

## Educator Notes

# Julian Schnabel Plate Paintings 1978–86

November 4, 2016–February 19, 2017



Julian Schnabel, *The Death of Fashion*, 1978. Oil, plates, bondo on wood, 90 x 120 x 13 in (228.6 x 304.8 x 33.02 cm). Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from Roy Halston Frowick, 1991.4

## About the artist

Julian Schnabel was born in Brooklyn, in 1951, and currently lives and works in New York and Montauk, Long Island. He received his BFA from the University of Houston in 1973, and participated in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. He is an acclaimed artist and Oscar-nominated filmmaker whose work in all forms is marked by an ability to explore abstraction and the expansive themes of human experience.

## About the exhibition

Julian Schnabel's Aspen Art Museum exhibition is the first US museum presentation to focus on the renowned artist's now culturally iconic plate paintings. Largely unexhibited since the early 1980s, Schnabel's pieces reveal the artist's interest in material experimentation, the physicality of surface, and the relationship between the figure and abstraction. His AAM show includes a concise survey of these works—from the artist's first plate painting, *The Patients and the Doctors* (1978), through to *The Walk Home* (1985).

Schnabel first became interested in making plate paintings after a trip to Barcelona, Spain, in 1978, where he saw the famed mosaics of Antoni Gaudí. Schnabel's plate paintings have thick, highly nuanced texture. This creates an intimacy with the viewer despite their large size—some stretching over nineteen feet. Broken fragments of plates extend off their wood surfaces into three-dimensional space with the help of Bondo, an automotive adhesive. The representational forms painted upon these varied surfaces range from very personal portraits to allegorical subject matter.

## Questions for discussion

- | Have you ever created something new from broken objects?
- | Imagine stepping inside one of these paintings. What do you see, feel, or smell?
- | The artist is also a film director. What type of movies could you imagine within these paintings?

## Suggested activities

### Paper Plate Paintings

Gather paintbrushes, various acrylic paints, hot glue, large chipboard pieces, and heavy-duty paper plates.

Distribute chipboard and paper plates to students. Have students rip (or cut) plates into three–five pieces, and arrange the pieces onto the chipboard with glue. Although hot glue is preferable, traditional classroom glue may be used with extra time given for drying. Encourage your students to add multiple layers to create depth and visual interest.

As students are finishing their paper plate arrangement, begin to pass out acrylic paints. Invite students to choose a historical event or a significant person in their lives for the subject of their painting. Advise students to fill every area of their board with paint, including hard-to-reach and uneven surfaces.

Once the paintings have dried, create a gallery space in the classroom by hanging completed artworks on the wall. Encourage students to reflect on their artistic choices and subject matter with classmates, family, and friends.

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email [education@aspenartmuseum.org](mailto:education@aspenartmuseum.org)

Following page: Julian Schnabel, *Divan*, 1979. Oil, plates, bondo on wood, 96 x 96 x 12 in (243.84 x 243.84 x 30.48 cm). Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, CT

AAM exhibitions are made possible by the Marx Exhibition Fund. General exhibition support is provided by the Toby Devan Lewis Visiting Artist Fund.

Major support for *Julian Schnabel Plate Paintings 1978–86* is provided by Sandy and Paul Edgerley. Additional support is provided by the AAM National Council.

AAM education programs are made possible by the Questrom Education Fund.

