

ROLF SACHS UNVEILS A NEW SOLO EXHIBITION AT STALLA MADULAIN IN SWITZERLAND, CONCEIVED AS A MULTISENSORIAL POETIC JOURNEY

The extensive exhibition, envisaged as an orchestrated scenography, offers a unique opportunity to explore the breadth of Sachs' oeuvre and the fluidity across the artist's mediums.

On view through March 17, 2024



January 11, 2023 (Madulain, Switzerland) – For his *carte blanche* at Stalla Madulain gallery this winter, artist **Rolf Sachs** presents *'So ein Mist!' (What B.S.)*, a multidisciplinary exhibition spanning sculpture, installation, video, painting and works on paper. Consisting almost entirely of new work, with interventions both inside and outside, the artist envisioned *So ein Mist!* as a carefully orchestrated multisensorial and poetic journey. On view through March 17, the exhibition encapsulates much of Sachs' enduring interest in materiality and recontextualizing everyday objects, all the while unveiling a series of never seen before paintings and drawings, his *Défroissage* series.

Many of the works in *'So ein Mist!'* subtly relate to Stalla Madulain's history as an agricultural barn in the mountains. The hayloft, a stable on the middle floor where the animals lived, and the basement, which was used both as a storage room and as a slaughterhouse were subtly transformed in 2014 into three unique exhibition spaces which now showcase contemporary art. The space bears the patina of 500 years of mountain farming, respecting the original spirit and inherent tradition of the place. Stalla Madulain has a deep personal resonance for the artist as he grew up in the region.

The grand hayloft (*tabla*) hosts a series of deeply meditative and immersive site-specific works which flow as an ensemble. An expression of the artist's sensorial relationship to the valley, the works displayed are a celebration of the innate poetry found in commonplace agricultural materials that would have once populated a place like Stalla Madulain. The visitor's visual and sensory experience is enhanced by the barn's open structure, allowing the outside elements to enter the gallery space.



We are greeted by *Einsamkeit [Loneliness]* (2023), a minimalist salt installation reflecting on mankind's solitary and existential experience in the surrounding mountain landscape. Looking up, the video installation *Leise rieselt der Schnee [Silently the Snow Falls]* (2016) enhances the artist's scenographic approach and evokes the particularly magical experience of snow falling at night. The monumental vitrines *Mist, Wolle, Heu and Ross* (2023) are an homage to the archaic materials that could have been found in a barn like this one: manure, wool, hay, and horsehair. Their scale celebrates the materials' tactility and vitality. The vitrines' museum glass gives their content an immediate presence, making them almost like immersive portals. Part object, part abstract painting, these commonplace materials are elevated. On the wall opposite hangs *Rocks* (2016) consisting of sharply cut stones that the artist chose from the riverbed of the Inn river.

Although the works in the hayloft seek to elicit an emotional, sensory reaction, Sachs also deftly employs humour and wit, a strategy Sachs recurrently turns to (as seen in the exhibition's title). The hanging pink moped, a personal reference to him passing by Stalla Madulain during teenage clandestine escapes, adds *salz in the suppe [salt in the soup]* to what would be otherwise a contemplative room.

The stable (*stalla*) on the second floor unveils new paintings and works on paper. While this is a new venture for the artist, his pictorial approach is a continuation of an enduring interest in materiality, tactility and reinterpreting the conventional use of materials. As often in his work, the artist finds a certain freedom in letting things fall under the agency of chance. The process behind the *Défroissage* series is a perfect balance between 'faire et laisser faire.' Sections of raw canvas are crumpled and creased, scrunched into a ball, a process that the artist sees as a sensual act. The canvas is then unfolded, and it is in this 'defroissage', that the surface's character is

unraveled. The unfolded canvas is then fixed with layers of resin, rendering the creased canvas part painting, part object. The sculpture *Froissage Rose* (2023) furthers that dialogue. Even with painting, Sachs is interested in making work that impacts us physically.

'A blank piece of paper or canvas is unassuming, characterless, uninspiring. If you crush it, as to dispose of it, and then unfold it delicately, it reemerges alive, with character. It nearly compares to traces of life. When we emerge as a newborn, we are cute and sweet and a clean slate. It then takes a lifetime to shape us, to give us the depth, wrinkles, character, understanding,' Sachs explains.



The dark, damp rooms of the basement (*schler*) are transformed into an atmospheric, dreamy environment. Separated from their original, practical function, everyday farming objects such as milk cans and buckets are transformed into sculptures and therefore given a new poetic dimension. By perforating their surface and lighting them from inside, the artist highlights their importance and beauty. Once again, the viewer's experience is multisensorial.



Sachs has always been inspired by his upbringing in Switzerland and has regularly referred to it in his sculptural practice. The neon installation *Ewiger Lauf* [Perpetual Run] (2016), placed on Stalla Madulain's façade, recalls the memories of hearing rainwater falling down the gutter, its noise here replaced by a silent neon strip. In the field facing the barn, a 5.50 meter wooden pyramid entitled *Boundless* (2023) recalls the archaic architectural language used to build simple mountain structures but rendered in this case infinite.

The exhibition encompasses Sachs' visual language in its entirety. All three floors attest to the artist's oneiric sensibility, enduring fascination with materiality, interest in recontextualising domestic objects and to his empathetic and sensual approach to art.



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NOTES TO EDITORS:

'So ein Mist!' (*What B.S*) by Rolf Sachs is on view at Stalla Madulain through March 17, 2024.

Address:

Via Principela 15
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Switzerland

Opening Hours:

08.01 to 17.03 – Friday to Sunday 3-6 pm



About the Artist

Rolf Sachs is a multi-disciplinary artist currently based in Rome. He applies a distinctive humane and conceptual approach across a multitude of mediums, ranging from sculpture, photography, painting and design and through to architectural projects and set designs for opera and ballet. Since the 1990s, Sachs has challenged preconceived applications of materials, processes, and everyday objects, imbuing them with novel meaning. Deftly employing humour and wit, his work seeks to elicit emotional, sensory reactions. However, his work has nothing of the dryness that is often associated with conceptual art. Rather, it is full of humanity, sensibility, and respect towards the materials he uses. It is poetic, humorous, tongue and cheek, but never irreverent. Currently, his work is particularly focused on exploring the human psyche, people's character, relationships, soul, and spirit.

His work has been exhibited internationally in galleries and museums including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Museum for Applied Art, Cologne, the MAK, Vienna, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Hauser and Wirth, Gstaad and Monika Sprüth, Cologne.

<https://rolfsachs.com/>

About Stalla Madulain

Stalla Madulain is a contemporary art gallery housed in a 500-year-old barn located in the smallest village in the Upper Engadin. Founded in 2014 by cousins Gian Tumasch Appenzeller and Chasper Schmidlin they have exhibited national and international artists, such as Not Vital, Franz Gertsch, Mirko Baselgia, Jani Leinonen, Conrad Jon Godly and Chrissy Angliker and Olga Titus, all who have a connection with the Engadin.

Appenzeller and Schmidlin also run Stalletta, a small gallery located in a 17th C stable next to Stalla Madulain. Stalla Madulain has also collaborated with Muzeum Susch on site-specific projects with artists from their programming.

<https://www.stallamadulain.ch/>

Image Credits:

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Image 2. Exhibition View 'So Ein Mist' by Rolf Sachs. Photography by Stefan Altenburger.

Image 3. Exhibition View 'So Ein Mist' by Rolf Sachs. Photography by Stefan Altenburger.

Image 4. Exhibition View 'So Ein Mist' by Rolf Sachs. Photography by Katja Meuli.

Image 5. Exhibition View 'So Ein Mist' by Rolf Sachs. Photography by Rolf Sachs.

Image 6. Exterior View of Stalla Madulain. Photography by Stefan Altenburger.