



TALKS

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A talk with Florence Bonnefous

PHOTOGRAPHY BY REBEKKA DEUBNER

Florence Bonnefous and Edouard Merino founded the Romainville-based contemporary art gallery Air de Paris in 1990, even before there was an actual art market. Florence told us about the approach through which they've been running the gallery, driven by a great curiosity, as well as about the principles of their practice and the characteristics she usually looks for in an artwork.



How did you come close to the art world and, especially, to that of contemporary art?

I attended an art school and, by the end of my cursus, I realised I was more interested in the artworks created by other people than those made by myself.

How would you describe your personal approach? Is there something or someone that particularly influenced it?

Actually, it has always mingled with that of my business partner, Edouard Merino: we definitely have a collective approach. Once, a friend told us that the gallery – and thus our choices – is “conceptual outsider” (Art Brut Conceptuel, in French). If this sounds like an oxymoron, it is nevertheless quite a good description for a mix of very different styles and different ways to come up to producing an artwork, as well as an exhibition. Our influences root in Fluxus and conceptual art.

What’s the history of Air de Paris? How did you came up with the decision of opening your

own art gallery?

We opened the gallery together in 1990, in Nice, by the sea. We thought we should rather start at the periphery of the art world, which was already very Parisian oriented. And now we are in Romainville, in the outskirts fo Paris!

On what principles does Air de Paris base its practice? What goals does the gallery aim to achieve through the programme of exhibitions?

We have always been driven by the principle of pleasure, more than by that of reality. Our first goal is to satisfy our curiosity and the second one to obtain the least amount of success that would have allowed us to pursue our practice.

As a curator, what do you usually look for in an artwork?

Balance, intensity, intelligence, style.



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What are your thoughts about the global art market nowadays? How did it change since you founded the gallery?

It is just not comparable! There was no art market when we started, then there was a "stammering" art market, and then again it went global. We cope but we do not support...

Do you remember the first time you get in touch with Mutina? What has impressed you the most?

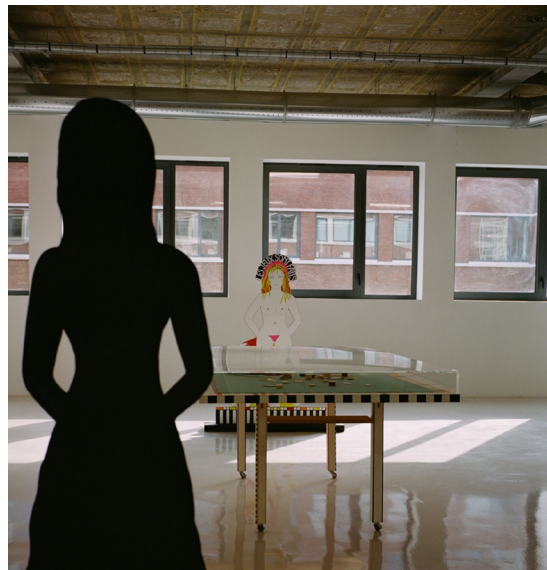
Yes, of course! I met Sarah Cosulich and Massimo Orsini at Fiac. I already knew and had much respect for Sarah. I didn't know Massimo at that time, but I immediately enjoyed his cheerfulness and kindness.

Do you have a favourite Mutina collection? Why?

I love the triangle-shaped elements of Rombini by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, the Diarama sequences by Hella Jongerius and the effect of Folded by Raw Edges.

Speaking of emerging contemporary artists, is there someone you think would be a good fit for our company?

I think that some of the cryptic patterns from Guy de Cointet's works on paper or Lily van der Stokker's acid coloured flowers might be interesting departure points to create a ceramic collection.



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