to “blur the boundaries of art and life,” Schoots has also always been interested in the notion of spectator participation. The viewer is “invited to step into their own imagination” he says. “In my scientific research and in reporting results I had to be precise, meticulous and conclusive in each step. As a painter I make pieces, with visceral colors and an intoxicating composition that I hope is truly resonating with people”. And indeed, as viewers we marvel at the ingenuity and brilliance of Schoots’ ability to explore the unknown territory of the human imagination, and phenomena to an immense degree. For Schoots the answer, it seems, is communication and dissemination of ideas. Marshall McLuhan put it best, “The medium is the message.” Schoot’s paintings remind us, Artists present, represent, and present again, indeed, his creativity is a never-ending process of back and forth that involves a give and take between expression and interpretation. It is this generosity as a scientist, an artist and as an individual, that proves Andre Schoots recognizes the power of visual form, whether knowingly, or intuitively, and fortunately for us, leaves his impression for us, the grateful viewer, to contemplate.

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