

Jan Schoonhoven - Official 18977

HOW JAN SCHOONHOVEN - THROUGH AN ACT OF FAITH - BECAME A FAMOUS ARTIST.

In his own lifetime, the works of Jan Schoonhoven (Delft, 1914 –1994) were compared to those of Swiss painter Paul Klee and Dutch painter Piet Mondriaan. The symmetric and yet mysterious white reliefs made out of carton and papier maché by the artist, are now auctioned for large sums at Sothebys's and Christie's. Jan Schoonhoven himself however lived a sober and modest life as state postal official no. 18977.

Who was this man, who one day spontaneously let world-famous Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama paint his nude body with Polka dots to appear the next day neatly dressed at the office?

In 1967 he won a prize at the Ninth Bienal in Sao Paolo, which brought him instant fame internationally. Since then, he has been regarded as one of the most important European artist of the 20th century, an influence for a whole new generation.

During research the filmmakers found out that an important commissioned art work had disappeared from its wall at the Post Office in Delft. In the film his friend, artist Jan Henderikse sets out to find the lost work. An image of Schoonhoven's life, his mysterious character and the meaning of his art work starts to reveal itself.

For Jan Schoonhoven, gothic churches and the streets in his home town Delft were a great source of inspiration, as well as the imposing cathedrals of Chartres, Paris and Cologne. In the early 1960s Dutch artists Armando, Jan Henderikse, Henk Peeters and Jan Schoonhoven formed the 'Nul Group', linked to the 'Zero Movement' in Germany, Italy and Japan with the French Yves Klein, the Italians Piero Manzoni and Lucio Fontana, Germans Mack, Piene, Uecker and Japanese Yayoi Kusama.

Jan Schoonhoven - Official 18977 (50 min., video) contains unique footage of Jan Schoonhoven from the 1970s and 1980s.