

# Irène Schoenholzer: Art Dealer Extraordinaire

**Few are as home in the world of art as Irène Schoenholzer. Best known in the Saanenland as the founder of the Lovers of Fine Art in Gstaad gallery, Schoenholzer is now setting her sights on a new challenge: Private art dealer.**

At a gallery, artwork is sold to interested buyers who visit the exhibitions. Without a fixed gallery, Schoenholzer has taken this “matchmaking” one step further; as an independent art dealer, she personalises an artwork selection for each client, using her extended network to pair the most exquisite pieces with wealthy buyers around the world.

“The art market, the buyers and I have evolved over the last few years,” says Irène Schoenholzer with a winning smile on her face as she enters her new Zurich office.



Globalisation has also left its mark on the art market – only a few selected works of museum quality can be acquired today, creating a higher demand than supply. It takes an art dealer with exclusive international connections to access these treasures, the likes of which are few and far between. Enter Irène Schoenholzer – with her many years of active service in the art community, she is one of just a handful of dealers who boasts the necessary Rolodex.

With her sophisticated expertise and network of relationships, Schoenholzer has works by Alberto Giacometti to Francis Bacon, from Pablo Picasso to Vincent van Gogh, to mention just a few names from the broad spectrum of art, at her fingertips.

Now Schoenholzer receives her demanding clientele in total discretion, mainly at her new business premises in Zurich.

“Today’s buyer of high quality art puts increasing emphasis on anonymity,” she states.

## From the Gallery to the Globe

Schoenholzer has been helping celebrities, politicians, artists and business people build their art collections since her days at the gallery in the Saanenland. For 15 years, Lovers of Fine Art in Gstaad was the gathering place for aficionados of both classical and contemporary works. The exhibitions Schoenholzer arranged were sought-after events that attracted high profile art connoisseurs to Gstaad. But preparing every last detail of these exhibitions demanded enormous personal time and devotion.

“However, ultimately I lacked the time to my true passion, the global art market,” says Irène Schoenholzer.

Leaving Gstaad and choosing Zurich as a home base was a natural step in Schoenholzer’s personal and professional evolution. However, she still maintains strong

connections to the Saanenland, even meeting customers for the season on request in Gstaad.

“Without the gallery I have greater independence in my planning. With my new freedom, I can customise a quality work-life balance,” says the 55-year old.

## Sweet Memories in the Saanenland

The echo of Schoenholzer’s last major exhibition can still be heard in Gstaad. Irène Schoenholzer succeeded – in partnership with Karl-Friedrich Scheufele, Co-President of Chopard – to bring the world-renowned Swiss star photographer Michel Comte to Gstaad. Here he was inspired to complete the unique project “Berner Alpen um Gstaad”. Ms Schoenholzer sold a large number of these stunning images to worldwide art collections and museums.

The photos remain hugely popular, with Gault Millau Switzerland’s “Hotel of the Year 2013” The Alpina Gstaad acquiring a selection to decorate their gourmet restaurant and junior suites. The spectacular landscape interpretations are expected in the next year at the Kunstmuseum Bern, where they will be made available to a wide audience. This exhibition features old friends Irène Schoenholzer, Karl-Friedrich Scheufele and Chopard, who have come together for a common artistic mission.

“After the crisis years of the banks and low interest rates in the Euro zone, high-quality art was sold at record levels. Art is considered a profitable investment, and one that provides significantly more pleasure than any stocks or bonds,” says Schoenholzer.

And after all, Ms Schoenholzer’s role as art dealer brings pleasure into the lives of her clientele, as well as her own.

“The daily administration of running a gallery devoured most of my time,” she says. “I can now spend real time with each customer, discovering his or her desires, and searching for the perfect work of art to fill that special place in their homes.”

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