



# MAX SCHAFFER

\*1985

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Max Schaffer locates his practice at the point of collision and cocreation between the public sphere and the realm of fine art. Rooted in aesthetic debates, his practice coalesces, through his actions and interventions, into a system connecting work, theory, attitude, institution and interpretation. Schaffer engages with questions of intellectual property, appropriation and the perpetuation of the art historical canon. In objects, drawings, reworked paintings and photographs he illuminates philosophical principles of control and subverts artistic tradition.

Schaffer's piece *Between Gestures of New Beginning and Rhetorics of Ruin*, presented at the Städtische Galerie of Bremen on the occasion of his winning the Bremen Advancement Award of the Visual Arts, is an intervention into public space that agitates and highlights the authority wielded by images. On a scaffold covering, a large tarpaulin printed to mimic the facade of the Hofburg Palace underneath, Schaffer lettered the apt phrase, 'between gestures of new beginning and rhetorics of ruin', a quotation from the art historian Helmut Draxler. This graffiti, when later diligently scrubbed out and finally whitewashed by the restoration workers, instilled the scaffold cover, itself only an analog of a monument, with the value of the original, as an object worthy of restoration. The object was then elevated through yet another rubric of worth when Schaffer installed it in the gallery.

Through his concise and keen methodology, Schaffer illuminates the power held by simulacra in contemporary culture to mediate the understanding of reality and to direct behavior. By setting up catalysts and parameters he facilitates 'open-sculptures' that are created by participants as a byproduct of everyday labor. He consciously muffles the mark of the author and indicates instead the creation of work through reproduction and imposition.

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*Max Schaffer (\*1985) lives and works in Vienna and Berlin. He studied at The University of Fine Arts, Bremen, The University of Applied Arts, Vienna and The Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. In addition to winning the Bremen Advancement Award of the Visual Arts in 2011, his work has been exhibited at institutions such as the MUMOK Museum of Modern Art in Vienna, the Salzburger Kunstverein, the Kunsthalle Bremen, the Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts and the GAK Gesellschaft für aktuelle Kunst, Bremen.*