

# Swiss Institute

*For Immediate Release*

**Heidi Bucher**

**February 19 – April 20, 2014**

**Opening reception: Tuesday, February 18, 6 to 8PM**

Swiss Institute proudly presents a comprehensive selection of work by Swiss sculptor Heidi Bucher (1926-1993). This exhibition was initiated by Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris and continues for a second iteration in New York.

Born in 1926 in Winterthur, Bucher moved to California in the 1960's where she collaborated with her husband Carl Lander on *Bodyshells*, sort of wearable sculptures. She returned to Switzerland in the late 1970's and started her most emblematic body of works consisting in latex casts of objects and architectural spaces.

In "A Lover's Discourse: Fragments", French semiotician Roland Barthes defines the language as a skin. More precisely, a skin one could rub against others. Often compared to exuviae, these ghostly skins which some animals leave behind while shedding, the casts of Heidi Bucher are a memorial vestige. To create those, the artist applied in generous brushstrokes several layers of an opaline, vegetal made, liquid on architectural spaces, portions of walls, entire rooms or various objects previously covered in gauze. Once solidified, the *skin* is peeled in one fell swoop and presents itself as an embalmed, although almost immediate, memory.

Successively, Heidi Bucher created both an archival and a linguistic tool, a lexicon, which allowed her to record the evidence of her own history. Through a pudic excavation of her relationship to the world, Bucher's process could symbolically be referred to as a self-archeology

In the main exhibition space is presented *Herrenzimmer*, a 4 sided floating moulding of the master bedroom of *Ahnenhaus* –literally The Ancestors House–, her family house in Winterthur. The imprints are on a one-to-one scale, as for the decal to speak in syntony with its original, for the image to be as less distorted as possible. From *Ahnenhaus*, she also casted a portion of the parquet floor which appears in transparency, hung on the rear wall. On the elevated platform is shown *Grande Albergo*, a majestic imprint of a hotel's facade in Brissago, a Swiss village on the western shore of the Lake Maggiore. The resort hotel was demolished in 1993, the same year Heidi Bucher passed away.

The exhibition continues in the lower level gallery where the movies directed by the artist during the 1970's are projected in 2 separated rooms.

With a Proustian perception of time; in an urgency to remember, Heidi Bucher tackles the theme of domesticity and questions the ambiguity of familiar environments possibly being equally as oppressive as they are heart-warming.

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