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Réflexions sur l'espace et le temps
Works on Paper by Érik Desmazières

22 April to 22 June 2015
Opening: Tuesday, 21 April 2015, 6 p.m.

In spite of its astonishingly realistic rendering, the art of Érik Desmazières (born 1948) actually breaks with reality – either in its handling of space or in the way it conveys a sense of time. His oeuvre reveals visual worlds, often unpopulated, of breathtaking precision and extraordinary timelessness. The sharp gaze of the artist penetrates the opulently teeming interiors of past ages – such as studios and libraries – and sweeps across the empty streets of the present day.

This French artist, living in Paris, is one of the finest printmakers of his generation. With consummate skill, he pushes the technical boundaries of etching and aquatint to their very limits. At the same time, he nuances the tonalities with remarkable mastery, conjuring atmospheric effects of light and shadow. He often stays with a single motif at great length, exploring it and varying it in ways that create a multiplicity of situations.

Some of his prints seem to take on a dynamic of their own that has an almost dizzying effect on the viewer, thanks to the spatial lines that appear to continue beyond the edges of the image. Others are so detailed and contemplative that they appear to be an exact portrayal of reality. Desmazières opulent visual language is inspired by an older, bygone tradition that makes it look anachronistic. The loss of all sense of time is manifested most notably in his realistic urban scenes which show neither progress nor modernity. The deserted interiors frequently recall places that no longer exist in reality. Yet at the same time, they are intimate characterizations of the people absent from the picture. Realistic as Desmazières' spaces may appear, they are windows on different worlds subject to some strange construct of space and time. What they show is his own interpretation of reality.

Swiss artist Marc-Antoine Fehr (born 1953) and Érik Desmazières have been friends for many years. Their work occasionally reveals glimpses of their close bond. For this reason, works by Fehr, who lives in Burgundy, are on display in the showcases in the corridor.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication: *Réflexions sur l'espace et le temps. Druckgraphik von Érik Desmazières*, with a text by Patrizia Solombrino, Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2015; 80 pages, approx. CHF 25.-, ISBN 978-3-7319-0221-8; Special edition with a original graphic work, Edition: 50 copies, CHF 350.-.

If you require further information and/or visual materials, please contact Patrizia Solombrino: tel. 044 632 40 46 or patrizia.solombrino@gs.ethz.ch