

PRISKA C. JUSCHKA FINE ART

P R E S E N T S

Constanze Schweiger

Friends

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For **Constanze Schweiger**, portraiture is a complex social algorithm of which her photographs, paintings and video comprise merely one element. Her conceptual process provides an ingenious structure to her interactions with others: her friends, associates, fellow artists, lovers. Rather than resorting to the diaristic conventions of snapshot photography, however, **Schweiger** relies on a strict methodology that repudiates haphazardness. The success of this deliberateness depends on several tensions. First, the tension between painting, which her photographs reference in pose and scale, and photography, which her paintings mimic in flatness and precision. Second, the tension between idiosyncratic subject and machine-smooth production. Third, the tension between art and marketing, life and fantasy, fact and fashion.

It is in this last example that **Schweiger's** work finds its deepest resonance. Abiding by the conventions that fashion photography uses to construct desire, her videos and photographs radiate a similar strategic confidence. It should come as no surprise, then, that to produce them she has employed fashion photography's essential tools: medium format camera, set design, styling. Her sitters' poses even echo the seductive hauteur of the industry's top models.

Crucially, though, **Schweiger's** sitters are not models. The frankness with which they regard the camera is not a professional affectation but rather a badge of their relationship to the photographer. And the comic juxtaposition of their irregular faces and blankly seductive expressions creates a disruption: a witty obstacle in fashion's machinery of desire.

Schweiger began as a painter, and her new paintings remain vital to her photography. Named after her friends, like the photos, these brightly-patterned canvases impudently suggest that an individual's stylistic palette says as much about them as their facial features. Hung beside the photo portraits in diptychs or triptychs, they employ a restricted selection of hues designed for maximum coordination. They also quote from the photos, echoing the sitters' outfits and the studio stage set so that, side by side, the paintings and the photos each validate the fictive reality and the actual reality upon which they are based.

Craig Garrett 2003

Constanze Schweiger studied in Vienna and Maastricht. In 2001 she was selected for the International Studio Program at New York's PS1, where she also participated in the 2002 exhibition *Listening to New Voices*. She currently lives and works in Vienna.