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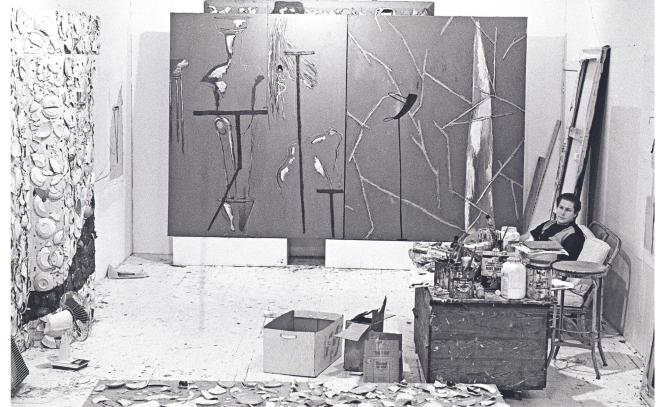
PLATE TECTONICS

Julian Schnabel caused an earthquake in another art era with his plate paintings. Now that his most famous works are on view again in Aspen, he sits down to dish exclusively to Ted Loos.

280 culturedmag.com







Julian Schnabel's

Julian Schnabel's home, studio-personal art gallery/family compound has a name: Dealize Chupi. The rencemend painter and fillimmaker decided to add a few floors of a pink, Verrettan-style pelazzo to an old stable in the far West Villago, outraging some and deligiting others. Technically the grand building is a condo, but his son Vito is one of the few other residents, and I would guess that the committee deciding who gets in is made up only of a certain famous artist and nobody else.

The message is clear: It's Schnabel's world, people. We're just flwing in it.

When I arrive to interview him on a clear fall day—a few weeks before a rare exhibition of his classic "plate paintings" doubts at the Aspen Art Museum—it's clear he's a little wary. Schnabel has been famous for a long, long time, and he's won a best Director Award at the Camnes Film Festival, so it's unlikely that this hour we have together is going to be life-changing for him. And yet, when I make clear that I'm willing to look at paintings—to really look—Schnabel wars. He engages. Pretty soon, I'm helping him move big (and I mean really big, more than 10 feet across) carvasses across his vast (and I



JULIAN SCHNABEL

"It's the first museum exhibition to focus on these works. How do you look at something with its own mythology around it but see it fresh?"

-Heidi Zuckerman



"There's a certain light you need. I remember a been?" he says, smiling. updet: 'Once a painting becomes familiar, it's too late.'" It becomes clear that Schnabel thinks a lot about looking at art, about experiencing art. Later to focus on these works," says the museum's in says, The linst time you see a caravaggo unextor and CCV, held unconstinat, with head the painting it's amazing. The second time you see it dever idea to stage it. Thou do you look at is still the first time you see it. And so is the third time. And the same is true of the movie Shoeshine it is either in the same is true of the movie Shoeshine it is either.

studio, to better see them. Some of these is a guy whose movies—Basquiat, Before Night sprawling paintings, which all feature a huge Falls and The Diving Bell and the Butterfly—were stuffed white goar, reference his friend the late at lefter and more realized than the work of many full-time directors. But Schnabel admits he's annoyed that some people ask him, "Hey do you around the room to assess his own work better. still paint?" His reaction: "I think, Where have you

he says, "The first time you see a Caravaggio director and CEO, Heidi Zuckerman, who had the

February 19 and features 13 of the works that caused quite a stir when Schnabel started making them in the late 1970s. Created with actual pottery shards, they had an ancient aspect to them, and straddled the line between painting and sculpture. They didn't look like anything else around-and still don't today, "They have a kind of urgency," says Zuckerman. "They make me uncomfortable," which she means as a compliment. They don't soothe, they provoke. Love or hate them, you can't ignore them,

Schnabel has told the story many times, but in essence, the genesis of his most famous works was simple. "I tried to make a painting I hadn't

seen before," he says, A trip to Spain, particularly his communion with Antoni Gaudi's ceramic-studded works in Barcelona, planted the seed. "I thought, What if those colored shards in the benches were white?" As he leafs through some of the works on the Aspen checklist, it's clear that these are his children and reuniting them will be an emotional experience for him. "This particular painting has been in Des Moines Art Center for 20 years," he says of *The Death of Fashion* (1978). "I don't get to see these very often."

Schnabel, that famous bad boy of the art

world, is now 65, and that enforces a certain a mark can do." words, show os, and that encodes a certain an analysis of the perspective. It's a good thing," he says of the show's bringing the works together. "As you get older, you get more and more removed from represented my whole pursuit—there was a battle breathing."

everything."
I've always thought there was a Pompelian flavor to the plate paintings, and that Schnabel was making a comment on the long arc of art history—the fact that millennia after paintings have melted or turned to dust, ceramics will still be around. "There's an archeological aspect in a way," he tells me. "But that's not the end-all, beall. It was more like. What is the substrate of

between what the object was and a picture," he says. "Where those two things converged, that's the space where I was working."

And it's where he still works, Schnabel takes And its where he still works. Schnabet takes me in an elevator to yet another floor of Palazzo Chupi, into a warmiy wood-paneled space that he uses as a personal gallery, and it's filled with new canvases. I'm sworn to secrecy about what they entail, but you may see them at Pace Gallery next time? It's about the signifies that the false have spring. They may—or may not I—take another very the familiarity and the scale of them. As a painter, famous painter as inspiration. Schnabel stands you look for all the multiplied possibilities of what micro-view of their surface.

284 culturedmag.com culturedmag.com 285