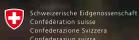


THE ART FOUNDRY

A FILM BY **IWAN SCHUMACHER**

WITH FELIX LEHNER CHRISTIAN MEIER JIAJIA ZHANG RITA KAPPENTHULER LAILA PAULI DAVID ANDERMATT SAMUEL BISCHOFF ADI GRÜNINGER LUKAS FURRER
TILL JÄCKLI NING SUN ZIHUA WANG KATALIN DEÉR SCRIPT ANJA BOMBELLI MARTIN JAEGGI IWAN SCHUMACHER CAMERA PIO CORRADI IWAN SCHUMACHER
EDITING ANJA BOMBELLI MUSIC VICTOR MOSER SOUND DESIGN & MIX JÜRIG VON ALLMEN C.A.S GRADING & DIGITAL EFFECTS PAUL AVONDET PRODUCTION SCHUMACHER & FREY
CO-PRODUCTION SRF SCHWEIZER RADIO UND FERNSEHEN COMMISSIONING EDITOR ANITA HUGI URS AUGSTBURGER CO-PRODUCTION MANAGER URS FITZE TELEPRODUKTIONS-FONDS
www.schumacherfrey.ch



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Thurgau
Lotteriefonds

ERNST GÖHNER STIFTUNG



SYNOPSIS

THE ART FOUNDRY is a film about the meeting of craftsmanship and art, and about St. Gallen and Shanghai. Distinguished artists such as Urs Fischer, Katharina Fritsch, Fischli/Weiss, Paul McCarthy and Hans Josephsohn come to the St. Gallen Art Foundry to work with its charismatic founder Felix Lehner and his colourful crew of mainly young women and men, who, with much delight and passion, transpose the artists' visions into sculpture. The fact that these craftworkers are so enthralled by the ancient skill of metal casting has caused a great stir in the contemporary art market. Their success has been so great that a part of their production has had to be transferred to Shanghai. The cultural and technical exchanges with Shanghai have brought both challenges and enrichment. But whether in Shanghai or St. Gallen the sight of molten metal remains magical – fantasy becoming reality.



A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

Iwan Schumacher: «It was the artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss who first pointed out to me the great filmic potential of the Art Foundry. That was more than 10 years ago and at that time it seemed like a way of distracting me from any idea of filming them. In retrospect it has turned out to be a masterstroke. From my very first visit I was fascinated by this business with its highly skilled specialist workforce putting body and soul into the task of translating the artists' ideas and fantasies into sculptures. I discovered that the foundry not only contained a group of committed individuals, but also acted as a hub, where art, craft, ancient cultural techniques and the latest hi-tech processes interface. As a result, long sequences of my film about Markus Raetz were shot in the Art Foundry. This is where I first encountered Urs Fischer - a meeting that also led to a film portrait. In 2007 I finally turned my attention to the young women and men working in the foundry and began, from this different perspective, to make this film.»



THE ST GALLEN ART FOUNDRY

Internationally the St. Gallen Art Foundry is a leader in its field. Numerous distinguished contemporary artists have their works produced here. Initially only metal casting was done here, but today the foundry offers artists numerous other technical possibilities for creating artworks. However it's not the artists who appear at the centre of this film, but rather the ensemble of foundry workers coming from widely different backgrounds. We discover why they chose this profession, how they define their relationship with the artists, and how they assess their own contribution to the pieces they have worked on.

FELIX LEHNER

Fascinated by the work of the sculptor Hans Josephsohn, Felix Lehner, a book dealer by profession, decided to train as a foundry worker. In 1983 he started the Art Foundry in Beinwil am See, then transferred to St Gallen with two colleagues in 1994. Today he manages a business with more than forty co-workers and a sister firm in Shanghai.



Felix Lehner: «It's a wonderful situation, being able to work with artists. They are quite distinct personalities, the young, the old, the famous, the unknown. Above all it's about respecting the work, in the knowledge that good artists take great risks.»

FROM ANCIENT TO HIGHT-TECH

In the Art Foundry a wide range of techniques are employed from different cultural epochs. The foundry could be called a living archive of cultural processes from ancient times to high-tech. Metal casting is among the oldest of all technologies. Whoever watches the manipulation of fire and molten metal, the 'alchemistic' transformation of materials, still senses today how daring and Prometheus-like this process must have seemed over many centuries. The magic of fire, the melting and casting, opens this film. At the same time, the newest materials, synthetic fibres of all kinds are in use here, developing new techniques. Experimental solutions have to be found in answer to the artists' sometimes outlandish expectations. Digital technology plays its part in the development and planning of artworks. As a visual contrast to the bravely archaic process of metal casting, the film emphasizes the ingenuity and the laboratory nature of these high-tech works.

After a foundation course at the Kunstgewerbeschule in St. Gallen, and working among other things as a car mechanic, Laila Pauli completed an apprenticeship in metal casting in Berlin in 2011. Since 2012 she's been a full-time member of the metal casting team at the St. Gallen Art Foundry.



Laila Pauli: «I was hooked from the start: the sight of molten bronze gripped me, and the fact that this craft is thousands of years old. And has remained the same, but with a bit more luxury and less blood and sweat... I always smoke a cigarette before the start, to calm the nerves. Then you say „Good luck!“ or „Good casting!“ before you cast.»

FROM SITTERTAL TO SHANGHAI

Globalisation has also influenced this highly specialized field of work. A direct result of this foundry's success and growing number of commissions is the collaboration with Shanghai Shengtian Artcasting, where Felix Lehner frequently has these commissions produced. The decision to send work to China proved controversial and caused much dispute at the Art Foundry.

Felix Lehner: «We had many discussions about globalisation, 3rd World and cost cutting. Some horrified co-workers asked: why buy local produce yet work in a foundry that has things produced in China, involving huge transportation of goods. That can't make sense!»



To control quality, after tough negotiations with the Chinese authorities, Lehner founded a branch company in Shanghai. He rented a large industrial building with a small office block attached and in another empty office block he installed living accommodation on two floors for himself and his colleagues. Alongside questions of art and craft and technology, this new branch brings them into contact with the everyday reality of a working life in a globalised world.

David Andermatt: «The Art Foundry has changed massively. The first 15-20 people were very political and rejected the idea of producing in China. Now with 40-50 people this has been accepted. By me too, but only after coming here and realising that each person was committed to responsible production and respected people's right to good working conditions.»



After his Matura, David Andermatt completed an apprenticeship in the St. Gallen Foundry in 2006. He was part of the workshop management team and worked most recently in the Shanghai foundry taking charge of quality control. Now he's studying at university in Berlin, but still returns to China in the holidays, working at the Shanghai foundry.

ART AND CRAFT

While in early Modernism craftsmanship and manual dexterity still played a significant part in the artist's work, Art in the second half of the 20th century, with its ever greater conceptual leanings and resulting redefinition of authorship, moved away from the artist's materials and their manipulation. At the same time craftsmanship in the traditional sense, increasingly lost ground. Industrially finished design-articles took the place of hand-made craft-objects from specialized manufacturers. This led to a considerable loss of technical and creative knowledge. Such skills are still nurtured at the Art Foundry – not for their practical use, but for their aesthetic qualities.

David Andermatt: «Casting an ordinary utensil usually is a serial job, usually it means producing thousands of pieces. Casting artworks is about the aesthetic appearance. It's about working on the sensory aspect, knowing it will be sold for a high price, hang in a gallery, or give someone pleasure. Every moment that you're working on an artwork, you are aware that this is an intellectual work that is being materialised.»

Many of the artists that the Art Foundry works with have little knowledge of techniques and materials and their expressive potential. Without the know-how, creativity and inventiveness of the Art Foundry workers, their artworks could not be made. A division of labour has come to the artistic process. The film displays this division, seeing it from the perspective of the foundry workers, showing their relationship with the artists and the artworks and asking how much 'ownership' they feel for the artworks they've helped to produce.

Rita Kappenthuler trained as a stonemason and has qualifications in technical drawing for civil engineering. She has worked in the foundry since 1999 and has mastered all sculptural techniques. She is responsible for producing silicon and plaster 'negative' moulds and for chasing. In the management team, alongside coordinating the work program, she takes care of the apprentices and interns.



Rita Kappenthuler: «When the finished art work is in an exhibition, in no way is it mine. I simply put some work into it. If I'm pleased with the work, or enjoyed doing it, an element of pride is there too. But the part I played in it is secret. And that's good too.»

A PIECE OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

Not to be forgotten, the film covers a particular part of Swiss industrial history. The Art Foundry came into being after the collapse of Swiss heavy industry. Felix Lehner started the Art Foundry with machinery and materials purchased cheaply when the industrial foundries were shut down – a perfect example of the way such highly specialized international service companies came to replace heavy industry.

Felix Lehner: «In 1993 the Georg Fischer steel foundry closed, Sulzer packed up too. At these liquidations I could buy materials that I could not possibly have done otherwise. As soon as I had some security and had repaid loans, another liquidation turned up. We arrived in Sittertal like scrap-metal dealers with 20 lorries from different factories.»

THE ART FOUNDRY AND ITS ARTISTS

The history of the Art Foundry is closely linked to a number of artists: Hans Josephsohn caused Felix Lehner to take up casting and Josephsohn's works were cast in the foundry for 30 years. Urs Fischer came 10-12 years ago during the Art – boom, starting to carry out complex projects. The collaboration with Shanghai Shengtian Artcasting came about because Fischer's production volume was too great for the St. Gallen Art Foundry to manage alone. Finally, working for Paul McCarthy secured the wages for the last four years.

Felix Lehner: «It really all started 15 years ago with Peter Fischli and David Weiss. Through them, other artists who work internationally also came.»

FIVE SCULPTURES, FIVE TECHNIQUES

At the centre of the film is the production of five very different sculptures that also use different techniques.

METAL CASTING



The American artist Paul McCarthy is famous for his provocative, often fiercely satirical works in numerous media. In the film he is working in the Art Foundry on a large sculpture called 'Ship of Fools'. The laborious process in hand, making the model, is the reproduction of countless tools on the deck, pots, brushes, and screws. All these small, even miniscule parts will be minutely moulded and cast to become part of the final bronze sculpture.

REPOUSSÉ AND CHASING TECHNIQUES



In China, the Swiss artist Alex Hanimann's five metre tall sculpture Vanessa is being chased in chromium steel. Commissioned for the entrance of the new Kantonsschule in Heerbrug, Hanimann has had a 3-D scan taken of one of the pupils. Using this scan data after digital corrections, a polystyrene model was cut in St Gallen and a net-like cutting pattern was superimposed for the workers in China to follow: hundreds of separate parts are then made in chromium steel sheeting which are then hammered into the required shape. These are then soldered together, finished and highly polished. This sculpture is an example of those projects that, for financial reasons, the Art Foundry in St. Gallen could only take on if completed in China.

CASTING EPOXY RESIN



The German artist Katharina Fritsch asked the St. Gallen Art Foundry to cast a 4.5-meter tall blue cock in epoxy resin. Since the 1980s she has been exhibiting figurative sculptures with a suggestive, narrative quality, made in synthetic materials. In 2013 the cock was displayed in London's Trafalgar Square on the so-called 4th plinth.

WAX



Urs Fischer has had some wax sculptures made at the St Gallen Art Foundry, with complex internal networks of wicks so that they can be lit like candles. Fischer had 3-D scans taken of his friend Rudi Stingel sitting on an office chair and of himself at a round table, then carved in polystyrene "bigger than life". These figures were then cut into pieces, negatives made, cast in wax, and reassembled.

STUCCO MARBLE



The Mexican artist, Mariana Castillo Deball, (currently living in Berlin/Amsterdam), is seen preparing a work to show at Documenta 13 in Kassel, working as a team with some of the Art Foundry workers to construct a stucco marble sculpture. This involves mixing plaster with rabbit skin glue, colouring it with pigments and kneading it. These colour masses are then kneaded and twisted into each other, as in marble, and pressed into so-called 'marble cakes'.

PRODUCTION DATA

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Film format HD, 16:9, Colour, Stereo
Language Swiss-German, English, Chinese (Mandarin)
Cinema DCP 86 Min; Audio: 5.1 + 2.0
Subtitles English, French, German, Italian, Chinese
TV Version HDCAM SR; 52Min; Audio 5.1 + 2.0

CREW

Script Anja Bombelli, Martin Jaeggi, Iwan Schumacher
Director Iwan Schumacher
Camera Pio Corradi, Iwan Schumacher
Editing Anja Bombelli
Montage Assistant Simon Gutknecht
Music Victor Moser
Sound design and Mix Jürg von Allmen C.A.S. Digiton
Animation Frederic Schwarz
Grading & Digital Effects Paul Avondet, peakfine
Production Schumacher & Frey GmbH
Co-production SRF Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen
Editing Anita Hugi
Urs Augstburger
Co-production Manager Urs Fitze
Supported by National Ministry of Culture EDI
Teleproduktions-Fonds
Canton of St Gallen
City of St Gallen
Canton of Thurgau
Ernst Göhner Foundation
UBS Cultural Foundation
Hannelore Fuchs

PARTICIPANTS

Felix Lehner, Christian Meier, Jijia Zhang, Rita Kappenthuler,
Laila Pauli, David Andermatt, Samuel Bischof, AdiGrueningler,
Lukas Furrer, Till Jaekli, Ning Sun, Konstantin Li, Zhihua Wang,
Katalin Deer

Urs Fischer, Mariana Castillo Deball, Alex Hanimann
Hans Josephsohn, Peter Fischli, Paul McCarthy
Katharina Fritsch

FIRST SCREENING

Vision du Reel, Nyon, 28. April 2014-04-02

CINEMA START

German speaking Switzerland, 12. June 2014

DISTRIBUTION

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IWAN SCHUMACHER

Born 1947 in Luzern. Studied photography at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich. 1967 attended the first film-maker's course in Switzerland. 1970-1972 taught photography at the Bath Academy of Art in England. Co-author (with Adrienne Burrows) of a monograph on the English psychiatrist and photo-pioneer Hugh W. Diamond: *Dr. Diamonds Bildnisse von Geisteskranken*, Frankfurt, 1979; London/New York 1990. Photographed the series of clay sculptures, *Plötzlichdiese Übersicht*, by Peter Fischli & David Weiss, for a publication with the same title, Zurich 1982 & 1995. Supervised and edited the publication of *David Weiss: Nine Books*, Edition Patrick Frey, 2014.

From 1972, worked continuously in film-making as camera-man, scriptwriter and director. 1977-1981 Member of Nemo Film AG. In 2000 founded Schumacher & Frey GmbH. Together with Patrick Frey, developed and produced the weekly TV series *C'est la vie!* for SF DRS. Married, three children, lives in Zurich.

FILMS

2014 *The Art Foundry*, DCP, 86'; Schumacher & Frey GmbH
2011 *Amiet*, HDCAM SR, 52'; Schumacher & Frey GmbH
2010 *Urs Fischer*, DCP, 98'; Schumacher & Frey GmbH
2007 *Markus Raetz*, DCP, 75'; Schumacher & Frey GmbH
2005 *Der Wolkensammler - Jean Odermatt, San Gottardo*, Digi Beta, 61';
2000 filmed and produced more than 100 episodes of *C'est la vie!* for SF DRS
1999 *Trümpi*, 35mm 70'; ventura film sa, Meride/Iwan Schumacher
1994 *Gasser & Gasser*, 35mm, 90', Filmkollektiv Zurich AG/Iwan Schumacher (EDI quality award)
1990 *Matthias Gnädinger - four figures & a portrait*, Beta SP, 30'; SF DRS
1984 *Tatort: Der Mord danach*, 16mm, 90'; Südwestfunk ARD.
1982 *Schlagschatten*, MAZ I-Zoll, 60', Südwestfunk ARD
1981 *Habsucht oder Hamburg-Madrid*, 16mm, 60'; Nemo Film AG
1978 *Man probiert, man probiert*, 16mm, 30'; SF DRS
1976 *Verglichen mit früher*, 16mm, 60'; Nemo Film AG, (EDI quality award, Zurich film prize).
1967 *Erste Schweizerischer Filmarbeitskurs*, 35mm, 10', Kunstgewerbe Schule Zurich, HGKZ

SCHUMACHER & FREY GMBH

1998-99 Iwan Schumacher and Patrick Frey develop the TV format of *C'est la vie!*
2000 The production company Schumacher & Frey GmbH is founded. A first batch of 31 *C'est la vie!* episodes are made for SF DRS. Iwan Schumacher is responsible for production and realization of these programs. 2001-03 Within three years, Schumacher & Frey produce a total of 108 *C'est la vie!* episodes. 4 pilot episodes are made in Berlin in the summer of 2002.

FILMS

2014 *The Art Foundry*; DCP, 86', director Iwan Schumacher
2011 *Amiet*; HDCAM SR, 52', directors Iwan Schumacher, Cornelia Strasser
2010 *Urs Fischer*; DCP, 98' director Iwan Schumacher
2009 *Träumereien*; DCP, 11', director Aaron Arens
2007 *Markus Raetz*; DCP, 75' director Iwan Schumacher
2005 *Der Wolkensammler - Jean Odermatt, San Gottardo*; Digi Beta, 61', director I. Schumacher