

### **Inaugural Winner of the 2019 SpallArt Prize Salzburg**

Sponsor: Sammlung SpallArt

Administered by the Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria

Director: Séamus Kealy

The Salzburger Kunstverein announces the inaugural winner of the 2019 SpallArt International Prize Salzburg. This international award for excellence in contemporary art is a rotating prize. For the years 2019 to 2021, the focus will be on contemporary photography.

There were 157 applicants received for the jury to review. After an intensive review and an established shortlist, it was decided that the inaugural winner is Berlin-based, French photographer **Pierre Descamps**. Sponsored by SpallArt, the *SpallArt Prize Salzburg* consists of €4,000 and a one month artist residency at the Salzburger Kunstverein.

Director Séamus Kealy issued the following statement: "The level of applicants for the 2019 SpallArt Salzburg Prize was very high and international in scope. Pierre Descamps' work struck us all for its clever combination of different histories of and references to modern art with a concern for photography as a shifting art form, as well as its knowing regard upon contemporary life. The work is humorous, searching, meditative, and while without urgency, it casts a serious scrutiny upon urban living and architecture, while also spiritedly positing some of the more hopeful urges of modernism within its aesthetic framework."

The Jury consisted of Nicolaus Schafhausen (Director, Kunsthalle Wien), Karin Peykker (Artist-Photographer, Board Member, Salzburger Kunstverein), and Andrew Phelps (Artist-Photographer, Board Member, Fotohof, Salzburg).

Pierre Descamps' body of photographic, wall objects and sculptural work is largely centered on a portrait of urban architecture. His well-defined, geometric focus emphasizes the formalism of urban constructions and the city barriers used by skateboarders. A second reading reveals however that his works enact a kind of periphrasis with the materials, confronting two contrasting cultures: popular culture and another more elitist one, grounded in the sophisticated legacy of twentieth-century conceptual movements: the aseptic imagery of the Dusseldorf School (the Bechers, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Demand) and the inexpressive influence of Pop (Ed Ruscha, Baldessari). While his sculptures and photos recall minimalist geometric compositions, the materials he employs and his way of making the works have completely different connotations, and on the other hand, unlike the popular iconography one usually finds in skateboarding culture, Descamps' images are aseptic and devoid of human expression. Showing physical work without workers, skateboarding without skateboarding, without skaters, when it is a practice that has its greatest ally in human relations, is undoubtedly a way to monumentalize an exercise that takes place in the streets, in a natural way, and that could be put in close relationship with many other spontaneous meetings that at times shake the foundations of the established.

## **Pierre Descamps**

Born 20.09.1975 in Amiens

Faculty of art in Strasbourg, 1994-1996

Vocational training in plastics processing in Lyon, 1997

Master of Arts at the Villa Arson in Nice, 2004

Lives and works in Berlin since 2008

Pierre Descamps grew up in a small industrial town in the north east of France, stucked between forests and ghettos. After trying the Faculty of Arts in Strasbourg and getting a vocational training in plastics processing in Lyon, he studied and got a master of art at the Villa Arson in Nice. He then moved to Berlin where he still works and lives. Besides his own work, he works as a freelance conservator for international galleries, a job that gives him an inside look at the art market today.

### Selected solo shows:

2018 *Site-Specifics*, Gallery The Goma, Madrid

2016 *Monuments 2006-2015*, Gallery The Goma, Madrid

2014 *Common Places—Common Spaces*, Gallery The Goma, Madrid

2012 *The Hole*, Gallery Catherine Issert, St. Paul de Vence

### Selected group shows:

2018 *Transition*, Kunstpreis 2018, Haus am Kleistpark, Berlin

2017 *2+1*, Gallery Catherine Issert, St. Paul de Vence

2013 *Commissariat pour un arbre*, Crystal Palace, Bordeaux

*La dernière vague, Surf, Skateboard and custom culture in contemporary art*,

La friche de la belle de Mai, Marseille

## **About Spallart**

The private art collection SpallArt arose from Andra Spallart's enthusiasm for the diversity of possibilities that photography uses to obstruct, deny and challenge our perception. Andra Spallart first acquired contemporary photography and video in the end 1980s. The collection commenced with a focus on contemporary Austrian photography and has broadened to a European and international focus. Since 2011, the collection has increased its presence in the public eye through various publications and exhibitions; for example, Andra Spallart has presented curated exhibitions at the Foto-Raum ([www.foto-raum.at](http://www.foto-raum.at)) in Vienna. After moving to Salzburg the collection thrives to this day. Temporary pop-up exhibitions at the Foto-Raum's depot are shown under the title "Open Space," regularly conveying a sense of the collection's breadth of photographic themes. The entire collection is also presented online. [www.sammlung-spallart.at](http://www.sammlung-spallart.at)

## **About the Salzburger Kunstverein**

The *SpallArt Prize Salzburg* is administered by the Salzburger Kunstverein. Founded in 1844, the Salzburger Kunstverein is a long-running and leading contemporary art organisation specialising in contemporary art. It is located in Salzburg, Austria, and is housed in the Künstlerhaus, built in 1885. The Salzburger Kunstverein organises about twelve exhibitions of international and Austrian artists annually, and generates discourse and other relevant programming through its lectures, residencies and screening programs. The Director since January 2014 is Séamus Kealy.

SpallArt Applicants:

Alltogether 157; female: 73, male: 84

Austria: 49

Germany: 35

England: 14

USA: 13

Italy: 7

Netherlands: 4

Finnland, Israel, Canada: each 3

Russia, Denmark, France, Australia, Greece, Hungary: each 2

Portugal, Serbia, Belgium, Lithuania, Montenegro, India, Argentina, Poland, Mexico,

Macedonia, Brazil, Morocco, Rumania, Turkey: each 1



Further information & photo material:

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Öffnungszeiten Ausstellung: Di-So 12-19 Uhr

Öffnungszeiten Café Cult: Mo-Fr 11-23 Uhr