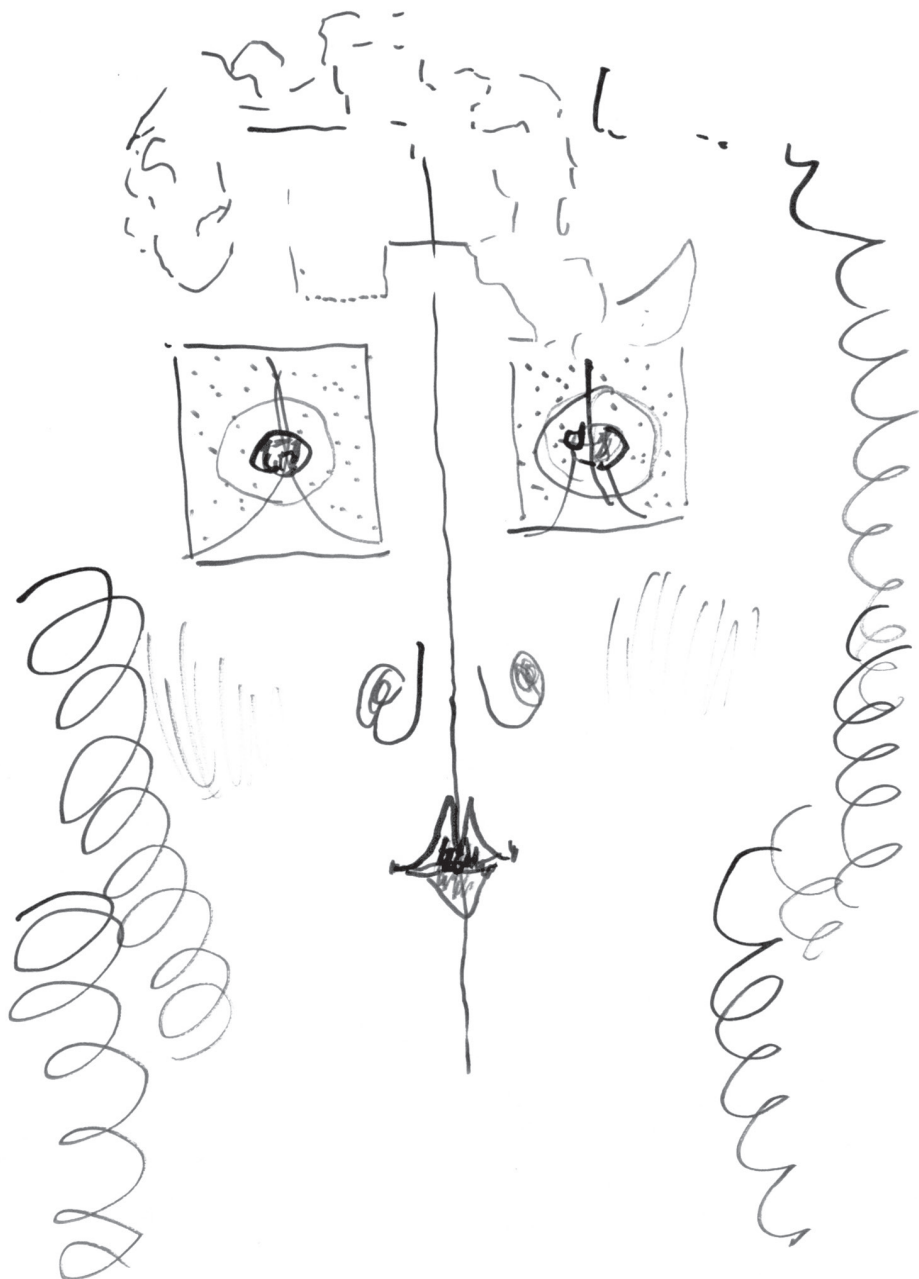


Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst
Grand Prix suisse d'art
Gran Premio svizzero d'arte
Grond premi svizzer d'art

Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018



4.0
x 60

4	Vorwort
5	Avant-propos
6	Prefazione
7	Foreword
8	Einleitung
10	Introduction
12	Introduzione
14	Introduction
16	Samuel Gross en conversation avec Sylvie Fleury
45	Samuel Gross in conversation with Sylvie Fleury
52	Yasmil Raymond in conversation with Thomas Hirschhorn
84	Yasmil Raymond im Gespräch mit Thomas Hirschhorn
94	Stefano Moor in conversazione con Luigi Snozzi
127	Stefano Moor in conversation with Luigi Snozzi
137	Anhang
	Annexe
	Appendice
	Appendix

Vorwort

Der Prix Meret Oppenheim wurde 2001 durch das Bundesamt für Kultur (BAK) in Zusammenarbeit mit der Eidgenössischen Kunstkommission eingerichtet. Er würdigt Kulturschaffende aus den Bereichen Kunst und Architektur, Kuratorinnen und Kuratoren sowie Kritikerinnen und Kritiker, die das Schweizer Kulturschaffen über die Landesgrenzen hinaus dauerhaft bekannt machen. Mit seiner 18. Ausgabe wird der Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst / Prix Meret Oppenheim sozusagen erwachsen. Er geht an drei bedeutende Persönlichkeiten aus Kunst und Architektur. Auf Empfehlung der Eidgenössischen Kunstkommission zeichnet das BAK die beiden Kunstschaffenden Sylvie Fleury und Thomas Hirschhorn sowie den Architekten Luigi Snozzi aus. Die in diesem Band veröffentlichten Interviews bieten einen Überblick über Denkweisen, Vorgehen und Erfahrungen der Preisträgerin und der Preisträger. Die Gespräche der diesjährigen Ausgabe führten Samuel Gross, Yasmil Raymond und Stefano Moor.

Dass sich die Kommission dafür entschieden hat, Sylvie Fleury auszuzeichnen, ist kein *Wunder*, sondern zeugt von der Reife eines irritierenden Werks. In einer verführerischen Umkehrung der Situation hat sich die Künstlerin der Luxusindustrie bedient, die sich zuvor an der Kunstwelt inspiriert hatte. *Yes to Sylvie Fleury*. Ebenso geehrt für sein künstlerisches Werk wird Thomas Hirschhorn. Hirschhorns Karriere als Künstler begann in den 1980er-Jahren dank eines Umwegs in der beruflichen Laufbahn. Ein Glücksfall. Sein monumentales Schaffen ist engagiert, unbequem, unkontrollierbar, grosszügig mit Worten und Materialien und es verschiebt die üblichen Grenzen. Luigi Snozzi ist Architekt sowie emeritierter Professor von internationalem

Renommee und mit seinem intellektuellen Format eine legendäre Figur der Architekturszene. Sein Projekt zwischen Städtebau und Architektur im Dorf Monte Carasso im Tessin dient auch Jahrzehnte nach seiner Umsetzung noch als Referenz. Die Kommission zeichnet ihn mit dem Prix Meret Oppenheim aus, um seinen Einfluss auf die nachfolgenden Generationen von Architektinnen und Architekten zu würdigen.

Wir drücken der Preisträgerin und den Preisträgern unsere Bewunderung aus und hoffen, dass die hier erstmals veröffentlichten Gespräche die Entstehung ihrer Werke und ihres Denkens beleuchten. Das BAK dankt den Mitgliedern der Eidgenössischen Kunstkommission für ihren unermüdlischen Einsatz für das zeitgenössische Kunst- und Architekturschaffen. Schliesslich möchten wir die Namensgeberin des Preises würdigen, Meret Oppenheim, von deren Werk diese Ausgabe – sowohl wörtlich als auch im übertragenen Sinn – geprägt ist.

Léa Fluck
Kulturschaffen, Leitung Kunstförderung

Avant-propos

Le Prix Meret Oppenheim a été créé en 2001 par l'Office fédéral de la culture en collaboration avec la Commission fédérale d'art. Il honore des artistes, architectes, commissaires, chercheurs et critiques qui font rayonner la création suisse au-delà de nos frontières et à travers les années. Pour sa 18^e édition, qui marque son passage à l'âge adulte, le Grand Prix suisse d'art / Prix Meret Oppenheim est décerné à trois personnalités accomplies de l'art et de l'architecture. Suivant les recommandations de la Commission fédérale d'art, l'OFC distingue deux artistes : Sylvie Fleury et Thomas Hirschhorn, auxquels s'ajoute l'architecte Luigi Snozzi. Les entretiens publiés dans cet ouvrage donnent un aperçu des réflexions, des démarches et des expériences qui ont accompagné la lauréate et les lauréats dans leur activité. Les interlocuteurs cette année sont : Samuel Gross, Yasmil Raymond et Stefano Moor.

Ce n'est effectivement pas un *miracle* si la Commission a choisi de distinguer Sylvie Fleury, mais bien la preuve de la maturité d'une œuvre qui irrite. Dans un séduisant retournement de situation, l'artiste s'est servie de l'industrie du luxe de la même façon que cette dernière s'était d'abord inspirée du monde de l'art. *Yes to Sylvie Fleury*. L'autre Prix Meret Oppenheim récompensant un travail artistique a été attribué à Thomas Hirschhorn. La carrière d'artiste de Hirschhorn a débuté dans les années 1980 grâce à un heureux faux pas d'orientation professionnelle. Tant mieux. Engagé, dérangeant, incontrôlable, généreux en mots, en matériaux, son travail artistique monumental repousse les limites ordinaires. Enfin, Luigi Snozzi, architecte et professeur émérite de renommée internationale, est, de par son envergure intellectuelle, une personnalité légendaire du monde de l'architecture. Son projet à la croisée

entre urbanisme et architecture dans le village de Monte Carasso au Tessin est toujours une figure de référence, plusieurs décennies après sa mise en œuvre. La Commission a choisi de lui remettre le prix Meret Oppenheim pour honorer son influence sur les jeunes générations d'architectes.

Nous exprimons notre admiration et adressons nos sincères félicitations à la lauréate et aux lauréats et espérons que ces entretiens inédits sauront révéler la genèse de leur création et de leur pensée. L'OFC remercie les membres de la Commission fédérale d'art pour leur fier engagement en faveur de la création artistique et architecturale contemporaine. Enfin, nous saluons notre héroïne en titre, Meret Oppenheim, qui marque – tant allégoriquement que littéralement – cet ouvrage de son empreinte.

Léa Fluck
Création culturelle, responsable de l'encouragement de l'art

Prefazione

Il Prix Meret Oppenheim, istituito nel 2001 dall'Ufficio federale della cultura in collaborazione con la Commissione federale d'arte, rende onore ad artisti, architetti, curatori, ricercatori e critici che con le loro posizioni fanno risaltare la creazione artistica svizzera negli anni e al di là dei confini.

Giunto alla 18a edizione, che segna il passaggio alla maggiore età, il Gran Premio svizzero d'arte / Prix Meret Oppenheim è assegnato a tre personalità affermate dell'arte e dell'architettura. Ribadendo le raccomandazioni della Commissione, l'Ufficio federale della cultura premia i due artisti Sylvie Fleury e Thomas Hirschhorn e l'architetto Luigi Snozzi. Le interviste pubblicate nel presente volumetto forniscono uno spaccato delle riflessioni, delle evoluzioni e delle esperienze che hanno accompagnato la vincitrice e i vincitori durante la loro carriera. Gli intervistatori di quest'anno sono Samuel Gross, Yasmin Raymond e Stefano Moor.

Che la Commissione abbia proposto una distinzione per Sylvie Fleury non è certo un *miracolo*, ma la prova che la sua è un'opera matura e provocatoria. In un seducente rovesciamento di situazioni, l'artista si è servita dell'industria del lusso nello stesso modo in cui quest'ultima si era inizialmente ispirata al mondo dell'arte. *Yes to Sylvie Fleury*. L'altro Prix Meret Oppenheim che ricompensa un lavoro artistico è assegnato a Thomas Hirschhorn, la cui carriera è iniziata negli anni Ottanta grazie a una svolta felice nel suo orientamento professionale. Un vero colpo di fortuna. La sua produzione artistica monumentale è impegnata, scomoda, incontrollabile, generosa di parole e materiali attraverso i quali si spinge oltre i confini abituali. Luigi Snozzi è architetto e professore emerito di fama internazionale, che per la sua levatura intellettuale è una figura leggendaria nel mondo dell'architettura. Il suo progetto al crocevia tra urbanisti-

ca e architettura a Monte Carasso in Ticino continua a essere un modello di riferimento anche a decenni dalla sua realizzazione. La Commissione ha scelto di premiare Luigi Snozzi per onorare il suo influsso sulle nuove generazioni di architetti.

Esprimiamo la nostra ammirazione e ci congratuliamo vivamente con i vincitori e la vincitrice nella speranza che queste interviste inedite permettano di cogliere la genesi del loro operato e del loro pensiero. L'Ufficio federale della cultura ringrazia i membri della Commissione per il loro qualificato impegno nei confronti dell'arte e dell'architettura contemporanea. E, infine, acclamiamo la nostra eroina titolare Meret Oppenheim che segna, sia metaforicamente sia testualmente, quest'opera con la sua impronta.

Léa Fluck
Produzione culturale, responsabile
Promozione artistica

Foreword

The Prix Meret Oppenheim was established in 2001 by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (FOC) in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Art Commission. It serves to honor artists and architects as well as curators and critics in the fields of art and architecture who lastingly heighten the international profile of Swiss cultural production. With this eighteenth edition, the Swiss Grand Art Award / Prix Meret Oppenheim is coming of age, as it were. It goes to three eminent figures in art and architecture. Upon recommendation of the Federal Art Commission, the FOC honors the two artists Sylvie Fleury and Thomas Hirschhorn as well as the architect Luigi Snozzi. The interviews published in this volume outline the ways of thinking, the approaches, and the experiences of the awardees. The conversations in this year's edition were conducted by Samuel Gross, Yasmin Raymond, and Stefano Moor.

The decision of the commission to honor Sylvie Fleury is not a *miracle*, as it stands testament to the maturity of an irritating oeuvre. In a seductive reversal, the artist has drawn on the luxury industry which had previously drawn inspiration from the world of art. *Yes to Sylvie Fleury*. Another Prix Meret Oppenheim for artistic work goes to Thomas Hirschhorn. Hirschhorn's artistic career began in the 1980s as the result of a fortunate career detour. So much the better. His monumental work is committed, inconvenient, uncontrollable, generous with words and materials, and pushes conventional boundaries. Luigi Snozzi is an architect and internationally renowned professor emeritus and, with his intellectual stature, a legendary figure in the architecture scene. His project straddling urban planning and architecture in the town of Monte Carasso in Ticino still serves as a point of reference decades after its realiza-

tion. The commission awards him the Prix Meret Oppenheim in recognition of his influence on the new generations of architecture.

We would like to express our admiration to the awardees and hope the conversations first published here will adequately illuminate the genesis of their work and thought. The FOC would like to thank the members of the Federal Art Commission for their dedication to contemporary artistic and architectural production. Lastly, we want to acknowledge Meret Oppenheim, the artist after whom the award is named and whose work shapes this edition in ways both literal and figurative.

Léa Fluck
Cultural Production, Head of Art
Promotion

Be Amazing – Be Better

Es ist ein grosses Vergnügen, die Preisträgerin und die Preisträger des Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst / Prix Meret Oppenheim vorstellen zu dürfen: Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn und Luigi Snozzi. Das Vergnügen mischt sich jedoch mit der Schwierigkeit, in wenigen Zeilen die Arbeiten ihrer Karrieren und die riesige Bedeutung ihres weltweiten Einflusses zusammenzufassen.

Diese drei Schweizer Kulturschaffenden können als ideale Zeugen unserer Zeit betrachtet werden. Das seit der letzten Ausgabe des Preises vergangene Jahr war geprägt durch wichtige und dringliche Diskussionen von grundlegender Bedeutung für die Zivilgesellschaft, die auch die Kulturszene beeinflusst haben. Es waren intensive Debatten über die Gleichberechtigung der Geschlechter, über die Bedeutung der Ausbildung, über Diskriminierungen, die zu Gewalt führen, über die Ungleichheiten zwischen den Regionen der Welt, zwischen Männern und Frauen sowie in anderen Bereichen der Gesellschaft. Auf der Suche nach Gründen befassten sich die Diskussionen mit der wirtschaftlichen Ungerechtigkeit, die eher zu- als abnimmt. Heftig diskutiert wurde über die Konflikte zwischen öffentlichen Institutionen und privaten wirtschaftlichen Interessen. Abgeschlossen sind diese Diskussionen natürlich noch lange nicht, aber wir befinden uns in einer Phase der Neuorientierung des ethischen Systems und damit auch der Art und Weise des Austauschs und der Beziehungen von Individuen und Gesellschaft.

Der Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018 zeichnet drei Persönlichkeiten aus, die diese Themen präzise und unverfälscht betrachten. Die Auswahl der Eidgenössischen Kunstkommission erfolgte jedoch nicht aufgrund dieser Diskussionen. Berücksichtigt wurden

in erster Linie die Kriterien der künstlerischen Qualität und der heutigen und zukünftigen Relevanz des Schaffens von Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn und Luigi Snozzi.

«Be Amazing» ist einer der Slogans, die uns in den Sinn kommen, wenn wir an Sylvie Fleury denken. Die Genfer Künstlerin hat diesen Ausspruch mehrmals wiederholt: als Wandmalerei, in Neonschrift oder als einfache Gedenktafel. Fleury schafft es wie sonst kaum jemand, mit grösster Leichtigkeit und Einfachheit die Diskrepanz aufzuzeigen zwischen Realität und Wunsch, zwischen Projektion der Werbung und Grenzen der Existenz. Die Künstlerin verbindet den feministischen Diskurs mit der Ästhetik des Pop und mit einer beissenden Ironie. Dies macht Sylvie Fleurys Schaffen im aktuellen Kontext besonders wichtig, da es auch in einer Welt besteht, die von der Aufmerksamkeitsökonomie besessen ist.

Wer Thomas Hirschhorn persönlich und durch seine immersiven Werke kennenlernen durfte, wird bestätigen, dass das Adjektiv *amazing* genau auf ihn zutrifft. Die Dringlichkeit und Energie des Künstlers und seiner Installationen sind einzigartig und zeugen von einem tiefen und entschlossenen Bedürfnis, die Umwelt mitzugestalten und von der Überzeugung, dass eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der Gegenwart der Antrieb des Fortschritts ist. Hirschhorn stellt die Worte bewusst ins Zentrum seines Schaffens und ist ein unermüdlicher Vermittler und ein hervorragender Botschafter der tragenden Rolle, welche die Kunst im öffentlichen Diskurs annehmen kann – und muss.

Auch Luigi Snozzi hat Auseinandersetzungen nie gefürchtet. Er war sich bewusst, dass die Architektur einen direkten Einfluss von grosser Wichtigkeit auf den Alltag und somit auf die Gesellschaft hat. Die Aussergewöhnlichkeit des Tessiner Architekten drückt sich allerdings nicht nur durch die Präzision seiner Gedanken aus, sondern vor allem in der Fähigkeit, diesen

Diskurs in einer radikalen und unvergleichlichen Ästhetik umzusetzen. Ich bin wenige Kilometer von Monte Carasso entfernt aufgewachsen, der Gemeinde, die dank den städtebaulichen Eingriffen von Luigi Snozzi zum bedeutenden Vorbild für die internationale Architekturszene wurde. Für mich als Tessiner ist es fast schon ergreifend, mich in den Strassen von Monte Carasso zu bewegen und festzustellen, dass eine Vereinigung von Moderne und Tradition, von lokaler Verankerung und Avantgarde hier nicht nur ein theoretisches Konstrukt ist, sondern möglich und real.

Es bleibt uns, Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn und Luigi Snozzi zu danken für ihr grosses Engagement in der Entwicklung und Umsetzung ihrer Werke, deren Potential noch lange nicht ausgeschöpft ist. Es ist eine grosse Ehre, diesen Persönlichkeiten den Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst / Prix Meret Oppenheim zu verleihen. Vor allem aber ist es ein grosses Vergnügen, ihr Schaffen mitzuerleben, dank dem wir uns Fragen stellen, die uns zu einer Auseinandersetzung mit der Realität zwingen und uns zu Verbesserungen anregen.

Giovanni Carmine
Präsident der Eidgenössischen
Kunstkommission

Be Amazing – Be Better

C'est un véritable plaisir de présenter la lauréate et les lauréats de l'édition 2018 du Grand Prix suisse d'art / Prix Meret Oppenheim : Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn et Luigi Snozzi. Un plaisir qui va de pair avec la difficulté de résumer en quelques lignes le travail accompli durant le cours de leur carrière et qui a eu un énorme impact au niveau global.

Il est intéressant de noter que ces acteurs de la scène culturelle et artistique suisse sont de parfaits témoins de notre temps. L'année écoulée depuis la dernière édition du concours a été agitée de discussions fondamentales, importantes et urgentes pour la société civile et, par contre-coup, pour la scène artistique. Le débat sur l'égalité des genres, sur le rôle fondamental de l'éducation, sur les discriminations génératrices de violences, sur les disparités entre le Nord et le Sud, entre les femmes et les hommes et sur les autres inégalités sociales a été intense. Dans sa recherche des causes profondes, le débat s'est étendu sur les injustices économiques qui, loin de disparaître, n'ont fait qu'augmenter. Ainsi, il a été abondamment question des interférences entre intérêts économiques privés et institutions publiques. Ces discussions sont bien entendu loin d'être à leur terme, mais nous nous trouvons certainement dans une phase de redéfinition d'un système éthique commun et de la manière dont les individus et la société doivent agir et interagir.

Le trio lauréat du Grand prix suisse d'art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018 semble refléter d'une manière précise et naturelle le débat évoqué ci-dessus. Il est important de souligner cependant que le choix de la Commission fédérale d'art n'a pas été déterminé par ces discussions. Car ce qui a présidé à la désignation des lauréats, ce sont des critères de qualité artistique et l'importance que les œuvres respectives de Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn et

Luigi Snozzi ont aujourd'hui et auront encore pour les générations à venir.

« Be Amazing » est un des slogans qui retentit dans nos têtes quand nous pensons à Sylvie Fleury, un slogan que l'artiste genevoise a utilisé à de nombreuses reprises, comme peinture murale, écrite au néon ou simple plaquette commémorative. Comme peu d'autres artistes, Sylvie Fleury réussit à montrer avec légèreté et facilité l'écart existant entre la réalité et le désir, entre projection publicitaire et limites existentielles. Il est inutile de rappeler la capacité de l'artiste à conjuguer le discours féministe avec l'esthétique pop, et avec une ironie mordante, ce qui rend son œuvre particulièrement importante dans le contexte actuel, parce qu'elle est capable de s'affirmer même dans un monde obsédé par l'économie de l'attention.

Toute personne ayant eu l'occasion de rencontrer Thomas Hirschhorn, personnellement ou en s'immergeant dans l'une de ses œuvres, sera d'accord pour dire que l'artiste incarne parfaitement l'adjectif *amazing*. L'urgence et l'énergie que dégagent autant l'artiste que ses installations sont uniques et témoignent non seulement d'un besoin profond et opiniâtre de participer à la définition du monde, mais aussi de la conviction que la confrontation critique avec la réalité contemporaine est le cœur et le moteur du progrès. Et c'est pourquoi Hirschhorn, plaçant consciemment la parole au centre de son travail, est aussi un infatigable médiateur et un excellent ambassadeur de l'art qui souligne inlassablement le rôle fondamental que celui-ci peut et doit assumer dans le débat public.

Luigi Snozzi n'a lui aussi jamais craint les luttes dialectiques, conscient qu'il est du fait que l'architecture est une discipline qui a une influence directe et importante sur la vie quotidienne et sur la société civile. Le côté extraordinaire de l'architecte tessinois ne s'exprime pas seulement à travers la précision de sa pensée, mais surtout

dans sa capacité à mettre en accord ce discours avec une esthétique radicale et qui lui est très personnelle. L'auteur de ces lignes a grandi à quelques kilomètres de Monte Carasso, une commune qui, grâce à l'intervention urbanistique de Luigi Snozzi, est devenue un mythe pour la communauté de l'architecture internationale et un exemple à suivre. Au-delà de la rhétorique, il est émouvant pour un Tessinois de parcourir les rues de Monte Carasso et de se rendre compte que le mariage entre modernité et tradition, entre territoire et avant-garde n'est pas qu'une chimère théorique, mais un parcours possible et bien réel.

Il ne nous reste plus qu'à remercier chaleureusement Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn et Luigi Snozzi de l'engagement qu'ils ont mis à développer et réaliser des œuvres dont le potentiel est loin d'être épuisé. C'est un grand honneur d'attribuer à de telles personnalités le Grand Prix suisse d'art / Prix Meret Oppenheim, mais surtout c'est un immense plaisir d'être les contemporains de leurs œuvres, qui nous interrogent et nous forcent à réfléchir à la réalité, et enfin qui nous incitent à poursuivre nos efforts pour devenir meilleurs.

Giovanni Carmine
Président de la Commission fédérale d'art

Be Amazing – Be Better

È un vero piacere poter presentare la vincitrice e i vincitori dell'edizione 2018 del Gran Premio svizzero d'arte / Prix Meret Oppenheim: Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn e Luigi Snozzi. Il piacere si associa però alla difficoltà di riassumere in poche righe il lavoro che hanno sviluppato nel corso della loro carriera e l'enorme impatto che questo ha avuto a livello globale.

È interessante notare come questi attori della scena culturale e artistica svizzera siano dei perfetti testimoni del nostro tempo. L'anno trascorso dall'ultima edizione è stato infatti scosso da discussioni fondamentali – importantissime e urgenti – per la società civile e di riflesso per la scena artistica. Il dibattito sulla parità di genere, sul ruolo fondamentale dell'educazione, sulle discriminazioni generatrici di violenza, sulle ineguaglianze tra Nord e Sud, tra donne e uomini e su altre disparità sociali è stato intenso. Alla ricerca delle motivazioni profonde, il dibattito si è protratto sulle ingiustizie economiche, che, invece di sparire, purtroppo aumentano; così come si è parlato animatamente delle interferenze tra interessi economici privati e istituzioni pubbliche. Queste discussioni sono naturalmente lungi dall'essere concluse, ma certamente siamo nel pieno della ridefinizione di un sistema etico da condividere e in questo senso anche della maniera in cui individui e società devono agire e relazionarsi.

Il trio vincitore del Gran Premio svizzero d'arte / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018 sembra riflettere in maniera precisa e naturale il dibattito citato sopra. È importante sottolineare tuttavia come la scelta della Commissione federale d'arte non sia avvenuta in maniera funzionale a questo dibattito. Nella scelta sono stati applicati anzitutto i criteri della qualità artistica e della rilevanza che l'opera di Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn e Luigi Snozzi ha al giorno d'oggi e avrà anche per le generazioni future.

“Be Amazing” è uno degli slogan che riecheggiano nelle nostre teste quando pensiamo a Sylvie Fleury, uno slogan che l'artista ginevrina ha utilizzato ripetutamente, come pittura murale, scritta al neon o semplice placchetta commemorativa. Come pochi altri, Fleury riesce con estrema leggerezza e facilità a dimostrare la discrepanza tra realtà e desiderio, tra proiezione pubblicitaria e limiti esistenziali. Inutile ricordare la capacità dell'artista di coniugare il discorso femminista con l'estetica pop e con una tagliente ironia, cosa che rende l'opera di Fleury particolarmente importante nel contesto attuale, perché capace di affermarsi anche in mondo ossessionato dall'economia dell'attenzione.

Chiunque abbia avuto l'occasione di incontrare Thomas Hirschhorn – personalmente o tramite una delle sue opere immersive – concorderà che l'artista incarna perfettamente l'aggettivo *amazing*. L'urgenza e l'energia che sprigionano sia l'artista che le sue installazioni sono uniche e dimostrano non solo un profondo e determinato bisogno di partecipare alla definizione del mondo, ma anche la convinzione che il confronto critico con la realtà contemporanea sia il fulcro e il motore del progresso. In questo senso Hirschhorn, mettendo consapevolmente la parola al centro del proprio lavoro, è anche un instancabile mediatore e un eccellente ambasciatore del ruolo fondamentale che l'arte può – e deve – assumere nel dibattito pubblico.

Nemmeno Luigi Snozzi ha mai temuto il confronto dialettico, ben consapevole del fatto che l'architettura è una disciplina che ha un influsso diretto e importante sul quotidiano e quindi sulla società civile. La straordinarietà dell'architetto ticinese non si esprime però solo attraverso la precisione del suo pensiero, ma soprattutto nella capacità di accordare questo discorso con un'estetica radicale e inconfondibile. Chi scrive è cresciuto a pochi chilometri da Monte Carasso, comune

che, grazie all'intervento urbanistico di Luigi Snozzi, è diventato mitico per la comunità architettonica internazionale e un esempio da seguire. Al di là della retorica, per un ticinese è quasi commovente muoversi fra le strade di Monte Carasso e qui rendersi conto che il connubio tra modernismo e tradizione, tra territorio e avanguardia non è solo una chimera teorica, ma un percorso possibile e reale.

Non ci resta quindi che ringraziare sentitamente Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn e Luigi Snozzi per l'impegno profuso nello sviluppo e nella realizzazione delle loro opere, il cui potenziale è lungi dall'essere esaurito. È un grande onore insignire queste personalità del Gran Premio svizzero d'arte / Prix Meret Oppenheim, ma soprattutto è un immenso piacere essere dei contemporanei della loro opera, perché questa ci interroga, ci costringe a riflettere sulla realtà e ci stimola a proseguire nello sforzo di migliorare.

Giovanni Carmine
Presidente della Commissione federale d'arte

Be Amazing—Be Better

It is a great pleasure to introduce the recipients of the Swiss Grand Art Award / Prix Meret Oppenheim: Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Luigi Snozzi. Yet this pleasure comes with the difficulty of outlining their careers and the momentousness of their influence throughout the world in just a few lines.

These three Swiss cultural practitioners may be seen as perfect witnesses of our time. The year that has passed since the last edition of the award has been marked by major and urgent debates on issues of fundamental importance to civil society, debates that have also had an impact on the cultural scene. The issues include gender equality, the importance of education, forms of discrimination that lead to violence, the divides between the various regions of the world, the gender gap between men and women, and inequality in other areas of society. Looking for reasons, the debates focused on economic inequity, which is growing rather than declining. The conflicts between public institutions and private commercial interests have been a subject of intense debate. These debates are, of course, far from finished, but we are now at a point where our system of ethics and, consequently, forms of social exchange and relations are being realigned.

The Swiss Grand Art Award / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018 honors three individuals who consider these issues in precise and unbiased ways. The selection by the Swiss Federal Art Commission was not, however, based on those debates, but instead primarily considered the criteria of artistic quality and contemporary and future relevance of the work of Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Luigi Snozzi.

“Be Amazing” is one of the slogans that comes to mind when thinking of Sylvie Fleury. The Geneva-based artist has used this statement repeatedly: as

wall painting, in neon writing, or as a plain commemorative plaque. Fleury manages like few others to point out with the greatest ease and straightforwardness the discrepancy between reality and desire, between the projection of advertising and the limits of existence. The artist combines feminist discourse with the aesthetic of Pop and scathing irony. This makes Sylvie Fleury’s work particularly relevant in today’s context, as it likewise exists in a world obsessed with striving for attention.

Those who have had the chance to get to know Thomas Hirschhorn in person and through his immersive works will confirm that the epithet «amazing» fits him to a t. The urgency and energy of the artist and his installations are exceptional and bespeak a deep and determined desire to take active part in shaping the world around us as well as a conviction that critical reflection on the present is the motor of progress. Hirschhorn deliberately places words at the center of his work and is an indefatigable champion and outstanding ambassador of the vital role art can, and must, take on in public discourse.

Luigi Snozzi similarly has never shied away from confrontations. He was aware that architecture has a direct and major bearing on everyday life and therefore on society. The singularity of the Ticino-based architect manifests itself in the precision of his ideas, but most of all in his ability to translate this discourse into a radical and incomparable aesthetic. I grew up just a few miles from Monte Carasso, the town that, as a result of Luigi Snozzi’s urbanistic interventions, became an important model for the international architecture scene. Being from Ticino, it was almost moving for me to walk the streets of Monte Carasso and find there that a merging of Modernism and tradition, of local rootedness and avant-garde was not just a theoretical construct, but possible and real.

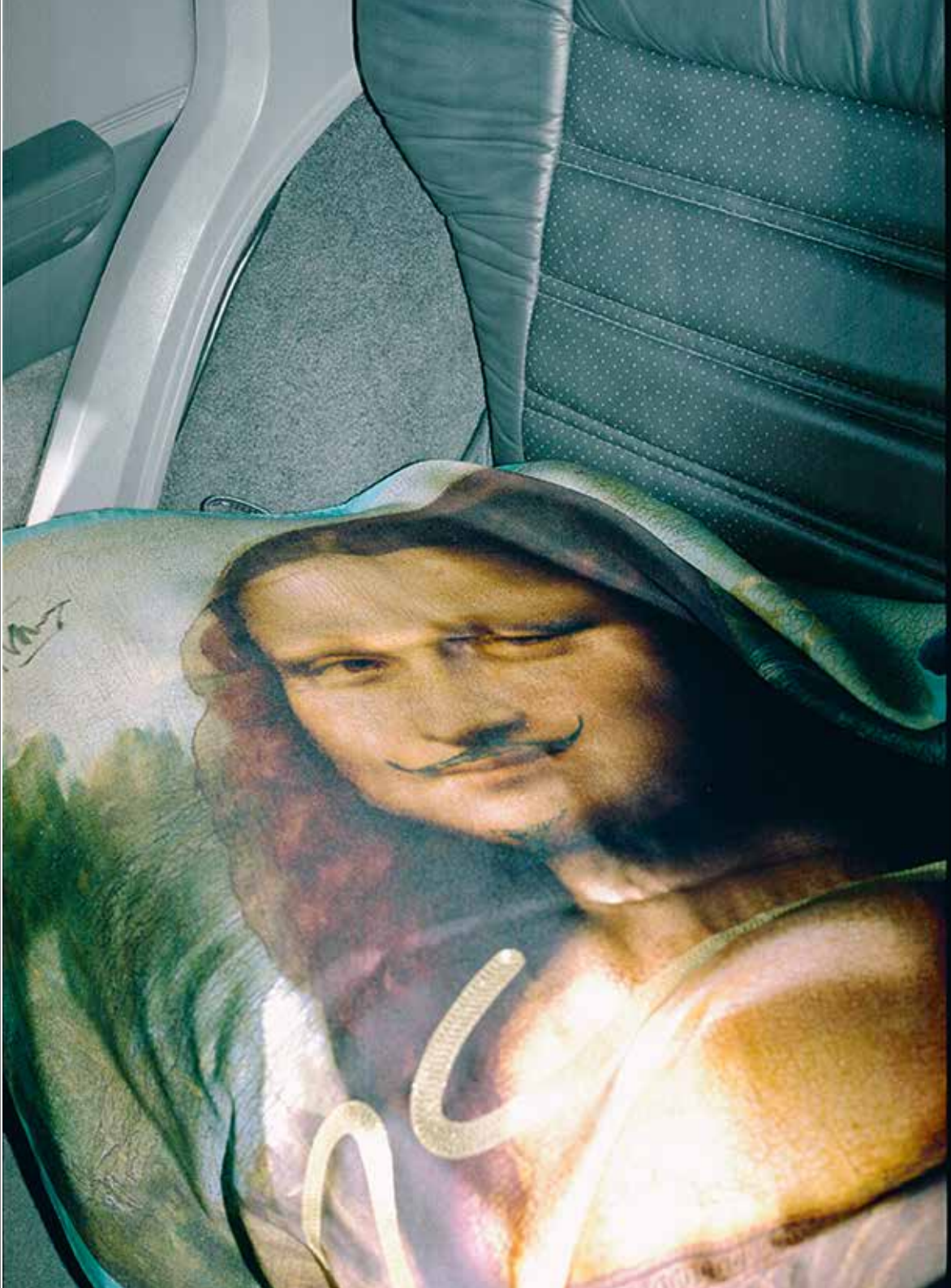
In conclusion, we want to thank Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Luigi Snozzi for their profound involvement in the development and realization of their work whose potential is far from exhausted. It is a great honor to award the Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim to these individuals. But above all it is a great pleasure to experience their work which makes us ask questions, forces us to confront reality, and inspires us to make changes for the better.

Giovanni Carmine
President of the Federal Art
Commission

« X = ... »
Samuel Gross en conversation avec Sylvie Fleury





















Pour Sylvie Fleury, sans aucun doute possible, l'art permet de changer la vie. L'artiste revient avec délicatesse et humour sur cet engagement à ne rien concevoir comme établi et indiscutable. La conversation suivante a eu lieu le 29 janvier 2018 à la villa Magica à Genève.

Samuel Gross

Tu m'as dit une fois : « Faire de l'art c'est customiser la vie. »

Sylvie Fleury

Peut-être que ce pourrait être aussi de mettre de la fourrure sur des tasses. Pour moi, un peu banalement peut-être, la vie consiste principalement à réfléchir à sa propre identité, à en jouer, à la modifier, à la tordre. Ce sont des aspirations que tout le monde connaît.

Meret Oppenheim dans un des carnets de notes de ses cours de maths a écrit l'équation suivante : « $X = \text{un lapin orange}$ ». Ce pourrait être le titre de notre entretien.

SG Effectivement. Et, dans ton équation : « $X = \dots$ » ?

SF $X = \text{un lapin rose}$ ou, mieux, une ambulance avec des flammes. D'après-moi, il y a toujours une métaphore dans la vie qui nous pousse à penser aux voitures. On traverse la vie dans un véhicule spatial qui est notre enveloppe. Donc, les flammes que l'on met sur sa voiture, sont comme les choses que l'on crée pour se différencier les uns des autres.

SG Dans le monde des voitures, comme dans la mode, l'objet de désir est un objet industriel, un objet qui peut être commun à plusieurs personnes.

SF C'est exactement pour cela que le custom est important. On apporte des petites modifications pour s'approprier le monde. L'objet commun à tous est la vie. Le custom est juste une façon de transformer ou de faire empirer ce destin commun. En plus, je pense qu'aujourd'hui il est difficile de prétendre pouvoir entreprendre quoi que ce soit qui ne se rapporte pas à des modèles préexistants. A l'extrême, avec le temps, comme artiste, on doit faire avec des modèles existants dont on réalise qu'ils sont parfois même déjà les nôtres. Comment faire quelque chose qui ne connaîtrait pas de modèle ?

SG Parler du custom est aussi un moyen d'évoquer les nombreuses choses qui ne se voient pas dans tes œuvres, à commencer par les objets qui sont dans les shopping bags. Beaucoup de modifications faites sur les voitures ne sont pas perceptibles de l'extérieur. Et tout le monde ne sait pas que tes installations de shopping bags contiennent des objets choisis qui renvoient à des motifs de l'histoire de l'art, à des icônes. Ce sont des appropriations de modification de modèles iconiques, une encyclopédie de l'art passée par le filtre de la consommation rêveuse. Le surréalisme énonce une définition de l'art comme un objet de désir. Une déformation machiste de cet énoncé l'a rendu ou le rend très discutabile.

SF Meret Oppenheim a joué de ce désir, notamment dans ce buste de 1968 *Robe du soir avec collier soutien-gorge*. Je trouve très belle cette œuvre emplie d'une suggestion sadomasochiste troublante.

SG Sur un autre mode d'appropriation, un certain nombre de tes pièces se proposent de féminiser, avec une certaine nonchalance joyeuse, un faisceau de références. Dans ton travail, tu t'es approprié certains gestes et objets qui renvoient clairement à des formes masculines d'expression du désir artistique. Tu as par exemple détourné, ou en tout cas, discuté le mode sur lequel Carl Andre réduit l'histoire de la sculpture à une horizontalité. Tu as souligné son pré-supposé proprement masculin, qui dirait : « Je vais taper très fort sur toute l'histoire de la sculpture pour la réduire à un socle industriel, un geste primordial amplifié par l'industrie. », en écrasant du make-up sur des installations qui s'inspiraient très nettement de sa sculpture. C'est un processus similaire de féminisation ironique et très aiguë qui te permet d'imaginer faire dégouliner du *slime* pailleté sur des installations murales inspirées de Judd. Mais, cette provocation féminine ne nie pas les éléments de séduction présents dans les œuvres de référence.

SF Dans une même idée, je repense actuellement beaucoup à mes séries de flammes, que j'ai déclinées notamment sous forme de peintures murales. C'est un des attributs les plus directs et classiques du custom. Et c'est vrai que c'est, là aussi, un geste très masculin. On ne voit pas beaucoup de femmes conduisant des voitures flammées, ou de femmes peintres en carrosserie en peindre.

SG Etre une femme artiste c'est encore et toujours devoir prendre à son compte un certain espace du désir ? Et, cette séduction s'énonce avant tout dans un champ masculin ? Pour revenir aux métaphores automobiles, dans ce monde automobile, aussi machiste que le monde de l'art peut l'être, une voiture de femme est simplement une voiture qui ressemble à une voiture de mec, mais avec moins de puissance et de couple.

SF Je repense à une exposition de groupe à laquelle j'ai participé, il y a très longtemps. J'avais fait un *runway* qui obligeait les gens à monter quelques marches, à le parcourir pour traverser la salle. J'avais fait tourner tous les spots, destinés aux œuvres, dans la direction du podium. J'ai d'ailleurs refait cette pièce pour ma rétrospective au MAMCO. Et cela évoque directement ce que tu dis. Au fond, on pourrait voir cet élément comme un Scott Burton, une sculpture minimale phallique. Mais la sculpture s'unit symboliquement avec l'espace, comme le musée avec les visiteurs. L'un ne peut pas exister sans l'autre. Tout est lié, comme les adeptes du *New Age* avaient l'habitude de dire : *We are all one*. J'ai aussi beaucoup joué de ces liens, même sur un registre encore plus décomplexé. J'ai ainsi aussi fait cohabiter des champignons géants dans un univers formel fait de bandes évasées inspirées de Buren. J'ai toujours aimé imaginer que les choses ne font qu'interagir, se répondre, s'emboîter les unes dans les autres.

SG Dans une histoire culturelle plus large, tu as contribué à faire évoluer la mode et les espaces auxquels la mode pensait pouvoir accéder.

SF Je ne pense pas que j'ai été la seule. Mais, pour rire, j'ai parfois l'impression que les gens qui imaginent des vitrines à travers le monde, ont puisé des inspirations dans mon travail. C'est assez troublant pour moi. J'ai la vague impression d'avoir pu créer un vocabulaire qui autorise depuis des ponts formels entre l'art et la mode. Mais c'est un *crossover*. Si, avec d'autres, j'ai contribué à amener la mode dans le champ de l'art, j'ai aussi participé à rendre l'art plus présent dans la mode. De même sur un plan philosophique les notions liées à ces chevauchements m'intéressent beaucoup. Je réfléchis notamment aux miroirs ou à la surface, des éléments liés autant à la définition de l'art qu'à celle de la mode.

SG Je pense que c'est aussi un effet de génération. La mode a contribué à permettre aux artistes de votre génération de jouer de vos identités et d'ouvrir de nouveaux espaces créatifs.

SF Au moment de la mort d'Alaïa, j'ai publié une photographie du vernissage de l'exposition *No man's time* dans lequel j'étais habillée en Alaïa de la tête aux pieds. A cette date, on n'attendait pas d'une artiste qu'elle ose affirmer son goût pour la mode. Peut-être qu'on l'aurait mieux accepté de la muse d'un artiste, mais pas d'une femme artiste. On pourrait, par là, saisir définitivement l'occasion de discuter de ce motif récurrent de la muse que l'on colle aussi sur Meret Oppenheim et tant d'autres femmes artistes. Quelle devrait être cette position féminine prétendument enviable d'accompagner de sa présence la création des autres, des hommes ? Donc, quand je m'habillais en Mugler ou en Alaïa, et que je me coiffais de manière extravagante pour aller à des vernissages au volant de mon énorme Caprice Classic, je trouvais que le système qui tentait de ne jamais révéler rien qui puisse choquer ou présenter de différences était d'une hypocrisie monstrueuse. Il y a toujours eu un fond de morale castratrice dans le milieu de l'art.

Je n'étais, étrangement peut-être, pas très appréciée des féministes. Mon attitude les choquait. On m'a même accusée d'être antiféministe. Les femmes américaines étaient plus ouvertes, elles pensaient mon travail pour énoncer : « This is new feminism. »

Je ne suis pas loin de penser que ces deux réactions m'ont poussée à enfoncer le clou en jouant des limites entre les champs, en donnant à voir des objets qui évoquaient directement la société de consommation. J'ai pu, ainsi, tenter de faire passer le message. Mais, dans un registre parallèle, quand j'ai fait en 1993 la couverture d'*Artforum*, des jeunes gens sont aussi venus me remercier à New York. Ils voyaient en moi une justification libératrice, qui leur permettait de continuer à vivre leur vie dans un espace entre la mode et l'art sans devoir se justifier davantage. Heureusement, peut-être, ces deux questions se posent différemment aujourd'hui.

SG Tu sembles toujours faire la même chose avec la même énergie. Cette énergie est objectivement rattachée au moment que tu vis. Tu as eu le courage de faire diverses séries et pas seulement celles qui t'ont rendues célèbre. Ton travail est bien plus polymorphe que ce à quoi certains ont voulu le réduire.

SF Je pense avoir depuis toujours gardé, et c'est un peu embarrassant à avouer, une sorte de snobisme à vouloir faire les choses différemment. Je n'ai jamais aimé les règles établies et j'ai toujours essayé de m'autoriser à les discuter. Ainsi, par exemple, quand j'avais 20 ans, j'avais une Lada que je voulais transformer en ambulance. J'ai donc tenté de la faire échapper à son destin de break bon marché. Elle a donc subi beaucoup de transformations pour un effet illusionniste. J'ai toujours voulu transformer la réalité, transformer les objets de tous les jours. J'ai toujours eu le désir de faire tout autrement que tout le monde, comme une obsession. C'est peut-être aussi pour cela que la mode m'intéresse. Elle se nourrit de l'air du temps, mais produit aussi des codes que j'ai toujours voulu détourner. C'est cette énergie d'appropriation qui m'amuse. En rentrant à Genève après New York, où j'ai pu aller très jeune étudier dans une école de cinéma, c'était l'hystérie. Je ne pouvais plus voir le monde comme établi. Je voulais tout changer. J'ai ouvert une galerie avec des murs noirs. J'ai exposé du graffiti quand tout le monde trouvait ça indigeste et organisé des fêtes extravagantes. Mais tout cela se passe aussi à un moment où le punk est à la mode. C'était aussi un truc dans l'air du temps. Pour faire un parallèle, pour moi la bague de Meret Oppenheim, cette petite cage qui enferme un carré de sucre est géniale. Lorsque le sucre s'effrite, qu'il disparaît, tu remets un nouveau carré de sucre ou non. J'aime que cet objet évolue et se transforme.

SG Tu penses avoir la même énergie que celle que tu avais à tes débuts ?

SF Non, c'est bien sûr différent. Automatiquement, avec la somme des expériences vécues on voit plus clairement. On se détend aussi un peu. Mais je continue à penser que prendre le contrepied de ce qui est en train de se passer donne de l'énergie. Pour mon travail, il me faut toujours avoir une certaine compréhension du moment. J'aime avoir un survol du temps que l'on traverse ensemble. Quand je dis cela, je pense à avoir une attention au monde un peu légère mais, en même temps, extrêmement curieuse et ouverte, la même que celle qui est la nôtre quand on surfe sur Internet.

SG Les tensions homme – femme sur lesquelles tu jouais dans ton travail sont toujours présentes dans ton esprit ?

SF Je pense qu'elles le sont, mais le format de leur expression est devenu plus nuancé. La somme de tout ce que j'ai fait me donne

une lecture différente de ce que je fais aujourd'hui. J'ai peut-être moins besoin d'être explicite sur certaines choses. Je ne pense pas que la clef de lecture évoquant l'opposition féminin – masculin peut s'appliquer à tous mes travaux. On peut dire qu'une partie de mon travail, surtout à mes débuts, tente vraiment de féminiser des œuvres masculines. Mais, peut-être du fait que le monde de l'art a heureusement quelque peu évolué et que l'on ne peut plus simplement parler de suprématie absolument masculine, ce n'est plus le centre de ma pratique. Mais, si je revoyais une œuvre qui me donnait à repenser ce vis-à-vis dans ce sens, je n'hésiterais pas à m'en saisir. Le temps n'existe pas sur ce sujet. Pour moi aucune des séries d'œuvres qui composent mon corpus n'est close. Je ne crois pas vraiment aux arbres généalogiques qui résumeraient l'évolution d'une pratique artistique. J'ai l'impression que, certes, le temps existe, mais il a peu de prise sur moi. Notre vie est multilatérale.

SG Tu aurais pu rester une personne qui vivait ses rêves dans les espaces qui t'étaient offerts : la mode, le cinéma, la fête. Pourquoi as-tu eu ce désir de produire des objets ?

SF On pourrait dire que j'ai eu envie de changer de rôle et de devenir actrice plutôt que spectatrice, artiste plutôt que muse. Je voulais proposer et énoncer de façon plus claire une certaine vision du monde, de ses tensions, de ses absurdités et contradictions. Je voulais poser sur le monde qui m'était familier un filtre qui révélerait des effets de tension. Lorsque j'allais à New York faire une exposition, j'achetais des magazines à lire dans l'avion. Je regardais ce qui faisait l'actualité de la mode, de la création, du design, de la politique. J'y puisais une idée et l'exposition se construisait autour. Je ne veux pas dire que j'ai trouvé toutes mes idées dans un magazine de mode, mais cela servait de support à ma réflexion. Ce choix délibéré de la forme du geste créatif était pour moi un vrai *statement*. Je voulais mettre en doute le sérieux du milieu, provoquer une réponse à l'art institutionnel, rompre avec des codes de l'époque.

SG Que penses-tu quand tu regardes tes anciennes pièces ?

SF Lorsque je me plonge dans des anciens *shopping bags*, par exemple, j'y vois le moment où ils ont été créés. Ce sont comme des *polaroids* ou des *time capsules*. Pour d'autres pièces la relecture diffère de l'intention originelle. La patine du temps leur a conféré une autre symbolique.

Je regrette parfois d'être la seule qui puisse se souvenir de tout le processus qui est nécessaire à cet aboutissement (l'œuvre en elle-même). Pour moi l'expérience liée aux objets fait intimement partie de l'œuvre.

SG Tu veux parler de ton expérience de performeuse, de ton goût à produire une œuvre d'art totale, parfois déjantée, se jouant même du statut de tes propres œuvres ? C'est vrai que, pour moi, tu es trop souvent réduite à une image de tes objets.

SF En effet, je continue à produire des performances aujourd'hui, en en créant certaines ou en en recontextualisant des anciennes. C'est toujours une joie immense que de travailler avec d'autres artistes comme cela a été le cas lors de ma performance chez Thaddaeus Ropac à Pantin en 2015, une collaboration sonore avec Diemo Schwartz de l'IRCAM pour le son et 5 jeunes comédiennes pour l'action. Mais intimement, il m'apparaît aujourd'hui que la performance est intrinsèquement liée à mon processus de création, de près ou de loin. Que ce soit en écrasant du make-up sur des voitures pour ensuite les photographier, en roulant dans des paysages sublimes pour parfois en faire une vidéo ou en imaginant, à la frontière de la Corée du Nord et du Sud, montrer un escarpin Gucci géant (ce qui s'est finalement réalisé par la suite à Gimpo Park). Dans ce cas, par exemple, au final, les gens ne verront que la sculpture ou une image de cette sculpture. L'expérience précédant toute réalisation de mes pièces fait vraiment pour moi intimement partie de mes œuvres. L'œuvre est une performance en soi. C'est, peut-être, aussi pour cela qu'une de mes premières œuvres s'intitule : « C'est la vie ! ». Le titre même souligne l'importance du processus performatif de toute création. La vie est une performance. Nous sommes uniquement libres de décider un peu de la customisation de nos vies.

SG En même temps, par une série de hasards provoqués ou non, tu as eu l'opportunité d'être à des moments donnés dans des circonstances qui font maintenant partie de l'histoire culturelle récente. Mais, par ailleurs, pour d'autres, tu as aussi provoqué beaucoup de moments particuliers, notamment en enseignant.

SF L'enseignement est peut-être la chose que j'aimais le plus. Seul le système disciplinaire m'est impossible! C'est la partie la plus frustrante de l'enseignement. J'ai enseigné pendant 15 ans. J'adorais

faire des projets avec les étudiants et partager des moments et des visions. J'aimais particulièrement faire des expériences étranges avec eux. Je les ai par exemple amenés faire de la méditation dans une abbaye. C'était très drôle. On se levait à six heures du matin, on suivait les règles monastiques strictes. On était hors de notre cadre familial et cela permettait d'avoir des échanges très enrichissants. C'était comme un jeu. Dans un autre registre, on prenait des cartes. On tirait au hasard et on essayait de faire quelque chose autour de la thématique qu'on croyait lire dans les cartes. J'ai toujours cru être un bon professeur. J'ai d'ailleurs encore un projet, que je n'ai malheureusement pas pu encore réaliser avec des étudiants. Je rêvais de mettre en place un plateau de télévision pour leur montrer, entre autres, qu'ils peuvent s'adresser à une audience bien plus grande que celle à laquelle ils songent. C'est une chose que j'aurais voulu transmettre à des jeunes artistes.

SG Durant ces mêmes années d'enseignement, dans un autre contexte, tu as focalisé autour de toi des critiques très dures, de personnes qui ne supportent pas que l'on puisse prétendre que l'art est un jeu.

SF Au début ça m'a affecté. Beaucoup de mes amis curateurs me rappellent qu'à un certain moment, on ne pouvait pas prononcer le nom de Sylvie Fleury sans essuyer des remarques. Mais ces critiques m'ont aussi peut-être confortée dans l'idée que je faisais quelque chose d'utile. J'avais eu cette conversation avec Pipilotti Rist, lors de son exposition au Centre d'Art à Genève. Je lui avais dit : « C'est fantastique, toutes les critiques sont positives à ton égard. Regarde, c'est vraiment super ! » Et c'était vrai. Alors qu'au même moment à Zurich, pour une de mes expositions, on avait ressorti plein d'histoires liées à mon mariage, à mon ex-boyfriend, à mon boyfriend, à mon obsession pour la mode... J'étais clairement, à cette date, un personnage qui énervait, qui divisait. Elle m'a répondu : « Tu te rends pas compte comme c'est ennuyeux. Je rêve d'une critique dure à mon encontre. » De l'entendre de sa bouche m'a permis de voir les choses différemment. Je n'ai pas vraiment compris, à mes débuts, pourquoi des choses que je montrais, qui me semblaient assez anodines, produisaient une telle levée de boucliers. Et ça me semble toujours étrange. Je pense que j'étais sensible à des choses qui m'agaçaient, des choses qui me gênaient, que je voulais relever. Je me suis confortée dans l'idée que si mon travail irritait autant, c'est qu'il était aussi sûrement perti-

nent. Et finalement, j'aime bien avoir la possibilité de conserver une certaine aptitude à la provocation.

SG Je pense que nous sommes partis d'une situation dans laquelle les espaces de liberté à explorer étaient plutôt liés au monde de l'art pour aboutir à l'actuelle dans laquelle s'il en reste, ceux-ci sont plutôt liés au monde de la mode.

SF On peut en tout cas dire qu'avec le temps, les magazines de mode ont élargi leur manière de présenter les objets et de penser leurs campagnes. Aujourd'hui les magazines sont devenus beaucoup plus créatifs qu'ils ne l'étaient avant. Et l'art a ouvert son champ de vision. Cela s'est fait au prix de devoir heurter pas mal d'idées préconçues, des deux côtés. Il n'en reste pas moins qu'il n'est toujours pas si simple d'être une artiste. C'est sûr que des personnalités précédentes, comme Meret Oppenheim, ont dû ouvrir de nombreuses autres portes. Heureusement, les choses ne sont jamais immobiles. Mais il faut continuer à faire tomber plus de barrières. C'est du boulot et quelqu'un doit le faire !

Sylvie Fleury est née en 1961 à Genève, où elle vit et travaille. Elle est représentée par les galeries Thaddaeus Ropac à Paris et Salzbourg ; Salon 94 à New York ; Mehdi Chouakri à Berlin ; Almine Rech à Bruxelles et Karma International à Zurich.

Elle a présenté son travail dans de nombreuses expositions monographiques dès le début des années 90 dans diverses institutions internationales comme : la Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum à Graz (1993) ; Le Consortium à Dijon (1994) ; le MAMCO à Genève (en 1996 et en 2008) ; le Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst à Zurich (1998) ; le Kunstmuseum de Saint-Gall (2000) ; le Museum für Neue Kunst / ZKM de Karlsruhe (2001) ; le Magasin de Grenoble (2001) ; le CAC de Málaga (2011) ; le Bass Art Museum de Miami (2016) et la Villa Stuck de Munich (2016).

Ses œuvres ont été présentées dans de nombreuses expositions importantes telles que *Aperto* durant la biennale de Venise 1993 et la biennale de São Paulo en 1998. Ses œuvres sont conservées dans de très nombreuses collections publiques telles que : le Museum of Modern Art à New York ; le ZKM Center for Art and Media à Karlsruhe ; Daimler Contemporary à Berlin ; le Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst à Zurich ; le MAMCO à Genève ; le Musée des Arts Appliqués et d'Art Contemporain de Vienne et le Bass Art Museum de Miami.

Principales monographies

Sylvie Fleury, Villa Stuck, Munich, 2016 ; *Sylvie Fleury*, Société des Arts-Genève, JRP|Ringier, Zurich, 2016 ; *Sylvie Fleury*, CAC Málaga, Málaga, 2011 ; *Identity, Pain, Astral Projection*, Les Presses du réel, Dijon, 2001 ; *SF49000*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2001 ; *Ô – Sylvie Fleury*, Artsonje Center Seoul, 2001 ; *Sylvie Fleury*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 1999 ; *First Spaceship on Venus and Other Vehicles*, Lars Müller, Baden, 1998 ; *The Art of Survival*, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum, Graz, 1993.

Samuel Gross est né en 1976. Il vit à Genève et à Rome. Il est le curateur en chef de l'Institut suisse de Rome. Il organise des expositions dans les deux principaux espaces de l'institut (Rome et Milan), enseigne à l'ECAL à Lausanne et mène également des projets indépendants. Il a été l'éditeur de la monographie Sylvie Fleury, parue en 2016 chez JRP|Ringier.

Photographie : Reto Schmid

"X = ..."

Samuel Gross in conversation with Sylvie Fleury

For Sylvie Fleury, there is no doubt, art can change your life. The artist discusses graciously and with humour the commitment not to conceive of anything as established and indisputable. The conversation took place on January 29, 2018 at Villa Magica in Geneva.

Samuel Gross: You said to me once: "Making art is customising life."

Sylvie Fleury: Perhaps it can also be putting fur on cups. For me, a little unoriginally perhaps, life mainly consists of thinking about one's own identity, playing with it, modifying it, twisting it. These are aspirations that everybody knows. In one of her maths notebooks, Meret Oppenheim wrote the following equation: "X = an orange rabbit". That could be the title of our interview.

SG Indeed. And, in your equation: "X = ..."?

SF X = a pink rabbit or, better, an ambulance with flames. I think that there is always a metaphor in life that incites us to think about cars. We traverse life in a spatial vehicle that is our envelope. Thus, the flames that we put on our cars are like the things we create to set ourselves apart from other people.

SG In the world of cars, as in fashion, the object of desire is an industrial object, an object that may be shared by several people.

SF That is exactly why customisation is important. Small modifications are made to appropriate the world. The object common to all is life. The customisation is just a way of transforming or making worse this common destiny.

Furthermore, I think it is difficult today to say that you are able to undertake anything that is unrelated to pre-existent models. In the extreme, with time, as an artist, one has to make do with existing models that we realise are sometimes already our own. How can one make something that knows no model?

SG Talking about customisation is also a way of evoking many things that cannot be seen in your works, beginning with the objects that are in the shopping bags. Many of the modifications made to cars are not perceptible from the outside. And not everybody knows that your installations of shopping bags contain selected objects that refer to the motifs of art history, to icons. These are appropriations of modifications of iconic models, an encyclopaedia of art passed through the filter of escapist consumption. Surrealism formulates a definition of art as an object of desire. A chauvinistic misrepresentation of this statement has rendered it or renders it very debatable.

SF Meret Oppenheim plays on this desire, notably in the 1968 bust *Evening Dress with Bra-Strap Necklace*. I find this work filled with an unsettling sado-masochistic suggestion very beautiful.

SG On another mode of appropriation, a certain number of your pieces set out to feminise, with a certain joyful nonchalance, a stack of references. In your work, you have appropriated certain gestures and objects that clearly refer to masculine forms of the expression of artistic desire. You have, for example, twisted or, in any case, discussed the way Carl Andre reduces the history of sculpture to a horizontality. You have underlined his truly masculine presupposition, which would go—"I'm going to come down hard on the entire history of sculpture to reduce it to an industrial plinth, a primordial gesture developed by industry."—by crushing

make-up on installations that were very clearly inspired by his sculpture. A similar process of ironic and very sharp feminisation that allows you to imagine drip glittery slime over wall installations inspired by Judd. But, this feminine provocation does not deny the elements of seduction present in the works of reference.

SF In the same vein, I'm thinking a lot again about my series of flames, which I produced in particular in the form of murals. It is one of the most direct and classic attributes of customisation. And it's true that it is, once again, a very masculine gesture. You don't see many women driving cars with flames or women automotive paint specialists painting them.

SG Is being a woman artist again and again having to take responsibility for a certain space of desire? And this seduction is expressed above all in a masculine field?
To get back to automobile metaphors, in the automobile world, as male chauvinist as the art world perhaps, a woman's car is simply a car that looks like a man's car but with less power and torque.

SF I'm thinking again about a group exhibition in which I participated, a very long time ago. I had made a runway that obliged people to go up some stairs and walk across it to get to the other side of the room. I had all the spotlights, intended for the works, turned in the direction of the podium (moreover, I remade this piece for my retrospective at MAMCO). And that directly evokes what you are saying. Basically, we could see this element as a Scott Burton, a phallic minimalist sculpture. But the sculpture symbolically unites with the space, like the museum with the visitors. One cannot exist without the other. Everything is connected, like the adepts of New Age had the habit of saying: "We are all one."

I also played a lot with these links, even on an even more unapologetic register. I thus also made giant mushrooms coexist in a formal universe made of tapered stripes inspired by Buren. I've always liked to imagine that things only interact, answer each other, fit into each other.

SG In a wider cultural history, you contributed to the development of fashion and the spaces in which it thought it could access.

SF I don't think I was the only one. But, for a laugh, I sometimes get the impression that the people that design window displays around the world have drawn their inspirations from my work. I find it rather unsettling. I have the vague impression of having been able to create a vocabulary that has since authorised formal bridges between art and fashion. But it's a crossover. While, with others, I contributed to leading fashion into the field of art, I also participated in making art more present in fashion. Likewise, on a philosophical level, I'm very much interested in concepts related to these overlaps. I'm thinking in particular about mirrors or on the surface, elements as connected to the definition of art as to that of fashion.

SG I think that it is also a generational effect. Fashion helped enable the artists of your generation to play on your identities and to open new creative spaces.

SF When Alaïa died, I published a photograph of the opening of the exhibition *No Man's Time* in which I was dressed head to toe in Alaïa. Back then, no one expected an artist to dare assert her taste for fashion. Perhaps it might have been better received from the muse of an artist, but not from a woman artist. That's gives us the opportunity to discuss the recurrent motif of the muse, which Meret Oppenheim and

so many other women artists were also saddled with. What was this supposedly enviable female position of accompanying with one's presence the creation of others, men, supposed to be?
So, when I dressed in Mugler or Alaïa, and extravagantly styled my hair to go to openings driving my huge Caprice Classic, I found that the system that attempted never to reveal anything that could shock or present differences was monstrously hypocritical. There has always been an element of castrating morals in the art milieu. I have never been, strangely perhaps, very appreciated by feminists. My attitude shocked them. I was even accused of being anti-feminist. American women were more open, they thought that my work expressed the same thing as they did when they said: "This is new feminism." I am almost inclined to think that these two reactions drove me to ram the point home by playing with the limits between the fields, by showing objects that directly evoke consumer society. I could thus attempt to get the message across.

But, in a parallel register, when I was on the cover of *Artforum* in 1993, young people came to thank me in New York. They saw in me a liberating justification, that allowed them to continue to live their lives in a space between fashion and art without having to justify themselves further.
Fortunately, perhaps, these two questions are asked differently today.

SG You seem to be always doing the same thing with the same energy. This energy is objectively connected with the moment you are living in. You had the courage to make various series and not only the ones that made you famous. Your work is much more polymorphous than what some people wanted to reduce it to.

SF I think I've always kept, and it's a little embarrassing to admit, a kind of snobbery about wanting to do things

differently. I never liked the rules and I always tried to allow myself to discuss them. Thus, for example, when I was twenty, I had a Lada that I wanted to transform into an ambulance. So I tried to make it escape its destiny as an inexpensive estate car. It has thus undergone a long of transformations for an illusionistic effect. I always wanted to transform reality, transform everyday objects. I always wanted to do everything differently from everybody else, it was an obsession. That is also perhaps why I'm interested in fashion. It is influenced by the spirit of the times, but also produces codes that I've always wanted to change. It's this energy of appropriation that amuses me. After returning to Geneva after New York, where I was able to go at a very young age to study in a film school, it was hysteria. I could no longer see the world as established. I wanted to change everything. I opened a gallery with black walls. I exhibited graffiti when everyone found it indigestible and organised extravagant parties. But all this was also taking place at a time when punk was in fashion. It was also something in the spirit of the times. To draw a parallel, for me it's Meret Oppenheim's ring, the small cage containing a sugar cube is brilliant. When the sugar crumbles away, when it disappears, you put in a new sugar cube or not. I like the fact that this object evolves and changes.

SG Do you think you have the same energy as you did when you were starting out?

SF No, it's different, of course. Automatically, with the sum of lived experiences, we see more clearly. We also relax a little. But I still think that taking the opposite line of what is happening gives energy. For my work, I need a certain understanding of the moment. I like having an overview of the time we spend together. When I say that, I think I have an attention to the world that is a little light but, at the same

time, extremely curious and open, the same as the one we have when we are surfing the Internet.

SG Is the tension between men and women on which you play in your work still present in your mind?

SF I think it is, but the format of its expression has become more nuanced. The sum of all that I have done gives me a different reading of what I am doing now. I perhaps have less of a need to be explicit about certain things. I do not think that the key to interpretation evoking the female-male opposition can be applied to all my works. It could be said that part of my work, especially when I was starting out, really attempted to feminise male works. But, perhaps as a result of the fact that the art world has fortunately evolved a little and that one can no longer simply talk about absolutely male supremacy, it is no longer the centre of my practice. But if I saw again a work that led me to rethink this vis-à-vis in this sense, I would not hesitate to examine it. Time does not exist with regards to this subject. For me, none of the series of works that make up my corpus is closed. I don't really believe in the family trees that sum up the evolution of an artistic practice. I have the impression that, of course, time exists, but it has little hold over me. Our lives are multilateral.

SG You could have remained a person who lived her dreams in the spaces that were given to you: fashion, cinema, parties. Why did you have the desire to produce objects?

SF You could say that I wanted to change roles and became an actor rather than a spectator, an artist rather than a muse. I wanted to propose and express more clearly a certain vision of the world and its tensions, absurdities and contradictions. I wanted to place over the world that was familiar to me

a filter that would reveal the effects of the tensions.

When I went to New York to do exhibitions, I bought magazines to read on the plane. I looked at what was making the headlines in fashion, art, design and politics. I got an idea and the exhibition was built around it. I don't want to say that I found all of my ideas in a fashion magazine, but that served as a basis for my thinking. For me, the deliberate choice of the form of the creative gesture was a real statement. I wanted to call into doubt the seriousness of the milieu, provoke a response from institutional art, break with the codes of the time.

SG What do you think when you see your older pieces?

SF When I immerse myself in the old shopping bags, for example, I see the moment when they were created. They're like Polaroids or time capsules. For other pieces, the rereading differs from the original intention. The patina of time has conferred another symbolism on them. I sometimes regret being the only one who can remember the entire process that was necessary for this result [the work in itself]. For me, the experience linked to the objects is an integral part of the work.

SG Do you want to talk about your experience as a performer, your taste for producing a total work of art, sometimes off the wall, even playing on the status of your own works? For me, you are too often reduced to an image of your objects.

SF I continue to produce performances now, by creating some of them or recontextualising older ones. It's always a great joy to work with other artists as was the case during my performance at Thaddaeus Ropac in Pantin in 2015, a sonic collaboration with Diemo Schwartz of the IRCAM

for the sound and five young actresses for the action. But profoundly, it seems to me now that performance is intrinsically tied to my creative process, directly or indirectly. Whether by crushing make-up on cars to photograph them afterwards, by driving through sublime landscapes sometimes to make of video or by imagining, on the border of North and South Korea, showing a giant Gucci court shoe [which took place in the end at Gimpo Park]. In this case, for example, in the end, people will only see the sculpture or an image of the sculpture. The experience preceding the making of my pieces is really an integral part of my works. The work is a performance in itself. That is also why, perhaps, that one of my first works is called *C'est la vie !* [That's Life!]. The title itself underlines the importance of the performative process of any creation. Life is a performance. We are only free to decide a little about the customisation of our lives.

SG At the same time, by a series of coincidences – provoked or not – you had the opportunity to be at given moments in circumstances that now are part of recent cultural history. But, moreover, for others, you have also brought about many special moments, particularly while teaching.

SF Teaching was perhaps the thing that I liked most. I only the disciplinary system impossible! It's the most frustrating part of teaching. I taught for fifteen years. I loved doing projects with students and sharing moments and visions. I particularly liked doing strange experiments with them. For example, I brought them to an abbey to meditate. It was very funny. We got up at six o'clock in the morning, we followed strict monastic rules. It was outside our familiar surroundings, which allowed for very enriching exchanges. It was like a game. In another register, we picked cards. We picked them at random and tried to do something

around the themes we thought we could read in the cards. I always thought I was a good teacher.

I still have another project, that I unfortunately haven't yet been able to do with the students. I dreamed about set up a television set to show them, among other things, that they could address a much larger audience than they thought. It's something that I would have liked to transmit to young artists.

SG During these teaching years, in another context, you drew criticism that was very harsh from people that would not stand the idea that one could claim that art is a game.

SF In the beginning, that affected me. Many of my curator friends reminded me that at a certain time, one could not say the name Sylvie Fleury without having to endure remarks. But this critic also perhaps confirmed the idea that I was doing something useful. I had this conversation with Pipilotti Rist, during her exhibition at the Centre d'Art in Geneva. I said to her: "It's fantastic, all the critiques about you have been positive. Look, it's really great!" And it was true. While at the same time in Zurich, for one of my exhibitions, lots of stories linked to my marriage, my ex-boyfriend, my boyfriend and my obsession for fashion were trotted out. Then, I was clearly someone who annoyed people, who was divisive. She replied: "You don't realise how boring it is. I dream about getting a bad review." Hearing it from her allowed me to see things differently. I didn't really understand, when I was starting out, why the things that I showed, which I thought were pretty ordinary, caused such an uproar. And it still seems strange to me. I think that I was sensitive to things that annoyed me, things that bothered me, which I wanted to point out. I reassured myself with the idea that is my work was so irritating it was because it was also surely pertinent. And finally, I like having

the possibility of maintaining a certain aptitude for provocation.

SG I think that we started with a situation in which the spaces of freedom to explore were mainly linked to the art world and ended up with a situation in which, if some still remain, they are mainly linked to the world of fashion.

SF We can in any case say that with time, fashion magazines broaden their way of presenting objects and thinking their campaigns. Today, magazines have become much more creative than they were before. Art opened up their field of vision. This happened at the cost of having to go against quite a few preconceived ideas on both sides. Nevertheless, it's still not that simple to be an artist. It's true that past personalities, like Meret Oppenheim, had to open many other doors. Fortunately, things are never immobile. But we must continue to overthrow more barriers. It's hard work and somebody has to do it!

Sylvie Fleury was born in 1961 in Geneva, where she lives and works. She is currently represented by the Thaddeus Ropac galleries in Paris and Salzburg; Salon 94 in New York; Mehdi Chouakri in Berlin; Almine Rech in Brussels and Karma International in Zurich.

She has held solo exhibitions at international art institutions since the early 1990s, including the Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum, Graz (1993); Le Consortium, Dijon (1994); the MAMCO, Geneva (1996 and 2008); Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (1998); Kunstmuseum Sankt Gallen (2000); Museum für Neue Kunst / ZKM, Karlsruhe (2001); Le Magasin, Grenoble (2001); and the CAC Málaga (2011), Bass Art Museum, Miami (2016), Villa Stuck, Munich (2016). She has been included in many group exhibitions worldwide and participated

in *Aperto* at the Venice Biennale in 1993 and the São Paulo Biennale in 1998. Her work is included in public collections such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York; ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe; Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich; MAMCO, Geneva; and the Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, Vienna, Bass Art Museum, Miami.

Selected monographs:

Sylvie Fleury, Villa Stuck, Munich, 2016
Sylvie Fleury, Société des Arts-Genève, JRP / Ringier, Zurich, 2016

Sylvie Fleury, CAC Málaga, Málaga, 2011
Identity, Pain, Astral Projection, Les Presses du réel, Dijon, 2001
SF49000, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2001

Ô - Sylvie Fleury, Artsonje Center, Seoul, 2001

Sylvie Fleury, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 1999

First Spaceship on Venus and Other Vehicles, Lars Müller, Baden, 1998

The Art of Survival, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum, Graz, 1993

Samuel Gross was born in 1976. He lives in Geneva and Rome. He is the chief curator of the Istituto Svizzero di Roma. He organises exhibitions in the two main spaces of the institute (Rome and Milan), teaches at the ECAL in Lausanne, and carries out independent projects. He edited the monograph on Sylvie Fleury published by JRP|Ringier in 2016.

Photographs: Reto Schmid

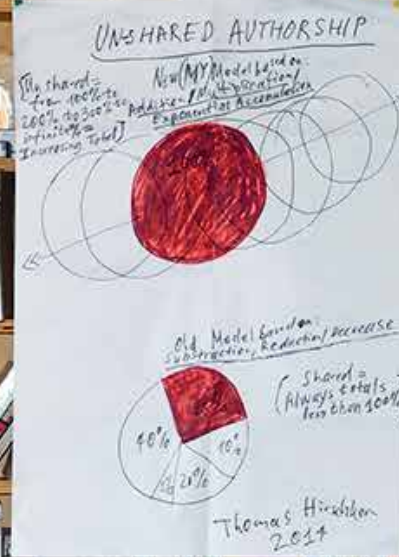
“Art, Art and Self”

Yasmil Raymond in conversation with Thomas Hirschhorn



泥豬瓦狗皆自寶

雲月風花盡由天



THOMAS HIRSCHHORN
"RE"

ANNÉES DE GUERRE

Clairalfa







SPECTRE D'ÉVALUATION
- DIRECTEUR
- D'INSTITUTION
- CRITIQUE D'ART
- COMMISSAIRE D'EXPOSITION
- GALLERISTE
- HISTORIEN D'ART
- COLLECTIONNEUR
- PROFESSEUR

EVAL







HUSSEIN - VOTE

GYM

TUNING - CONCEPT CAR

[PRESSES]: News Time Poesy / TRAVAIL / JOIE / BOURSE /

FEUX - TRDIS - BOIS DETOURNE
GUERRE / CATASTROPHE / RVINES

ATTENTATS .. 1 M SEPTEMBRE
HOMMES ARMES / SOLDATS # TERRORISTE
CA MOUFLAGE

MONUMENT

AUTEL

MANIFESTATION BANNERS

MORTS

PRISONNIERS - BLESSES - MORTS





My first experience of Thomas Hirschhorn's work was *Swiss Army Knife* (1998); in the spring of 1999, it was on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. I was about to complete my undergraduate degree in art and immediately understood that everything I had been taught was obsolete. Hirschhorn constructs his work quickly using common materials that have become his signature: packaging cardboard, plywood, brown packing tape, magazine cutouts, cellophane wrap, and gold and silver foil. The earnestness in his work can be destabilizing, the abundance and density of materials overwhelming. And yet, all the excessiveness is never gratuitous or precious. Hirschhorn's work challenges intellectual snobbery with its furious clarity. "To make art politically," Hirschhorn said early on, "means to choose materials that do not intimidate, a format that doesn't dominate, a device that does not seduce. To make art politically is not to submit to an ideology or to denounce the system It is to work with the fullest energy against the principle of 'quality'." I followed Hirschhorn's work for two decades, traveling to dozens of cities, including Amsterdam, Berlin, London, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Minneapolis, Montreal, New York, Paris, Pittsburg, São Paulo, and Saint Petersburg. In 2013, I held the title of Ambassador to his outdoor project *Gramsci Monument*, which was commissioned by Dia Art Foundation and located at Forest Houses in the South Bronx. The following interview took place through an exchange of emails early this year.

Yasmil Raymond

Where are you with your work today? What are some of the problems you are grappling with?

Thomas Hirschhorn

I still have so much to do—I am not complaining because I am very happy to have so many projects to do for exhibitions. I still have much to assert and many ideas to give form to. I do challenging work and doing it is truly a never-ending fight. My problem with each work is: how can I take a position? How can I give form to this position? And how can this form create a truth—a universal truth—beyond aesthetic, political, economic conventions? My problem with my work in public space is how to provide an answer to the question "why non-permanency persists?" How to give a form to the logic of "non-permanency"? And how do the conditions for its precarious persistence take form in absolute necessity and urgency, as opposed to a form of "ephemeral logic" related to objects and death. My

problem is: how can my work—and all works of art—resist the many safety and security restrictions that have increased tremendously in museums, galleries, art spaces as well as in public space?

YR The commodity dilemma?

TH Today, I have to confront the hyper-power of security and safety and struggle for my own logic and for the form of my work at almost every occasion to exhibit it. It has even reached the point that security and safety rules tend to influence the form and the aesthetics of works of art. I sometimes ask myself whether the cleanliness and space suitability of some artworks aren't what they are just because they comply with all the security and safety regulations. My problem is, furthermore, to do a work—in public space or in a gallery, museum or art space—that resists historical facts. How can I do a work that transcends history? And how can I do a work—today, in our reality—that is a-historical? As always, I need grace, and grace, in art, comes from the strength and courage needed to create something despite its precarity, despite the precarity of all things, including of life itself. And my challenge as an artist is to give a form of my own, to affirm this form, but also to assert my own terms in art, to work within the coherence of my very own terms.

YR For several years now you have been using found images depicting the violent death of anonymous civilians and soldiers in countries at war. More recently, in the series *Pixel-Collage* (2015–17), you juxtaposed these found images alongside advertisements from women's fashion magazines that you blur with handmade pixels made from cut-out papers. Your work responds to this dichotomy between the arbitrariness of war and the consciousness of wealth. What about this opposition interests you?

TH Yes, there is a relationship, a relationship between everything, really everything that is part of the world, of our world, our unique and only world. To assert and give this a form is fundamental. I am convinced that the collage is a powerful, universal form for asserting this. Doing collages means using existing elements of this world to create a new world. It is fun to make a collage but it is also considered too simple, too fast, not respectable enough or immature. Everyone has made a collage at least once. Collages possess the power to involve the Other immediately. I like this capacity of non-exclusion and I like the fact that collages tend to be seen with suspicion and not

taken seriously. Collages still resist consumption, even if they, like everything else, must fight glamor and fashion. In doing collages I want to put together what cannot be put together. I think that's the aim of a collage and my mission as artist. I want to put the whole world into my collages; I want to express the complexity and contradiction of the world in one single collage. Not the world as a whole but a fragmented world, the world that I am living in. I want to reach, to touch history beyond the historical fact.

YR Do you see a fundamental relationship between war and wealth?

TH The question is always: what is my position? I want to confront the chaos, the incomprehensibility and the unclarity of the world, not by bringing peace or quietness, not by working in a chaotic way, but by working in the chaos and in the unclarity of the world. I want to do something that is charged and that, in its density, attains beauty. I want to work out of urgency; I want to do too much. The images that I use in a collage are an attempt to confront the violence of the world and my own violence. I am part of the world and all the violence of the world is my own violence, all the wounds of the world are my own wounds. All the hate is my own hate. I love Dada and the collages of the Dadaists; I love the beautiful collages of Hannah Höch and the grand *Plasto-Dio-Dada-Drama* by Johannes Baader. I love John Heartfield and his work. He said "Use photography as a weapon!" I love to do collages, a collage is resistant; it escapes control, even the control of the one who created it. Making a collage always has to do with headlessness. There is no other means of expression with such great explosive power. A collage is charged and always remains explosive. I often stand dumbstruck before it, and as an artist, in particular, it is a matter of enduring this "looking dumb".

YR In one of the reviews of your inaugural exhibition of the *Pixel-Collage* series at Galerie Chantal Crousel in 2015, a critic qualified as "troubling" the pairing of corpses and the abstract effect of the pixels. You are one of a very small number of artists who have been addressing the grief and disastrous reality that has defined the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings living in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. What is not that troubling?

TH I don't know, because I can't speak for the Other. As far as I am concerned, I need to be courageous, I need to act in headlessness,

I need not remain disobedient, I need to be precise, I need to act with generosity, I need to work with love. Since the beginning of my work, I have always wanted to attain the complexity, the beauty, the violence, the inseparable world, my world, our world. I always wanted to glue together, in a collage, the beauty and the violence of the world I am living in. I remember that at one of my first exhibitions at Shedhalle Zürich someone from the “art world” asked me if I couldn’t do a work leaving out those images of destroyed human bodies, death and destruction, adding that, maybe, it would be more successful? That’s when I realized once again, as I have been ever since the beginning of my work, that as an artist you need to do what you think should be done, what only you think should be done, and what only you think needs to be done. I try to stay true to this.

YR In another body of work you have taken up the topic of the ruin. For the large sculpture *In-Between* (2015), for example, you built a collapsing building inside the South London Gallery in London. Where did this work start?

TH It started with a wonderful quote from Antonio Gramsci: “Destruction is difficult. It is as difficult as creation.” In its logic, clarity and incommensurability this assertion by Antonio Gramsci points to a dynamic, a movement. I see it as the in-between status of a journey or trajectory. To me, this quote is about the difficulty of positioning oneself in the midst of the moving world, and about not separating, or creating an opposition, between “creation” and “destruction”. Implied in Gramsci’s quote is the non-corruptible and non-negotiable will to survive—and this is the site of “precariousness”.

YR Gramsci wrote this in prison during the rise of fascism in Europe.

TH Antonio Gramsci’s quote expresses the contradictions of our world today and the difficulty of confronting its reality. I love this quote for its simplicity and complexity. The challenge of confronting the world’s reality lies between “creation” and “destruction”. My work *In-Between* is the affirmation of a precarious dimension, the dimension of the non-guaranteed, the non-dimension of the abyss with its uncertainty. To create destruction is an aesthetic challenge; this is why the aesthetic of *In-Between* borrows from pictures of destruction—destruction by violence, by war, by accident, by nature, by structural failures, by corruption, by fatality. I have developed an

artistic assertion with this aesthetic in several projects: *Concordia*, *Concordia* (2012), *Break-Through* (2013) *Abschlag and Höhere Gewalt* (both 2014), and *Nachwirkung* (2015). Following Gramsci’s quote, the assertion is: To give form to destruction is difficult, to give form to ruin is the problem and to give form to disaster is the aesthetic challenge. Creating destruction is difficult for me as an artist because it means that removing things, destroying things, demolishing things starts in the mind as an “idea”, as the work’s guideline, as the artistic logic. It is to understand—not in a literal sense, of course, but in terms of an artistic gesture that is able to change everything.

YR I think of your work of the past decade, starting with the 2006 exhibition *Superficial Engagement*, as being symbolically charged with rage but also with uninhibited hope in art. This was tangible in a later work, the video *Touching Reality* (2012), which Okwui Enwezor included in *Intense Proximity* (the 2012 Paris Triennial). I remember following with my eyes each movement of the hand that was recorded scrolling through an iPad with dozen of images of corpses, trusting those fingers leading me through tremendous depictions of pain and sorrow. Do you believe in a healing dimension of the experience of art?

TH Yes, there is definitely this dimension in the experience of art. I want to try to be precise here: I understand the healing power of art in the experience of art, in the dialogue with art or in the confrontation with art as an action. Art is not medication that can be used passively and art is certainly not medication you can buy. Art is a tool or a weapon to confront today’s reality, the time we are living in and the world we are part of. If I use the tool of art actively, and if I am ready to engage in the experience of art, then art can cast a new light on reality and can then change the world. Art can do this because, as art, it possesses the power of transformation, the transformation of every human being. Being art, art is autonomous. Autonomy is what gives the artwork its beauty and its absoluteness. Also, being art, art is resistance. Art resists facts, political, aesthetical, cultural habits. Being resistance, art is positiveness, movement, intensity, belief, and healing.

YR MIT Press recently published an anthology of your writings titled *Critical Laboratory*. In the past two years, in your presentations of the series *Pixel-Collage* (2015–17), you included vitrines with

“step-by-step” examples of your method for making collages, source materials and references that have inspired your decisions. What drives this decision to make available your process and sources?

TH The point is to say: “You, too, you can think like this!” Therefore I called these vitrines *Showcase for Thoughts*. There are three reasons why I do them. First of all, the medium of the vitrine is part of the medium of the exhibition; I want to pay tribute to this. I noticed that looking into a vitrine creates a kind of will to intimacy, a will to care or pay attention, which I find beautiful. I find it beautiful because it’s a resistance to consumption. A vitrine is an invitation to spend time, to learn more, to get more. I also think it’s a resistance to comments because it often opens up towards the horizon of complexity—with the elements displayed in the vitrine. I also use the vitrine as a horizontal proposition complementary to the vertical hanging of *Pixel-Collage* and other works. I always try to give the vitrine its own surrounding space to make it exist as such. I use the vitrine *Showcase for Thoughts*—my thoughts but also thoughts for the Other—in order to create a space for the beyond, for a possible connection or a non-possible link.

YR To encourage proximity?

TH I want to offer a space for “thinking” differently, a space to lay out my own thinking, my clarification, my writing, my position. The *Showcase for Thoughts* is in no way an introduction to, or an explanation of, my work: it’s an extension of my thoughts as an artist. Earlier, you referred to some comment describing this as “troubling”—fair enough, but not really interesting because the *Showcase for Thoughts*, on the contrary, wants to underline that art, that a work of art, that my work, constitutes a “critical corpus”. That is, with, and in, the *Showcase for Thoughts* I want to create a place and time—because you need to spend time reading and looking into the vitrine—for ideas that interest me, notions that matter to me and concepts I consider important.

YR One of the most liberating aspects of your work for me is the abundance of materials and written language you offer to the spectator. Your work often includes your statements, printouts of texts written and books by your favorite authors for us to read and reference. What is the origin of this decision?

TH It is “doing too much, so that things don’t lie”. The strategy of overwhelming with information is the strategy of having to understand that everything is important, nothing is unimportant, nothing is less important. The effort of consumption tries to teach us that less is more, but I believe that “less is less and more is more”. And my idea is to refuse rarefaction and the distinction of things as outstanding in order to lend them importance. I want, on the contrary, to overwhelm, to do too much, too tightly, too densely, too charged, in order to generate veraciousness and alertness. I love to use printed material, I love books because I need them for my work and I need them to live. Books are a necessity. I don’t need books to create my work, but I am open for encounters of concepts and forms between art and philosophy, literature, poetry. Books encourage me and help me. A book never disappoints me.

YR Right, and this relates to your love of philosophy?

TH Philosophers are sculpting concepts with words as powerful tools to create new terms in philosophy. As an artist I, too, invent my own terms with regard to my work. And by insisting on my own terms I can clarify my position. For example, I came up with the concept of “unshared authorship”. “Unshared authorship” is a statement, an assertion; “unshared” stands for clearness, for a decision, for the “non-exclusive”, for the opening toward co-existence. “Unshared” means accepting complexity and implies multiplication. “Unshared responsibility” allows taking responsibility for what I am not responsible for. Furthermore, “unshared authorship” allows authorship even when I am not the “author”—this is essential, this is what’s new.

YR It has been over thirty years since you have been exhibiting your work. Could you talk a bit about your background? What were some big influences early on in your life? When you moved to Paris in 1983, you worked for a year or so in the design collective Grapus. What were some important lessons you learned there?

TH I do not know why this myth persists but your question gives me the opportunity to clarify once again that I never worked at the Grapus studio, because I left after half a day. It’s true that I wanted to work with them—I wanted to work on an equal level, but they simply did not want me! They, of course, offered that I be one of their “executing hands”—which I refused. And such a failure, having just arrived from Switzerland after finishing my studies at the

Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich, cannot be turned into anything other than what it actually was: my own failure! I loved the work of Grapus and my dream was to be part of their collective, which, by the way, was the reason I moved to Paris. Their refusal to accept me as one of them, meaning as one of the artistic deciders in their collective, taught me a lot. I was quite isolated, without connections or resources in Paris, refusing to go back home, and had to struggle with what was the central issue for me: How to engage with the world, with the time and with reality through my own work, my own vision, my own utopia? For about a decade I tried to find my own way staying true to what I always loved to do: collages. Consequently, my initial failure of not integrating into the Grapus Collective was the most important learning process.

YR A springboard?

TH As someone who wanted to do graphic design “coming from myself”, as I described it at the time, it was the cruel understanding that graphic design is not possible without a commission. I had to emancipate from the limitation, or self-limitation, of my understanding of “graphic design”. Art opened up a welcoming field for confronting my ideas and my will to give form. Art opened up a new dimension: the history of art. Art pushed me to ask myself the critical and crucial questions: what work of art can I do? What work of art should I do? What work of art makes sense to me? And therefore: what work is to be done?

YR You have dedicated your work to artists and authors you admire such as Raymond Carver, Robert Walser, Ingeborg Bachmann, Emmanuel Bove, Meret Oppenheim, Fernand Léger, Lyubov Popova and Otto Freundlich. You have also dedicated monuments to Baruch Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, Georges Bataille and Antonio Gramsci. I am drawn to your insistence to remember and celebrate their work and legacy. Could you talk about this aspect of your work and what drives you to honor them?

TH I wanted to pay tribute to these artists, writers, poets and philosophers, because they are the ones who changed the world. Through their work and life, they cast a new light on the world and asserted their way to engage with the world. They touch the reality of our time with hope and engagement. I wanted to point this out by giving form to it. The other important thing is that my tribute to all

these women and men to whom I dedicated an altar, a kiosk, a map, a monument, a sculpture or a festival is always a decision of my own. I decided to do it because I am a fan. I am definitely a fan of Robert Walser, Meret Oppenheim, Hannah Arendt, Gilles Deleuze and all the others. It is important to act—and for me as an artist, to give form—as a fan. No one can commission a homage, no one can ask me to pay tribute to someone I don’t admire. Being a fan carries some sort of resistance within itself. Being a fan allows using absolute thinking. I want to confront myself with pure thinking. Politics are not pure. I want to confront thoughts which provoke the activity of thinking, the activity of my own thinking.

YR In addition to making art, what else provokes your thinking?

TH Pure philosophy can do this. I love Spinoza and Deleuze for that. Philosophy is interesting because it is not politically oriented even though it may incorporate politics. In this sense it is not just non-political but trans-political. This means it is a way to think the political without being political or becoming political. The conflict between the political and philosophy is irreducible, but there is no conflict between art and philosophy. A philosophical notion such as the Multitude in (Hardt and Negri’s) “Empire” cannot be fulfilled by any historical fact. There is an irreducible gap between the fact and the notion. The scene of philosophy is not on the side of facts, nor is it on the side of opinions. It lies in this absolute distance, this absolute conflict, it is the abyss between the two dimensions. Both philosophy and art are contentious. It is like a war of sorts. Philosophers and artists are warriors, not politicians. As an artist I can, and must, go to war for my work, for my form, for my understanding of art. Doing this is a mission as well as a pleasure. And I do it in the awareness that I am not, and never was, alone in doing it.

YR Can we circle back to your love of Meret Oppenheim? I find her fur-covered cup, saucer, and spoon [*Object*, Paris, 1936] immensely powerful and wildly subversive. What about her work moves you?

TH Loving someone does not need an explanation, but I will try to provide one for you—and for me—regardless, because the notion of love, the love of art, for art and in art, is important. I must be categorically “in favor of” the artist that I love—such decidedness is really

important to me. Hence, there are artists that I have loved for a long time, Meret Oppenheim being one of them. To love an artist means to love everything, even the smallest works, and it means to love everything in his or her life. It's not about criticizing. It's about saying "yes!", saying "yes" to everything. It's about not distancing yourself and about not neutralizing. That's what love means in art. That's what matters and that's what helps me. A breakthrough can only happen if there is an absolute decision "in favor of" a work and the artist. This breakthrough that art can generate, it happens when something new, a new form, a new concept is created. It's only and always about this breakthrough and Meret Oppenheim achieved it with each one of her works, from the most famous ones, such as *Le Déjeuner en fourrure*, to those least known. This is why I love her. I love her for the "fur cup" as much as for everything she did before and after that. My decision "in favor of" her wasn't because of the "fur cup" or despite the "fur cup", but rather thanks to the "fur cup", and thanks to every other work as well. Loving someone serves to cut short the "art historical discussion", which doesn't address wholeness. The wholeness of a work of art, the wholeness of being an artist is what matters. Everything is important. Nothing is unimportant and everything has its own significance, and no one can tell me what should be important, or less so, in art! Therefore, a love for someone—my love for Meret Oppenheim—is not to be discussed.

YR The "fur cup" is a fascinating work, André Breton called it *Le Déjeuner en fourrure (The Luncheon in Fur)* but Oppenheim called it simply *Object*. It is simultaneously alluring and disturbing, exciting and eerie. What do you recognize in this work?

TH The "fur cup" is a good example of how a specific artwork is not helped by being isolated for the purpose of developing some theory, because this work is, as much as really anything Meret Oppenheim made, a wonderful piece of art. I love Meret Oppenheim because in her work form is given to what matters in art: being free with what comes from within you. This seemingly simple, seemingly easily reached goal—by means of form—is the great challenge in art. Meret Oppenheim achieved it with each of her works. I look at her work and can always see the moment of breakthrough: when one's own self becomes universal. The universal is what matters in art, and you can only touch the universal—truth is another word for it—with what comes from within you. Each and every work by Meret Oppenheim proves this. Each of her works is a statement, a pure statement!

Meret Oppenheim has shown that it's about one's own self and not about the personal! It's about one's own self and not about "circumstances"! It's about one's own self and not about the "social"! It's about one's own self and not about "identity"! It's about one's own self and not about "tradition"! It's about one's own self and not about "culture". I see this in every work by her, and this clarity makes me happy, especially nowadays with regard to the debate about "identity" and the never-ending apolitical "context" discourse. Meret Oppenheim has shown in her work where the true struggle lies: on the boundless field of freedom. Freedom with yourself! Meret Oppenheim struggles with her own claim to freedom. I see this in her works, in each one of them. In her work and in her carnets she is in a state of conflict with her dream of freedom.

YR What do you mean by that?

TH She describes a dream in her book *Poèmes et carnets* that's about how her own patriarchal attitude attempts to devalue, to kill, her feminine side and how she (as always) failed to encourage or support her masculine side so as to ultimately create something new and whole. I love her openness, her strictness and the significance of it, the significance of something being created. Meret Oppenheim is never sentimental and never narcissistic. Her work is always an act of emancipation, of self-determination, and this is why it is marked by precision and truth. Many terms come to mind when I think about her: ethics, beauty, intensity, conflict, strictness, dignity, certainty, hope. All these are terms that I love and they are all positive terms. I love Meret Oppenheim for her resistance. Every one of her works is resistant: resistant in itself. That is an important model for me; Meret Oppenheim demonstrates it in each of her works. A case in point is *Brunnen (Fountain)* (1983) on Waisenhausplatz in Bern. I believe that this work is one of the very best works of "public art". I don't know any other work that so miraculously manages to address the question of form anew each day. The question of whether it makes sense to give nature—including people and their "acts"—form at all? Meret Oppenheim made a statement with this piece of work that withstands and augments the question with irony, humor and grace. She was truly touched by grace. I love Meret Oppenheim for all of this as well as for what I don't know. What is exceptional about Meret Oppenheim, is that there are thousands of "reasons" to love her and that only few are loved like that. Could it perhaps be the privilege of those who were fully aware that they loved more than they were loved?

YR To date, you have made nearly 70 works in public space. You have written about your interest in exhibiting outdoors as a way to reach audiences that not necessarily visit galleries or can afford the admission ticket of a museum. What has your experience of building your work in public spaces contributed to the work you make in your studio?

TH Every experience in art contributes to my will and my effort to fulfill my mission as artist. Besides the incredible fun and hyper-complexity which I encounter in doing it, working in public space has always pointed to the question of audience in a beautiful and cruel way. My experience with work in public space and the notion of public space tells me that it is possible to touch—that is to say, create—a “non-exclusive public”, whether in a neighborhood in the urban periphery, in a museum or on a street in the center of a city. The non-exclusive public always constitutes the essential public to conquer and reconquer. I learned how important it is to aim my work at the “non-exclusive audience”, which is the Other, the stranger, the one I don’t know, the one not interested in art, the one struggling with other problems. In public space this is the majority, as opposed to in the museum, gallery or art space.

YR Meaning that there is a difference?

TH The audience in public space and art institutions is the same—it is merely a difference of proportion, of majority and minority. And the point is to never exclude anyone. Therefore, you really need to be in contact with the “non-exclusive audience”, because that’s the hard-core audience. You learn that notions such as equality, justice, truth or universality really do make sense. The “inflight” and the confrontation of my work in public space taught me to make sure not to exclude anybody even in a museum, gallery or art space. To include every human being, one by one, is the lesson I try to take away from public space and carry over into the museum: non-exclusion through the choice of materials, through the choice of light, through the dimensions, through the work that is done and the way it is done. I learned from working in public space as well as in institutions that non-intimidating work which refuses to play the added-value game can make sense because it is based on non-exclusion.

Thomas Hirschhorn graduated from the Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich in 1983. In addition to numerous group exhibitions, solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at the Art Institute of Chicago and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (1998); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2001); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston and the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2005); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2008); The Power Plant, Toronto (2011); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014); and the South London Gallery (2015). Hirschhorn’s work was included in documenta 11 (2002), the 27th São Paulo Biennial (2006) and the 55th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2008). He is the recipient of numerous awards and prizes, including the Preis für Junge Schweizer Kunst (1999), Marcel Duchamp Prize (2000), Rolandpreis für Kunst im öffentlichen Raum (2003), Joseph Beuys Prize (2004), and Kurt Schwitters Prize (2011). He has exhibited nearly 70 works in public spaces. Hirschhorn represented Switzerland at the Biennale di Venezia in 2011. He has been living and working in Paris since 1983.

Yasmil Raymond is Associate Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. From 2009 to 2015, she served as the curator of Dia Art Foundation. Prior to that, she was associate curator at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Her exhibitions include, among others: *Allora & Calzadilla: Puerto Rican Light* (co-curated with Manuel Cirauqui); *Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958-2010* (co-curated with Philippe Vergne); *Thomas Hirschhorn: Gramsci Monument*; *Jean-Luc Moulène: Opus + One*; and *Koo Jeong A: Constellation Congress*. Ms. Raymond has been a senior critic at the Graduate Fine Arts Program at the University of Pennsylvania since 2009.

Photographs: Jiajia Zhang

«Art, Art and Self»
Yasmil Raymond im Gespräch
mit Thomas Hirschhorn
übersetzt aus dem Englischen

Erstmals mit der Kunst Thomas Hirschhorns in Berührung kam ich im Frühjahr 1999, als ich im Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago *Swiss Army Knife* (1998) sah. Ich stand damals kurz vor dem Abschluss meines Bachelors in Kunstgeschichte und begriff sofort, dass alles, was man mich bis dahin gelehrt hatte, überholt war. Hirschhorn gestaltet seine Arbeiten zügig und verwendet alltägliche Materialien, die zu seinem Markenzeichen geworden sind: Karton, Sperrholz, braunes Paketklebeband, Ausschnitte aus Magazinen sowie Plastik-, Gold- und Silberfolie. Der seiner Arbeit innewohnende Ernst kann destabilisierend und die Fülle und Dichte der Materialien überwältigend wirken. Dennoch ist die ganze Maßlosigkeit nie willkürlich oder preziös. Hirschhorns Werk geht mit seiner wilden Klarheit gegen intellektuellen Snobismus an. «Kunst politisch zu machen bedeutet, Materialien zu wählen, die nicht einschüchtern, ein Format, das nicht dominiert, eine Anordnung, die nicht verführt. Kunst politisch zu machen bedeutet, sich nicht einer Ideologie zu unterwerfen oder das System zu denunzieren. ... Es bedeutet, mit aller Energie gegen das Prinzip der «Qualität» anzuarbeiten.» Ich habe Hirschhorns Arbeit zwei Jahrzehnte lang verfolgt und bin zu diesem Zweck in Dutzende Städte gereist, darunter Amsterdam, Berlin, London, Mexico-Stadt, Minnesota, Montreal, New York, Paris, Pittsburgh, Sao Paolo und St. Petersburg. Im Jahr 2013 war ich «Ambassador» von Hirschhorns Projekt *Gramsci Monument*, einer von der Dia Art Foundation in Auftrag gegebenen Arbeit im öffentlichen Raum, die in der Wohnanlage Forest Houses in der Süd-Bronx stattfand. Das nachfolgende

Interview wurde Anfang dieses Jahres in Form eines E-Mail-Austausches geführt.

Yasmil Raymond
An welchem Punkt bist du heute in deiner Arbeit? Was sind so die Probleme, die dich beschäftigen?

Thomas Hirschhorn
Ich habe weiterhin sehr viel zu tun – ich beklage mich nicht, denn ich bin glücklich, so viele Projekte für Ausstellungen zu haben. Ich habe noch so viel, das ich durchsetzen und so viele Ideen, die ich in eine Form gießen muss. Die Arbeit, die ich mache, fordert mir viel ab; es ist wirklich ein nicht enden wollender Kampf. Mein Problem bei jeder Arbeit ist: wie kann ich Stellung beziehen? Wie kann ich dieser Stellung Form verleihen? Und wie kann diese Form eine Wahrheit – eine universelle Wahrheit – jenseits ästhetischer, politischer, wirtschaftlicher Konventionen hervorbringen? Mein Problem bei meiner Arbeit im öffentlichen Raum ist, wie die Frage «weshalb besteht weiterhin Nichtbeständigkeit?» zu beantworten ist. Wie ist der Logik der «Nichtbeständigkeit» eine Form zu verleihen? Und wie nehmen die Bedingungen für ihr prekäres Fortbestehen in absoluter Notwendigkeit und Dringlichkeit Form an, im Gegensatz zu einer Art von «ephemerer Logik» bezogen auf Gegenstände und den Tod. Mein Problem ist: wie kann meine Arbeit – und jedes Kunstwerk – sich den zahlreichen Sicherheitseinschränkungen und -auflagen widersetzen, die sich in Museen, Galerien und Kunsträumen wie auch im öffentlichen Raum unheimlich vermehrt haben?

YR Das Dilemma der Ware?

TH Heutzutage sehe ich mich bei nahezu jeder Ausstellungsgelegenheit mit der Hypermacht der Sicherheit konfrontiert und muss für meine eigene Logik und für die Form meiner Arbeit

kämpfen. Es geht bereits so weit, dass Sicherheitsauflagen immer wieder die Form und Ästhetik von Kunstwerken beeinflussen. Ich frage mich manchmal, ob die Sauberkeit und Raumangemessenheit mancher Kunstwerke nicht der Erfüllung der vielen Sicherheitsauflagen geschuldet ist. Mein Problem ist zudem eine Arbeit – im öffentlichen Raum oder in einer Galerie, einem Museum oder einem Kunstraum – zu machen, die sich historischen Fakten widersetzt. Wie kann ich eine Arbeit machen, die über die Geschichte hinausweist? Und wie kann ich – heute, in unserer Realität – eine Arbeit machen, die ahistorisch ist? Wie immer brauche ich Gnade, und Gnade in der Kunst ergibt sich aus der Kraft und dem Mut, den man benötigt, um etwas zu erschaffen – ungeachtet seiner Präkarität, ungeachtet der Präkarität aller Dinge, einschließlich des Lebens. Und für mich als Künstler besteht die Herausforderung darin, meine ganz eigene Form dafür zu finden und diese Form zu bekräftigen, aber auch meine eigenen Vorstellungen in der Kunst durchzusetzen und innerhalb des Zusammenhangs meiner ganz eigenen Vorstellungen zu arbeiten.

YR Seit etlichen Jahren arbeitest du mit vorgefundenen Bildern, die den gewaltsamen Tod von namenlosen Zivilisten und Soldaten in Kriegsländern zeigen. In jüngerer Zeit, im Zyklus *Pixel-Collage* (2015–2017), hast du diese vorgefundenen Bilder mit Werbeanzeigen aus Modemagazinen kombiniert, die du mit handgemachten Pixeln aus ausgeschnittenen Papieren unkenntlich machst. Deine Arbeit ist eine Reaktion auf die Dichotomie zwischen der Willkür des Krieges und dem Wohlstandsbewusstsein. Was interessiert dich an diesem Gegensatz?

TH Ja, es besteht ein Zusammenhang, ein Zusammenhang zwischen allem, wirklich allem, was Teil der Welt, unserer Welt, unserer einzigen und

einzigartigen Welt ist. Dies zu behaupten und in eine Form zu gießen ist von grundlegender Bedeutung. Ich bin überzeugt, dass die Collage dafür eine wirkmächtige, universelle Form ist. Collagen machen bedeutet mit vorhandenen Elementen dieser Welt eine neue Welt erschaffen. Es macht Spaß, eine Collage zu machen, sie gilt aber auch als zu simpel, zu flüchtig, nicht seriös genug oder unreif. Jeder hat schon mal eine Collage gemacht. Collagen besitzen die Kraft, den Anderen unmittelbar einzubeziehen. Ich mag diese Kapazität der Nicht-Ausschließung und ich mag es auch, dass Collagen oft mit Argwohn betrachtet und nicht ernst genommen werden. Collagen widersetzen sich immer noch dem Konsum, selbst wenn sie wie alles andere gegen den Glamour und die Mode angehen müssen. Beim Collage-Machen will ich zusammenfügen, was sich nicht zusammenfügen lässt. Ich glaube, das ist das Ziel einer Collage und meine Aufgabe als Künstler. Ich will die ganze Welt in meinen Collagen einfangen; ich will die Komplexität und den Widerspruch der Welt in einer einzigen Collage zum Ausdruck bringen. Nicht die Welt als Ganzes, sondern eine fragmentierte Welt, die Welt, in der ich lebe. Ich will die Geschichte jenseits der historischen Fakten berühren.

YR Besteht in deinen Augen eine grundlegende Beziehung zwischen Krieg und Wohlstand?

TH Die Frage ist immer: was ist meine Haltung? Ich will dem Chaos, der Unbegreiflichkeit und Unklarheit der Welt gegenüberreten, nicht durch Herbeibringen von Friede und Ruhe, nicht durch chaotisches Arbeiten, sondern indem ich im Chaos und in der Unklarheit der Welt arbeite. Ich will etwas tun, das geladen ist und das in seiner Dichte Schönheit erlangt. Ich will aus einer Dringlichkeit heraus arbeiten; ich will zu viel tun. Die Bilder, die ich bei einer Collage verwende, sind ein

Versuch, mich der Gewalt der Welt und meiner eigenen Gewalt zu stellen. Ich bin Teil der Welt und alle Gewalt der Welt ist meine eigene Gewalt, alle Wunden der Welt sind meine eigenen Wunden. Aller Hass ist mein eigener Hass. Ich liebe Dada und die Collagen der Dadaisten; ich liebe die wunderschönen Collagen von Hannah Höch und das große *Plasto-Dio-Dada-Drama* von Johannes Baader. Ich liebe John Heartfield und sein Werk. Er sagte: «Benutze Foto als Waffe!» Ich liebe es, Collagen zu machen; eine Collage ist resistent; sie entzieht sich der Kontrolle, sogar der Kontrolle dessen, der sie schafft. Collagen machen hat immer mit Kopflosigkeit zu tun. Es gibt keine andere Ausdrucksform von derartiger Brisanz. Eine Collage ist geladen und bleibt immer explosiv. Ich stehe immer wie vor den Kopf geschlagen davor und besonders als Künstler geht es darum, ein solches «Dumm-Aussehen» auszuhalten.

YR In einer der Besprechungen deiner ersten Ausstellung des Zyklus *Pixel-Collage* (2015) in der Galerie Chantal Crousel bezeichnete ein Kritiker das Nebeneinander von Leichen und dem abstrakten Effekt der Pixel als «beunruhigend». Du zählst zu den wenigen Künstlern, die sich mit dem Leid und der katastrophalen Realität auseinandersetzen, die das Leben Hunderttausender von Menschen in Ländern wie Afghanistan, Irak und Syrien bestimmen. Was ist daran nicht beunruhigend?

TH Ich weiß es nicht, denn ich kann nicht für den Anderen sprechen. Ich für meinen Teil muss mutig sein, muss kopflos handeln, ich muss nicht ungehorsam bleiben, ich muss präzise sein, muss großzügig handeln, muss mit Liebe arbeiten. Schon seit Beginn meiner Arbeit wollte ich an die Komplexität, die Schönheit, die Gewalt, die untrennbare Welt, meine Welt, unsere Welt heranreichen. Ich wollte

schon immer die Schönheit und Gewalt der Welt, in der ich lebe, in einer Collage zusammenkleben. Ich erinnere mich, wie bei einer meiner ersten Ausstellungen in der Shedhalle Zürich jemand vom «Kunstbetrieb» mich fragte, ob ich nicht eine Arbeit ohne jene Bilder von verstümmelten Menschenkörpern, Tod und Zerstörung machen könne, und hinzufügte, dass sie dann vielleicht erfolgreicher wäre? Da wurde mir wieder einmal – wie schon seit Beginn meiner Arbeit – klar, dass du als Künstler tun musst, was deiner Meinung nach zu tun ist, was nur nach deiner Meinung zu tun ist und was nur nach deiner Meinung getan werden muss. Ich versuche dem treu zu bleiben.

YR In einer anderen Werkgruppe hast du das Thema der Ruine aufgegriffen. Für die raumgroße Skulptur *In-Between* (2015) zum Beispiel hast du innerhalb der South London Gallery in London ein einstürzendes Gebäude errichtet. Was war der Ausgangspunkt für diese Arbeit?

TH Der Ausgangspunkt ist ein wunderbares Zitat von Antonio Gramsci: «Zerstörung ist schwierig, ja genauso schwierig wie Erschaffung.» In ihrer Logik, Klarheit und Inkommensurabilität verweist diese Aussage Gramscis auf eine Dynamik, eine Bewegung. Ich sehe dies als Zwischenstatus einer Reise oder einer Flugbahn. Für mich bezieht sich das Zitat auf die Schwierigkeit, sich inmitten der sich bewegenden Welt zu positionieren, und nicht auf eine Unterscheidung oder die Schaffung eines Gegensatzes zwischen «Erschaffung» und «Zerstörung». Im Gramsci-Zitat impliziert ist der nicht korrumpierbare und nicht verhandelbare Überlebenswille – und dies ist der Ort der «Prekarität».

YR Gramsci schrieb dies im Gefängnis in der Zeit, als der Faschismus in Europa aufkam.

TH Antonio Gramscis Zitat bringt die Widersprüche unserer heutigen Welt und die Schwierigkeit, sich ihrer Realität zu stellen, zum Ausdruck. Ich liebe dieses Zitat wegen seiner Einfachheit und Komplexität. Die Herausforderung sich der Realität der Welt zu stellen liegt zwischen «Erschaffung» und «Zerstörung». Meine Arbeit *In-Between* ist die Bekräftigung einer prekären Dimension, der Dimension des nicht Garantierten, der Nicht-Dimension des Abgrundes mit seiner Unsicherheit. Zerstörung schaffen ist eine ästhetische Herausforderung; deshalb macht die Ästhetik von *In-Between* Anleihen bei Bildern der Zerstörung – Zerstörung durch Gewalt, durch Krieg, durch Unfall, durch die Natur, durch Strukturversagen, durch Korruption, durch Fatalität. Ich habe bei verschiedenen Projekten – *Concordia*, *Concordia* (2012), *Break-Through* (2013), *Abschlag und Höhere Gewalt* (beide 2014) und *Nachwirkung* (2015) – mit dieser Ästhetik eine künstlerische Aussage entwickelt. Anknüpfend an das Gramsci-Zitat, besagt die These: Der Zerstörung Form geben ist schwierig, der Ruine Form geben ist das Problem und der Katastrophe Form geben ist die ästhetische Herausforderung. Zerstörung schaffen ist schwierig für mich als Künstler, weil es bedeutet, dass das Entfernen von Sachen, das Zerstören von Sachen, das Demolieren von Sachen als «Idee», als Richtschnur des Werks, als künstlerische Logik im Kopf anfängt. Es bedeutet Verstehen – nicht in wörtlichem Sinn natürlich, sondern in Form einer künstlerischen Geste, die alles zu verändern vermag.

YR Aus meiner Sicht ist dein Schaffen des vergangenen Jahrzehnts, angefangen mit der Ausstellung *Superficial Engagement* im Jahr 2006, symbolisch mit Wut aber auch mit ungehemmter Hoffnung auf die Kunst aufgeladen. Spürbar war dies in einer späteren Arbeit, dem Video *Touching Reality* (2012), die Okwui Enwezor 2012

in *Intense Proximity*, die Pariser Triennale, aufnahm. Ich erinnere mich, wie ich mit den Augen jede Bewegung der Hand verfolgte, die in den Aufnahmen durch ein iPad mit Dutzenden Fotos von Leichen scrollte, und den Fingern vertraute, die mich durch die schrecklichen Darstellungen von Schmerz und Leid führten. Glaubst du an eine heilende Dimension der Kunsterfahrung?

TH Ja, es gibt zweifellos diese Dimension der Erfahrung von Kunst. Ich will versuchen, hier genau zu sein: Ich verstehe die heilende Kraft der Kunst in der Erfahrung von Kunst, im Dialog mit der Kunst oder in der Konfrontation mit Kunst als eine Handlung. Kunst ist keine passiv zu verwendende Medizin und Kunst ist ganz bestimmt keine Medizin, die man kaufen kann. Kunst ist ein Werkzeug oder eine Waffe, um der Realität von heute, der Welt, in der wir leben und von der wir Teil sind, zu begegnen. Wenn ich das Werkzeug der Kunst aktiv einsetze und wenn ich bereit bin, mich auf die Erfahrung der Kunst einzulassen, dann kann die Kunst ein neues Licht auf die Realität werfen und mithin die Welt verändern. Kunst ist dazu in der Lage, weil sie als Kunst die Kraft der Verwandlung, der Verwandlung eines jeden Menschen besitzt. Kunst ist, eben weil sie Kunst ist, autonom. Autonomie ist, was dem Kunstwerk ihre Schönheit und ihre Unabdingbarkeit verleiht. Kunst ist auch, eben weil sie Kunst ist, Widerstand. Kunst wider setzt sich Fakten und politischen, ästhetischen, kulturellen Konventionen. Kunst ist, als Widerstand, Bestimmtheit, Bewegung, Intensität, Glaube und Heilung.

YR Du schreibst regelmäßig über deinen Prozess und vor kurzem ist bei der MIT Press unter dem Titel *Critical Laboratory* eine Sammlung deiner Texte erschienen. In den vergangenen zwei Jahren hast du in deine Präsentationen des Zyklus *Pixel-Collage*

Vitrinen aufgenommen, in denen neben Quellenmaterial und Literatur, die deine Entscheidungen angeregt haben, deine Methode Schritt für Schritt veranschaulicht wird. Was bewegt dich dazu, deinen Prozess und deine Quellen zugänglich zu machen?

TH Es geht darum zu sagen: «Auch du kannst so denken!» Deshalb habe ich diese Vitrinen *Showcase for Thoughts* genannt. Es gibt drei Gründe, weshalb ich sie verwende. Erstens ist das Medium der Vitrine Teil des Mediums der Ausstellung; dem will ich meinen Tribut zollen. Ich stellte fest, dass, wenn man in eine Vitrine schaut, dies eine Art von Intimitätsbereitschaft oder Bereitschaft zur Aufmerksamkeit erzeugt, was ich sehr schön finde. Ich finde das schön, weil es eine Form von Konsumwiderstand ist. Eine Vitrine ist eine Einladung zum Verweilen, eine Einladung, Neues zu lernen und mehr mitzubekommen. Sie ist meiner Meinung nach zudem ein Widerstand gegen Kommentare, weil sie sich oft – mit den in ihr ausgestellten Elementen – zum Horizont der Komplexität hin öffnet. Ich verwende die Vitrine darüber hinaus als horizontales Angebot ergänzend zur vertikalen Hängung von *Pixel-Collage* und anderen Arbeiten. Ich versuche immer, der Vitrine ihren eigenen Umräum zu geben, damit sie als solche existieren kann. Ich verwende die Vitrine *Showcase for Thoughts* – meine Gedanken, aber auch Gedanken für den Anderen –, um einen Raum für das Jenseits, für eine mögliche Beziehung oder eine nicht mögliche Verbindung, zu schaffen.

YR Um zur Nähe zu ermutigen?

TH Ich möchte einen Raum für anderes «Denken» anbieten, einen Raum, um darin mein eigenes Denken, meine Präzisierung, mein Schreiben, meine Haltung darzulegen. *Showcase for Thoughts* ist keineswegs eine Einführung in oder eine Erklärung

meines Werkes, sondern eine Erweiterung meiner Gedanken als Künstler. Vorhin erwähntest du einen Kritiker, der dies als «beunruhigend» bezeichnete – schön und gut aber nicht wirklich interessant, denn *Showcase for Thoughts* will im Gegenteil unterstreichen, dass Kunst, dass ein Kunstwerk, dass meine Arbeit einen «kritischen Korpus» darstellt. Das heißt dass ich mit und im *Showcase for Thoughts* für Ideen, Vorstellungen und Begriffe, die für mich interessant und wichtig sind, einen Ort und eine Zeit schaffen will, denn um zu lesen und in die Vitrine zu schauen braucht man ja Zeit.

YR Ein ungemein befreiender Aspekt deines Werkes ist für mich die Überfülle an Materialien und Geschriebenem, die du dem Betrachter anbietest. In deine Arbeit beziehst du immer wieder eigene Aussagen, Printouts von Texten und Bücher deiner Lieblingsautoren und -autorinnen für uns als Lese- und Quellenmaterial ein. Woher kommt diese Entscheidung?

TH Es ist ein «Zuvieltun, damit die Dinge nicht lügen». Die Strategie der Überwältigung mit Information ist die Strategie, verstehen zu müssen, dass alles bedeutsam ist, dass nichts unwichtig oder weniger wichtig ist. Das Konsumstreben will uns lehren, dass weniger mehr ist. Ich glaube aber, dass «weniger weniger und mehr mehr ist». Und meine Idee ist es, die Exklusivierung abzulehnen, also das Herausstellen von Dingen, um ihnen Bedeutung zu verleihen. Ich will im Gegenteil überwältigen, ich will in zu dichter, zu geladener Form zu viel tun, um Wahrhaftigkeit und Aufmerksamkeit zu erzeugen. Ich verwende sehr gerne Gedrucktes, ich liebe Bücher, weil ich sie für meine Arbeit und zum Leben brauche. Bücher sind unerlässlich. Ich brauche keine Bücher, um mein Werk zu schaffen, ich bin aber offen für Begegnungen von Ideen und Formen zwischen Kunst und Philosophie,

Literatur, Dichtung. Bücher ermutigen mich und helfen mir. Ein Buch enttäuscht mich nie.

YR Klar, und das hat mit deiner Liebe zur Philosophie zu tun?

TH Philosophen formen Ideen mit Wörtern als mächtigen Werkzeugen zur Prägung neuer Begriffe in der Philosophie. Als Künstler erfinde auch ich meine eigenen Begriffe im Hinblick auf meine Arbeit. Und indem ich auf meinen eigenen Begriffen bestehe, kann ich meine Haltung verdeutlichen. So kam ich zum Beispiel auf den Begriff der «ungeteilten Urheberschaft». «Ungeteilte Urheberschaft» ist ein Statement, eine Behauptung; «ungeteilt» steht für Klarheit, für eine Entscheidung, für das «Nicht-Exklusive», für die Öffnung auf die Koexistenz. «Ungeteilt» bedeutet Komplexität zulassen und impliziert Vervielfältigung. «Ungeteilte Verantwortung» erlaubt es, Verantwortung für etwas zu übernehmen, wofür ich nicht verantwortlich bin. Zudem erlaubt «ungeteilte Urheberschaft» eine Urheberschaft, selbst wenn ich nicht der «Urheber» bin – das ist essenziell, das ist das Neue.

YR Du stellst dein Werk inzwischen seit 30 Jahren aus. Kannst du ein wenig zu deinem Werdegang sagen? Was waren einige maßgebliche Einflüsse in deinen jungen Jahren? Als du 1983 nach Paris übersiedelt bist, hast du etwa ein Jahr lang beim Designkollektiv Grapus gearbeitet. Was für lehrreiche Erfahrungen hast du dort gemacht?

TH Ich weiß nicht, warum sich diese Mär so hartnäckig hält. Deine Frage gibt mir aber die Gelegenheit, einmal mehr klarzustellen, dass ich nie im Grapus-Studio gearbeitet habe, weil ich dort nach einem halben Tag schon wieder weg war. Es stimmt, dass ich mit ihnen arbeiten wollte – ich wollte auf gleicher Ebene mit ihnen arbeiten, sie wollten mich aber einfach nicht! Sie

boten natürlich an, mich als einen ihrer «Handwerker» zu beschäftigen, was ich aber ablehnte. Und an einem solchen Versagen kurz nach meiner Ankunft aus der Schweiz, nachdem ich das Studium an der Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich abgeschlossen hatte, lässt sich nicht herumdeuteln: es war ganz schlicht und einfach mein eigenes Unvermögen! Ich liebte die Arbeit von Grapus und es war mein Traum, Teil ihres Kollektivs zu sein, was übrigens der Grund für meinen Umzug nach Paris war. Ihre Weigerung, mich als einen der ihren, also als einen der künstlerischen Entscheider im Kollektiv zu akzeptieren, war für mich sehr lehrreich. Ich war in Paris weitgehend isoliert, ohne Beziehungen oder Mittel, weigerte mich aber, in die Heimat zurückzukehren, und rang mit einem für mich zentralen Problem: wie mich durch meine eigene Arbeit, meine eigene Vision, meine eigene Utopie mit der Welt, mit der Zeit und der Realität auseinandersetzen? Etwa ein Jahrzehnt lang versuchte ich, einen eigenen Weg zu finden und dabei an dem festzuhalten, was ich schon immer gerne machte: Collagen. Meine anfängliche Unfähigkeit, mich in das Grapus-Kollektiv zu integrieren, war somit ein unheimlich wichtiger Lernprozess.

YR Ein Sprungbrett?

TH Als einer, der Grafikdesign «aus mir selbst heraus» machen wollte, wie ich es damals formulierte, war es die schmerzhafteste Erkenntnis, dass Grafikdesign ohne Auftrag nicht möglich ist. Ich musste mich von der Begrenztheit oder Selbstbegrenzung meines Verständnisses von «Grafikdesign» befreien. Die Kunst eröffnete einen verlockenden Bereich, um mich darin meinen Ideen und meinem Formwillen zu stellen. Die Kunst eröffnete eine neue Dimension: die Geschichte der Kunst. Die Kunst drängte mich, mir die entscheidenden Fragen zu stellen: was für künstlerische Arbeit kann ich

machen? Was für künstlerische Arbeit sollte ich machen? Was für künstlerische Arbeit ergibt für mich Sinn? Und deshalb: Was für Arbeit ist zu tun?

YR Du hast deine Arbeiten von dir bewunderten Künstlern und Autoren wie Raymond Carver, Robert Walser, Ingeborg Bachmann, Emmanuel Bove, Meret Oppenheim, Fernand Léger, Ljubow Popowa und Otto Freundlich gewidmet. Darüber hinaus hast du Baruch Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, Georges Bataille und Antonio Gramsci Monumente gewidmet. Mich interessiert deine Beharrlichkeit, an deren Werk und Erbe zu erinnern und dieses zu feiern. Könntest du ein wenig über diesen Aspekt deiner Arbeit sagen und was dich dazu bewegt, Figuren wie diese zu ehren?

TH Ich wollte diesen Künstlern, Schriftstellern, Dichtern und Philosophen Anerkennung zollen, denn sie sind es, die die Welt verändert haben. Durch ihre Arbeit und ihr Leben warfen sie ein neues Licht auf die Welt und machten ihre Art der Auseinandersetzung mit der Welt geltend. Sie wirken auf die Realität unserer Zeit mit Hoffnung und Engagement fort. Ich wollte auf dieses Fortwirken hinweisen, indem ich ihm Form gab. Der andere wichtige Punkt ist, dass meine Hommage an all diese Frauen und Männer, denen ich einen Altar, einen Kiosk, eine Karte, ein Monument, eine Skulptur oder ein Festival gewidmet habe, stets meine eigene Entscheidung ist. Ich entschied mich, sie zu machen, weil ich ein Fan bin. Ich bin ein entschiedener Fan von Robert Walser, Meret Oppenheim, Hannah Arendt, Gilles Deleuze und allen anderen. Es ist wichtig, als Fan zu handeln und, für mich als Künstler, Form zu geben. Keiner kann eine Hommage in Auftrag geben, keiner kann mich bitten, jemandem Anerkennung zu zollen, den ich nicht bewundere. Im Fan sein liegt eine Art von Widerstand.

Fan sein erlaubt absolutes Denken. Ich will mich reinem Denken stellen. Politik ist nicht rein. Ich will mich Gedanken stellen, die die Tätigkeit des Denkens, die Tätigkeit meines eigenen Denkens auslösen.

YR Was löst neben dem Kunst-Machen dein Denken aus?

TH Reine Philosophie ist dazu imstande. Ich liebe Spinoza und Deleuze dafür. Die Philosophie ist interessant, weil sie nicht politisch orientiert ist, auch wenn sie Politik einschließen kann. In diesem Sinne ist sie nicht nur unpolitisch, sondern transpolitisch. Sie ist mit anderen Worten eine Art und Weise, das Politische zu denken, ohne politisch zu sein oder zu werden. Der Widerspruch zwischen dem Politischen und der Philosophie ist irreduzibel, zwischen Kunst und Philosophie jedoch gibt es keinen Widerspruch. Ein philosophischer Begriff wie die Menge («Multitude») in *Empire* (von Hardt und Negri) kann nicht durch irgendeine historische Tatsache erfüllt werden. Zwischen der Tatsache und dem Begriff besteht eine nicht reduzierbare Kluft. Der Ort der Philosophie ist nicht auf der Seite der Tatsachen, aber auch nicht auf der Seite der Meinungen. Er liegt in dieser absoluten Ferne, diesem absoluten Widerspruch; er ist der Abgrund zwischen den beiden Bereichen. Die Philosophie und die Kunst sind beide streitbar. Es wie eine Art Krieg. Philosophen und Künstler sind Krieger, nicht Politiker. Als Künstler kann ich, und muss ich, für meine Arbeit, für meine Form, für mein Verständnis von Kunst in den Krieg ziehen. Das zu tun ist eine Aufgabe, aber auch eine Freude. Und ich tue es im Bewusstsein, dass ich dabei nicht alleine bin – und nie war.

YR Können wir auf deine Liebe zu Meret Oppenheim zurückkommen? Ihre pelzbesetzte Tasse, Untertasse und Löffel [*Objekt*, Paris (1936)] finde ich ungemein beeindruckend und unerhört

subversiv. Was an ihrem Werk berührt dich?

TH Jemanden lieben bedarf keiner Erklärung, aber ich werde trotzdem für dich – und mich – eine Erklärung zu geben versuchen, denn der Begriff der Liebe, der Liebe der Kunst, der Liebe zur Kunst und in der Kunst, ist wichtig. Ich muss kategorisch «für» den Künstler oder die Künstlerin sein, den oder die ich liebe – diese Entscheidung ist mir wirklich wichtig. Folglich gibt es Künstler, die ich seit langem liebe, und Meret Oppenheim ist eine von ihnen. Einen Künstler zu lieben bedeutet alles zu lieben, sogar die geringsten Arbeiten, und es bedeutet alles in seinem oder ihrem Leben zu lieben. Es geht nicht darum, zu kritisieren. Es geht darum, «ja!» zu sagen, «ja» zu allem. Es geht darum, sich nicht zu distanzieren, nicht zu neutralisieren. Das ist es, was Liebe in der Kunst bedeutet. Darauf kommt es an und das ist es, was mir hilft. Ein Durchbruch kann nur erfolgen, wenn es eine uneingeschränkte Entscheidung «zugunsten» eines Werkes und des Künstlers oder der Künstlerin gibt. Dieser Durchbruch, den die Kunst erzielen kann, ergibt sich, wenn etwas Neues, eine neue Form, ein neues Konzept erzeugt wird. Es geht immer nur um diesen Durchbruch und Meret Oppenheim erzielte ihn mit jeder einzelnen ihrer Arbeiten, von den berühmtesten, wie *Le Déjeuner en fourrure*, bis hin zu den am wenigsten bekannten. Deshalb liebe ich sie. Ich liebe sie genauso sehr für die «Pelztasse» wie für alles, was sie davor und danach gemacht hat. Meine Entscheidung «für» sie ergab sich nicht wegen der «Pelztasse» oder trotz der «Pelztasse», sondern vielmehr dank der «Pelztasse» und dank allen übrigen Arbeiten. Jemanden lieben hilft die «kunsthistorische Diskussion» abzukürzen, die sich nicht mit Ganzheit abgibt. Die Ganzheit eines Kunstwerkes, die Ganzheit des Künstlerseins, darauf kommt es an. Alles ist wichtig. Nichts ist

unwichtig und alles hat seine eigene Bedeutung und niemand kann mir erzählen, was in der Kunst wichtig oder weniger wichtig zu sein hat! Deshalb ist eine Liebe zu jemandem – wie meine Liebe zu Meret Oppenheim – nicht diskutierbar.

YR Die «Pelztasse» ist eine faszinierende Arbeit. André Breton nannte sie *Le Déjeuner en fourrure (Frühstück im Pelz)*, Oppenheim aber nannte sie einfach *Objekt*. Sie ist zugleich verlockend und verstörend, aufregend und unheimlich. Was erkennst du in dieser Arbeit?

TH Die «Pelztasse» ist ein gutes Beispiel dafür, wie einem bestimmten Kunstwerk nicht geholfen ist, wenn es zwecks Entwicklung irgendeiner Theorie isoliert wird, denn diese Arbeit ist, wie alles andere, was Meret Oppenheim gemacht hat, ein wunderbares Kunstwerk. Ich liebe Meret Oppenheim, weil in ihrem Werk dem Form verliehen wird, worauf es in der Kunst ankommt: frei sein mit dem, was aus dir selbst kommt. Dieses scheinbar einfache, scheinbar so leicht – über die Form – erreichbare Ziel ist die große Herausforderung in der Kunst. Meret Oppenheim vollbrachte dies in jeder ihrer Arbeiten. Wenn ich ihr Werk betrachte, kann ich immer den Moment des Durchbruchs erkennen, den Moment, wenn das eigene Ich universell wird. Das Universelle, darauf kommt es in der Kunst an, und man kann an das Universelle – ein anderes Wort dafür ist «Wahrheit» – nur mit dem heranreichen, was aus dir selbst kommt. Jede einzelne Arbeit Meret Oppenheims beweist dies. Jede einzelne ihrer Arbeiten ist ein Statement, ein reines Statement! Meret Oppenheim hat gezeigt, dass es um das eigene Selbst geht und nicht um das Persönliche! Es geht um das eigene Selbst und nicht um «Umstände»! Es geht um das eigene Selbst und nicht um das «Gesellschaftliche»! Es geht um das eigene Selbst und nicht um «Identität»! Es geht

um das eigene Selbst und nicht um «Tradition»! Es geht um das eigene Selbst und nicht um «Kultur». Ich sehe dies in jeder ihrer Arbeiten und diese Klarheit macht mich glücklich, gerade auch heute mit Blick auf die Identitäts-Debatte und den nie enden wollenden, apolitischen «Kontext»-Diskurs. Meret Oppenheim hat in ihrer Arbeit gezeigt, wo der wahre Kampf liegt: im grenzenlosen Feld der Freiheit. Freiheit mit dir selbst! Meret Oppenheim ringt mit ihrem eigenen Anspruch auf Freiheit. Ich sehe das in ihren Arbeiten, in jeder einzelnen von ihnen. In ihrer Arbeit und ihren *carnets* steht sie im Konflikt mit ihrem Traum der Freiheit.

YR Was meinst du damit?

TH In ihrem Buch *Poèmes et carnets* beschreibt sie einen Traum, der sich darum dreht, wie ihre eigene patriarchalische Haltung ihre weibliche Seite abzuwerten, zu töten versucht, und wie sie es (wie immer) versäumte, ihre männliche Seite zu bestärken oder zu unterstützen, um am Ende etwas Neues und Ganzes zu erschaffen. Ich liebe ihre Offenheit, ihre Strenge und deren Bedeutung, die Bedeutung, dass etwas erschaffen wird. Meret Oppenheim ist niemals sentimental und niemals narzisstisch. Ihre Arbeit ist immer ein Akt der Befreiung, der Selbstbestimmung und deshalb ist sie durch Präzision und Wahrheit gekennzeichnet. Alle möglichen Begriffe kommen mir in den Sinn, wenn ich an sie denke: Ethik, Schönheit, Intensität, Konflikt, Strenge, Würde, Gewissheit, Hoffnung. Das sind alles Begriffe, die ich liebe, und alles positive Begriffe. Ich liebe Meret Oppenheim für ihren Widerstand. Jede einzelne ihrer Arbeiten ist resistent: resistent in sich selbst. Das ist für mich ein wichtiges Modell; Meret Oppenheim beweist es in jeder ihrer Arbeiten. Ein Paradebeispiel hierfür ist ihr *Brunnen* (1983) auf dem Waisenhausplatz in Bern. Ich halte diese Arbeit für eines der besten Werke der Kunst im öffentlichen

Raum. Ich kenne kein anderes Schaffen, das auf so wunderbare Weise die Frage der Form immer wieder neu anzugehen weiß. Die Frage, ob es sinnvoll ist, der Natur – einschließlich der Menschen und ihres «Tuns» – überhaupt Form zu geben. Meret Oppenheim machte mit dieser Arbeit ein Statement, das der Frage standhält und sie mit Ironie, Humor und Anmut anreichert. Sie war wahrhaftig von der Gnade berührt. Ich liebe Meret Oppenheim für all dies wie auch dafür, was ich nicht weiß. Das Außergewöhnliche an Meret Oppenheim ist, dass es Tausende «Gründe» gibt sie zu lieben und dass nur wenige auf diese Weise geliebt werden. Ist dies vielleicht das Privileg derer, die sich voll und ganz bewusst waren, dass sie mehr liebten als geliebt wurden?

YR Du hast bis heute fast 70 Arbeiten im öffentlichen Raum gemacht. Du hast geschrieben, wie dich das Ausstellen im Freien interessiert als Möglichkeit, ein Publikum zu erreichen, das nicht unbedingt Galerien besucht oder sich die Eintrittskarte für das Museum leisten kann. Wie hat deine Arbeit in öffentlichen Räumen deine Arbeit im Atelier bereichert?

TH Jede Erfahrung in der Kunst bestärkt mich in dem Willen und Bemühen, meine Aufgabe als Künstler zu erfüllen. Abgesehen von der unglaublichen Freude und der Hyperkomplexität, auf die ich dabei stoße, spielt beim Arbeiten im öffentlichen Raum schon immer auf schöne und schmerzliche Weise die Frage des Publikums mit. Meine Erfahrung mit Arbeit im öffentlichen Raum und dem Begriff des öffentlichen Raums lehrt mich, dass es möglich ist, ein «nicht-exklusives» Publikum zu erreichen – das heißt sich zu schaffen –, sei es in einem am Stadtrand gelegenen Viertel, in einem Museum oder auf der Straße mitten in einer Stadt. Dieses «nicht-exklusive» Publikum ist immer schon das unbedingt zu erobernde und

wiederzuerobernde Publikum. Ich habe gelernt, wie wichtig es ist, mein Werk an das «nicht-exklusive» Publikum zu richten, das der Andere, der Fremde ist, der, den ich nicht kenne, der nicht an Kunst interessiert ist, der sich mit anderen Problemen herumschlägt. Im öffentlichen Raum ist dies, anders als im Museum, der Galerie oder dem Kunstraum, die Mehrheit.

YR Das heißt es besteht ein Unterschied?

TH Das Publikum im öffentlichen Raum und in Kunstinstitutionen ist das gleiche – es ist lediglich ein Unterschied des Verhältnisses von Mehrheit und Minderheit. Und es geht darum, nie jemanden auszuschließen. Deshalb ist es so wichtig, mit dem «nicht-exklusiven» Publikum in Kontakt zu stehen, denn das ist das Hard-Core-Publikum. Man lernt, dass Begriffe wie Gleichheit, Gerechtigkeit, Wahrheit oder Universalität wirklich sinnvoll sind. Der Kampf und die Konfrontation meiner Arbeit im öffentlichen Raum hat mich gelehrt, sicherzugehen, dass man niemanden ausschließt, nicht einmal im Museum, in der Galerie oder im Kunstraum. Jeden einzelnen Menschen einzuschließen, das ist die Lehre die ich aus der Arbeit im öffentlichen Raum zu ziehen und auf das Museum zu übertragen versuche: Nicht-Ausschließung durch die Wahl der Materialien, durch die Wahl des Lichts, durch die Dimensionen, durch die Arbeit, die getan wird, und die Art und Weise, wie sie getan wird. Die Arbeit im öffentlichen Raum wie auch in Institutionen hat mich zudem gelehrt, dass nicht einschüchternde Arbeit, die sich weigert, das Mehrwertspiel zu spielen, sinnvoll sein kann, weil sie auf Nicht-Ausschließung beruht.

Thomas Hirschhorn schloss 1983 sein Studium an der Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich ab. Neben zahlreichen Gruppenausstellungen widmete er folgende Institutionen seinem Werk

Einzelausstellungen: Art Institute of Chicago und The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (1998); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2001); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston und Pinakothek der Moderne, München (2005); Museo Tamayo, Mexiko-Stadt (2008); The Power Plant, Toronto (2011); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014); South London Gallery (2015). Hirschhorn war auf der documenta 11 (2002), der 27. Biennale von São Paulo (2006) und der 55. Carnegie International in Pittsburgh (2008) vertreten. Er wurde vielfach ausgezeichnet, darunter mit dem Preis für Junge Schweizer Kunst (1999), dem Marcel-Duchamp-Preis (2000), dem Rolandpreis für Kunst im öffentlichen Raum (2003), dem Joseph Beuys Preis (2004) und dem Kurt-Schwitters-Preis (2011). Er hat knapp 70 Werke in öffentlichen Räumen ausgestellt. Hirschhorn vertrat 2011 die Schweiz auf der Biennale von Venedig. Er lebt und arbeitet seit 1983 in Paris.

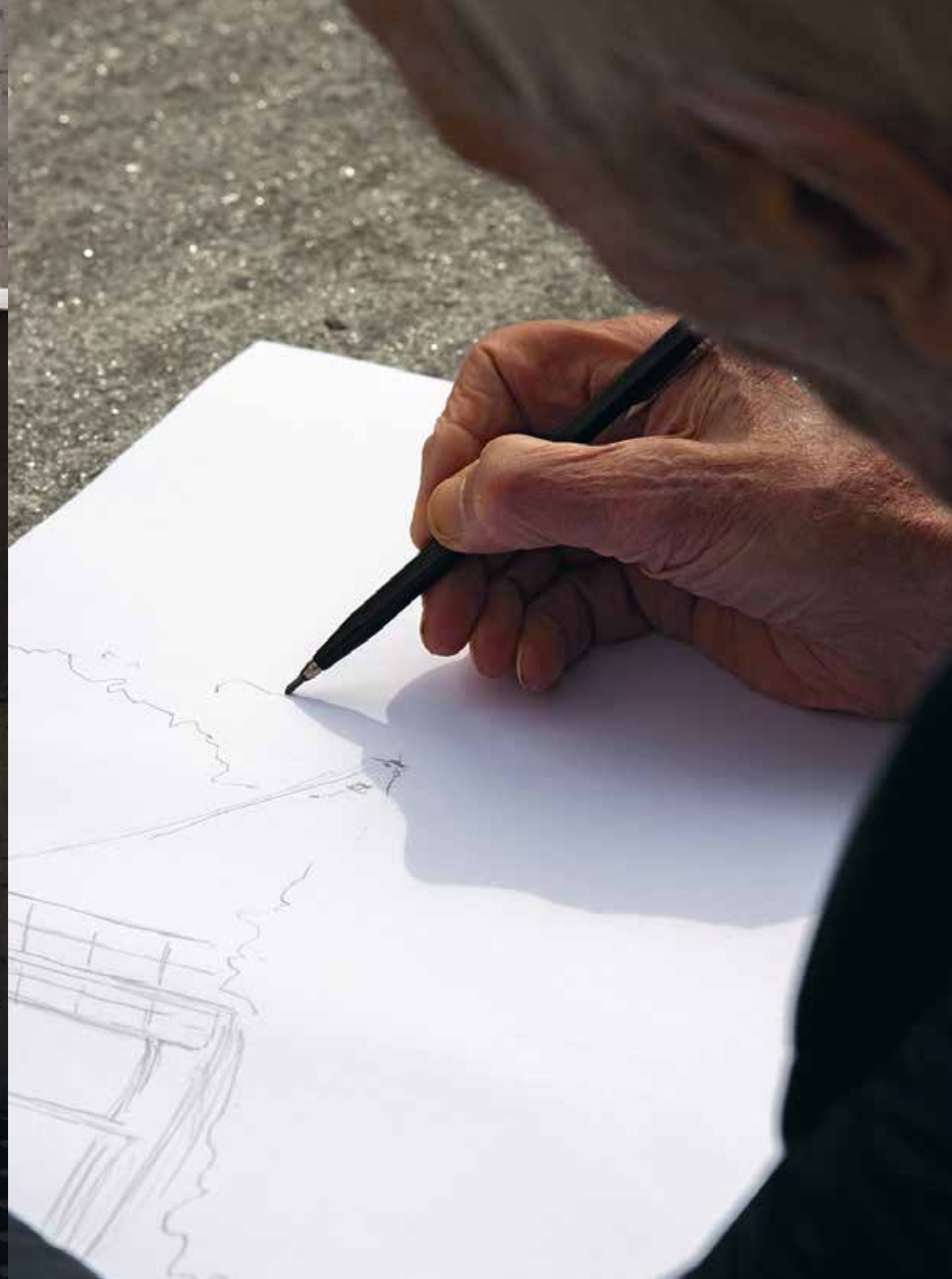
Yasmil Raymond ist Associate Curator im Department of Painting and Sculpture am Museum of Modern Art in New York. Von 2009 bis 2015 war sie Kuratorin der Dia Art Foundation, New York. Davor war sie Associate Curator am Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Sie hat zahlreiche Ausstellungen kuratiert, darunter *Allora & Calzadilla: Puerto Rican Light* (ko-kuratiert mit Manuel Cirauqui), *Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958-2010* (ko-kuratiert mit Philippe Vergne), *Thomas Hirschhorn: Gramsci Monument*, *Jean-Luc Moulène: Opus + One* und *Koo Jeong A: Constellation Congress*. Seit 2009 ist Yasmil Raymond zudem Senior Critic des Graduate Fine Arts Program der University of Pennsylvania.

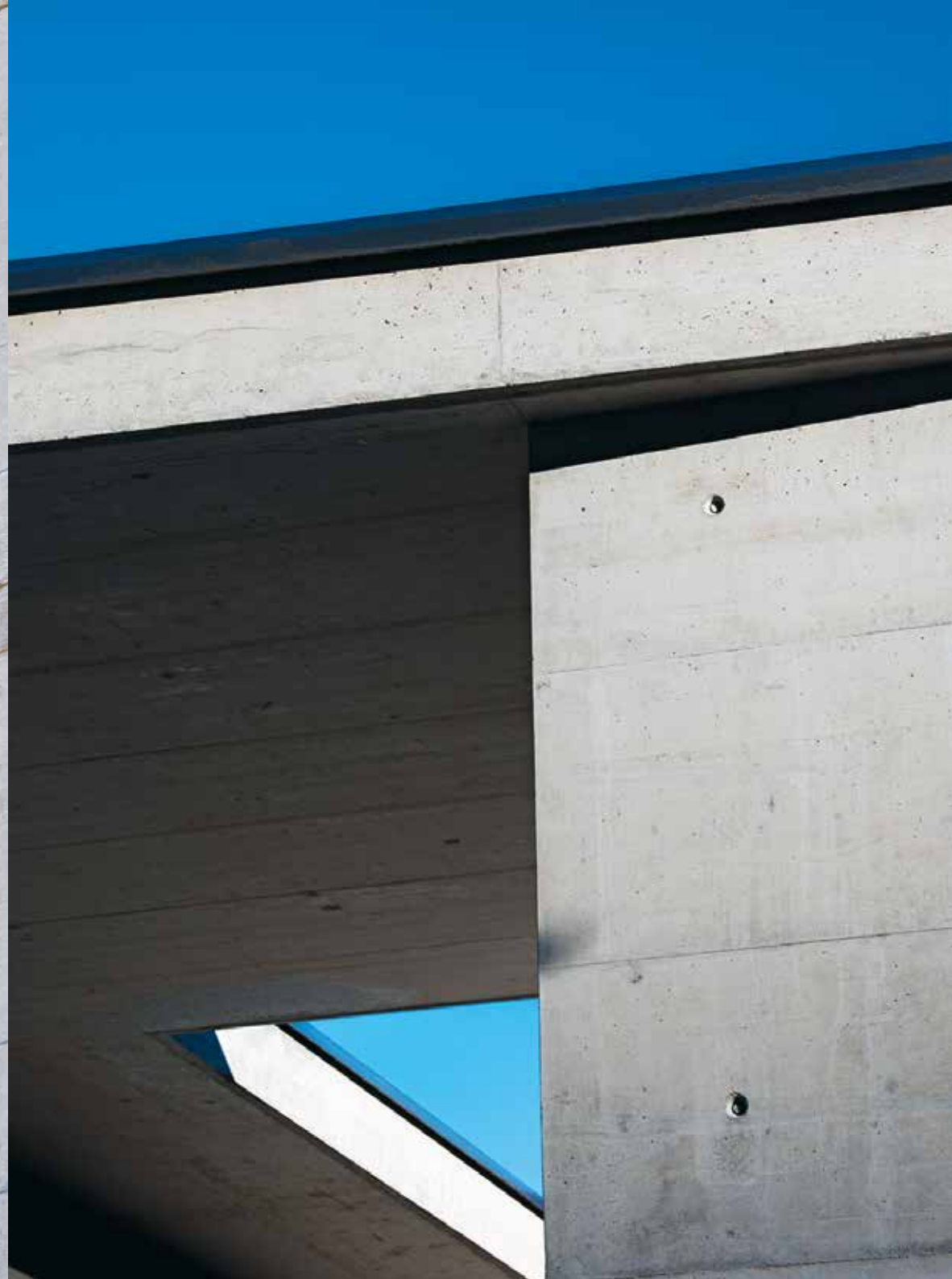
Fotografien: Jiajia Zhang

“Avanzare piano, ma sempre”
Stefano Moor in conversazione con Luigi Snozzi





















« Le projet d'architecture, qui nous permet d'identifier un lieu spécifique, la maison, qui remplit une fonction mais qui va pourtant au-delà, le monument, qui donne une valeur à un lieu banal, l'édifice enfin, qui nous paraît à la fois autonome et lié à un lieu spécifique, vieux de deux mille ans ou actuels, tous viennent au fond de Luigi Snozzi, car c'est lui qui nous a appris à les découvrir et à les comprendre. »

Roger Diener, *Le projet, la maison, le monument*

Stefano Moor

Ci sono alcuni punti sui quali mi piacerebbe far luce. Alla fine degli anni '80, sono venuto a studiare al Politecnico di Losanna, dove insegnavi già da tempo. Ricordo che alla tua prima lezione, mi sono detto "ah, finalmente si può cominciare a ragionare e a capire...". Hai saputo folgorarmi (e folgorare molti altri studenti) fin dal primo incontro. Dopo due anni di studi in cui avevo fatto una fatica tremenda a orientarmi, mi hai aperto un mondo. Da quel momento, prima come tuo studente, poi come tuo assistente, ho incontrato tante personalità con cui sei stato in contatto, e anche se continuo a vederti come qualcuno che è sempre andato per la propria strada, credo di poter valutare quanto queste persone abbiano influito sul tuo lavoro, sulla tua ricerca. Conosco invece meno gli anni della tua formazione, quelli prima di diventare il "maestro" noto a tutti. I tuoi maestri, se ne hai avuti, chi sono stati?

Luigi Snozzi

Credo che una delle persone che ha avuto il maggior peso nella mia formazione sia stato Enrico Filippini: lavorava come redattore per la casa editrice Feltrinelli a Milano, traduceva libri letterari e filosofici dal tedesco, era un intellettuale estremamente raffinato e apprezzato. Un uomo di rara intelligenza che mi ha in qualche modo aperto gli occhi sul mondo. Da giovane ho fatto moltissimi viaggi in Lambretta per l'Italia meridionale insieme a lui, a sua moglie Ruth Schmidhauser e a Peppo Brivio. Un'altra figura fondamentale è stata certamente quella di Virgilio Gilardoni che, attraverso il Circolo del Cinema da lui fondato, ha promosso un'intensa attività culturale: ricordo tante serate passate con lui a girare per vecchi cinema. Gilardoni era un comunista convinto, un militante vero, odiato da tutti. Un giorno mi ha scritto anche una bellissima lettera, che è entrata a far parte della monografia *Electa* sul mio lavoro. Questi e altri incontri sono accaduti in gran parte nello studio di Peppo Brivio; all'epoca ero ancora studente al Politecnico di Zurigo

e, ogni estate, andavo “a bottega” da lui. È stato Brivio a introdurmi ai problemi fondamentali dell’architettura. Nel suo studio lavorava anche Tita Carloni, che era due anni più avanti di me negli studi. Carloni era un personaggio eccezionale, dalla cultura vastissima, un intellettuale poliedrico che è stato anche scrittore e autore di commedie dialettali per la radio. Da loro due ho imparato moltissimo; è grazie a loro che sono entrato in contatto con l’architettura wrightiana, e i miei primi lavori (casa Lucchini a Faido e, prima ancora, il mio progetto universitario per una torre residenziale) risentono chiaramente di quest’influenza.

SM Il progetto della torre residenziale (che spesso descrivi come una “sfida” all’architettura di Peppo Brivio) risale al tuo settimo semestre, verso la fine dei tuoi studi. Mi racconteresti invece la storia del tuo diploma, inizialmente bocciato e che hai dovuto ripetere?

LS All’ultimo anno presi 1 in Diritto, il voto più basso che si potesse ottenere. A quei tempi, anche con un solo voto pari a 1, eri costretto a rimandare di un anno il progetto di diploma. Durante quell’anno ho frequentato l’atelier dello scultore Emilio Stanzani a Zurigo; andavo nel giardino di un manicomio lì vicino a scolpire. L’anno successivo ho rifatto il progetto di diploma con Rino Tami, che avevo già conosciuto nello studio di Brivio.

SM Racconti spesso di non essere sempre stato convinto di voler studiare architettura...

LS No, infatti. Avrei voluto studiare pittura, come il mio amico Livio Bernasconi; ma in famiglia eravamo in dodici e come quinto figlio (e primo maschio) sentivo il peso di una certa responsabilità. Anche se non lo diceva apertamente, mio padre lo lasciava intendere: non voleva che diventassi pittore. Tutti si aspettavano che dessi un aiuto concreto alla famiglia. Questa vicenda familiare mi ha impedito di seguire la strada della pittura. Ho quindi dovuto scegliere un altro mestiere, che soddisfacesse allo stesso tempo le aspettative di mio padre e le mie aspirazioni più “artistiche”; è per questa via che sono arrivato all’architettura.

SM Vorrei soffermarmi ancora sui tuoi anni da studente al Politecnico di Zurigo. Quali sono stati i tuoi professori di atelier? Qual è il tuo giudizio sull’insegnamento ricevuto in quegli anni?

LS Ricordo William Dunkel, forse il miglior professore del Politecnico in quegli anni, e Hans Hofmann, un docente che ho molto apprezzato e con cui avevo iniziato il primo progetto di diploma: era una persona molto aperta e sinceramente interessata al lavoro degli studenti. L’insegnamento di entrambi era chiaramente ispirato al Movimento Moderno, ma più incentrato sul linguaggio formale che su questioni legate alla città. È a questo lascito che si può ricondurre, in termini di espressione, il mio modo di fare architettura fino a oggi.

SM Terminati gli studi nel 1957, tornerai al Politecnico di Zurigo nel 1973, questa volta nelle vesti di professore invitato per due anni, senza aver avuto nel frattempo alcun altro contatto con il mondo dell’insegnamento. Negli anni che separano queste due date, sei diventato un architetto affermato, hai costruito opere significative in collaborazione con Livio Vacchini, hai partecipato a importanti concorsi suscitando grande interesse... insomma, in quegli anni sei diventato uno degli architetti più attenti ai temi della città, sempre capace di porre la domanda giusta. In quel periodo intravedo un momento di svolta per la tua ricerca: da progetti che si relazionano alla città quasi per contrasto (penso alle proposte per il Politecnico di Losanna e per il centro direzionale di Perugia, o ancora al primo progetto di concorso per la stazione di Zurigo), passi a progetti che declinano con grande precisione alcuni capisaldi della tua ricerca, come la necessità di porre un limite tra città e campagna e di lavorare con il vuoto. Oltre alle influenze che hai menzionato, ce ne sono altre a cui riconosci un particolare valore? Personalità o circostanze che ti hanno dato l’impulso per diventare il “Luigi Snozzi” che tutti conoscono?

LS Credo che dietro a questa svolta ci sia stato Aldo Rossi, e in particolare il suo libro *L’architettura della città*. È stato quel libro a far scattare qualcosa in me, a farmi capire molte cose. Per grande fortuna di noi architetti ticinesi, la lingua ci ha permesso di avere accesso a questo libro fin dalla prima edizione del 1966, senza dover aspettare per anni una traduzione come è invece toccato agli svizzeri tedeschi. Rossi è stato un personaggio fondamentale per me. Parlo della sua teoria, chiaramente.

SM Gli anni del tuo insegnamento al Politecnico di Zurigo, tra il 1973 e il 1975, coincidono con quelli in cui ci insegnava anche Aldo Rossi. È stata la prima occasione di conoscerlo di persona o eri già

in contatto con lui? Sempre a proposito di Rossi, mi chiedo se un lavoro come il rilievo della città di Bellinzona, che hai fatto con Livio Vacchini e Tita Carloni, risenta delle metodologie di analisi della città messe in campo da Rossi in quegli anni. C'era una certa intenzionalità nel seguire la pista di Rossi o solo una fortuita convergenza di pratiche?

LS No, prima di incontrarlo a Zurigo non avevo mai conosciuto Rossi di persona. Certo, quando abbiamo fatto il rilievo di Bellinzona, conoscevamo il lavoro di Rossi: ci basavamo proprio sul metodo sviluppato, tra gli altri, da Saverio Muratori, Aldo Rossi e Aldo Aymonino. Quel rilievo è stato fatto per il Piano Regolatore di Bellinzona; e ne è venuto fuori il peggior Piano Regolatore immaginabile. Ecco, lì ho preso consapevolezza del limite di questi rilievi: ho capito che c'è bisogno di fare un passo in più. I rilievi sono uno strumento necessario, ma non sufficiente per realizzare un buon progetto.

SM Nel suo libro, Rossi sviluppa delle teorie, propone dei metodi. Ma dove hai appreso ad essere così sensibile al disegno della città? Su questo punto faccio una certa fatica a stabilire un parallelo con Rossi o a immaginare altre influenze dirette. A prescindere dalla teoria, tu conosci a fondo il mestiere di architetto. Quando lavori sulla città, non ti limiti mai a un discorso teorico: la disegni, la articoli, individui sempre le occasioni per fare della buona architettura. Ecco, ritengo che questa sia una differenza sostanziale fra te e molti altri teorici. Ti ho sentito spesso sostenere che spingere troppo la riflessione teorica rischia, in alcuni casi, di compromettere il lavoro dell'architetto. La teoria ti appartiene (ne sono testimonianza tutti i libri che hai attorno, tutto quello che conosci) ma ho la sensazione che tu non abbia mai voluto porre un accento particolare sulla teoria in sé, che il fare architettura ti abbia sempre interessato di più. Non mi riferisco solo alla tua esperienza professionale ma anche e soprattutto al tuo lavoro di insegnante.

LS Assolutamente. Durante i miei corsi non ho mai parlato in astratto di teoria ma mi sono sempre e solo basato sulla spiegazione dei miei progetti; non ho mai mostrato progetti di altri architetti ad eccezione di quello di Le Corbusier per l'ospedale di Venezia, un progetto straordinario che, se realizzato, avrebbe davvero potuto dire qualcosa di fondamentale. Da quanto ricordo è così, se in alcune occasioni ho agito diversamente si è certamente trattato di grandi eccezioni.

SM Infatti non ricordo nessuna tua lezione *ex cathedra* che parlasse dell'opera di altri architetti o delle loro teorie; ricordo invece la tua formidabile capacità di ricollegarti ai loro insegnamenti quando si trattava di discutere i progetti degli studenti. Non ci hai mai parlato esplicitamente di Palladio, eppure attraverso le sue opere ci hai guidato verso la possibile soluzione di "nostri" problemi progettuali. Questo tuo approccio all'insegnamento sembra marcato da una speciale attenzione per il fare, per l'architettura come mestiere, che ho sempre riscontrato anche nella tua vita professionale. Quando progetti, è come se stessi risolvendo un Sudoku (una delle tue passioni): analizzi il problema con grande meticolosità e entusiasmo. Ho ricordi molto gioiosi di momenti di progettazione con te, in cui inseguivamo strenuamente "la" soluzione.

LS Un progetto senza sorriso non nasce mai. Quando progetti devi essere contento, non c'è niente da fare. Non puoi progettare col mal di stomaco. Il progetto, qualunque sia, richiede una ricerca lenta, paziente. Ancora oggi, prima di abordarare un progetto, che sia una casetta o il Palazzo delle Nazioni, all'inizio mi sento perso. Il foglio rimane completamente bianco per giorni, mi sento incapace di esprimere la minima idea. Niente, zero. È per questo che ogni nuovo lavoro mi fa paura; temo di non esserne capace. Nei primi giorni non faccio mai nulla, evito anche di pensarci, finché all'improvviso qualcosa scatta. È sempre stato così per me: non ho mai iniziato un lavoro col pensiero "sì, ce la posso fare". Proprio il contrario.

SM Invece, quando penso al tuo modo di analizzare i progetti quando insegni, la tua velocità nel centrare il problema è impressionante... Non conoscevo questo aspetto del foglio bianco: non l'ho mai notato. Forse perché, quando ho l'occasione di abordarare un nuovo progetto con te, l'assenza di immediate risposte progettuali è compensata dalla tua speciale curiosità e da quella capacità di porre domande spesso inaspettate. L'altro giorno, ad esempio, discutendo di un possibile nuovo progetto per un quartiere residenziale, le prime domande che ti sei posto sono state: chi andrà a viverci? In quale contesto umano sto operando? È quasi un voler prendere sempre coscienza del proprio lavoro. Quel tuo famoso invito ad avere una coscienza morale prima ancora di essere dei bravi architetti, lo si ritrova nella tua maniera di fare: prima di iniziare a fare qualsiasi cosa, cerchi sempre di capire se vale la pena farlo e, eventualmente, quali temi vadano messi in evidenza.

LS Sì, è assolutamente fondamentale capire di cosa si tratta, che cosa si sta facendo, prima ancora di mettersi a disegnare. È un processo che spesso richiede tempi lunghi perché, una volta superata l'impotenza iniziale di cui parlavo prima, è facile inciampare di nuovo e fermarsi più volte nel corso di un progetto. E per fortuna: è quando inciampi che hai la possibilità di fare un passo avanti. Con Vacchini accadeva spesso. Se dopo qualche tentativo ci rendevamo conto di essere in stallo, mollavamo tutto e andavamo al bar a bere champagne. È importante darsi il tempo di trovare la risposta giusta. In questo senso, ho sempre sofferto nel collaborare con persone che, confrontate a queste naturali battute d'arresto, tirano fuori decine di soluzioni alternative, una dietro l'altra, come se le pescassero da un magazzino delle idee.

SM Questa insofferenza verso chi ha sempre e subito la risposta giusta può estendersi a un'idea più generale di efficienza contemporanea? È stata recentemente pubblicata la trascrizione di una tua conversazione con il filosofo Fabio Merlini, intitolata *L'architettura inefficiente*. Stai sostenendo che quest'idea di super-efficienza sia pericolosa?

LS È terribile. Sai, forse il mio più grande amico di tutti i tempi è stato un pescatore. Passava per lo scemo del villaggio ma era un pescatore provetto. Ecco, quando ero con lui (faccio quasi fatica a parlarne), sentivo che avremmo potuto trascorrere mesi assieme. Ero attratto dalla sua grande costanza. Da pescatore, non si è mai accontentato di pescare e basta: ogni giorno cercava di correggere quello che credeva di non aver fatto abbastanza bene il giorno prima. Ho conosciuto un'altra persona così: era il cuoco di un ristorante che frequentavo e preparava solo fesa di vitello con contorno di spaghetti. Gli spaghetti erano sempre stracotti, ma la fesa di vitello era la migliore del mondo; giuro, per cinquant'anni ha fatto solo quello. Lui era un tipo così: per cinquant'anni un solo menù, spaghetti e fesa di vitello, e ogni giorno lo faceva con lo stesso amore e lo stesso impegno, ma con l'idea di migliorarlo. È questa la gente che piace a me, gente che continua e non molla, non molla, non molla. Mi piace la ripetizione.

SM C'è anche il tuo aforisma sulla ripetizione: "la varietà è il preludio alla monotonia, se vuoi evitarla ripeti il tuo elemento".

LS Sì. Come mio padre: era un veterinario e, in qualità di membro di una curiosa commissione addetta a verificare l'autenticità dei miracoli di Lourdes, faceva il giro di tutto il Canton Ticino per tenere una conferenza che conosco a memoria, "Lourdes e la medicina". Io dovevo accompagnarlo (allora avevo sette o otto anni) e proprio non lo sopportavo: mentre facevo scorrere le diapositive, ero costretto a sentire mio padre ripetere per l'ennesima volta la stessa conferenza, con le stesse parole e le stesse freddure. Cominciava con "Lourdes è bagnata dal fiume Gave, che comincia con la G come Gesù e finisce con ave come Ave Maria"... Che vergogna, volevo nascondermi sotto il tavolo, letteralmente sotto il tavolo! Ecco, a me piacciono le persone così. Oggi, in questo ripetersi senza remore riconosco la vera forza di mio padre. Ora ti racconto un altro episodio su quest'aspetto del suo carattere: all'epoca c'era una malattia dei pesci (non ricordo più quale fosse il nome) che era trasmissibile anche all'uomo e mio padre doveva tenere ciclicamente delle conferenze per sensibilizzare i pescatori ai rischi della malattia e alle accortezze necessarie per non contrarla. A un certo punto, durante una di queste conferenze ripetute fino allo sfinimento, iniziano a lanciargli dei pomodori. Mio padre, colpito dal primo pomodoro, continua imperterrito "e la trota...", ed ecco che arriva il secondo pomodoro! Quando ha finito era rosso di pomodori, eppure non ha mai fatto una piega: si beccava un pomodoro, se lo asciugava di dosso e continuava. Mio padre non mollava di un millimetro, mai. Io amo la gente semplice, che sa ripetere il suo lavoro in modo instancabile, giorno dopo giorno; questa è gente che ogni giorno cambia, perché ogni giorno accresce la propria conoscenza di una quantità infinitesimale, invisibile ai più. La forza dell'uomo sta proprio qui: nell'avanzare piano, ma sempre. I passi devono essere corti.

SM L'efficienza, in questo caso, si traduce nel tentare di conoscere a fondo un argomento, nell'evitare la superficialità: non ha nulla a che fare con una spasmodica ricerca di varietà.

LS No, infatti. L'efficienza sta proprio nell'avanzare millimetro dopo millimetro. Un millimetro al giorno è già troppo. Chi avanza in questo modo mi è simpatico: mi sono sempre circondato di amici così.

SM Quest'aspirazione a una ricerca paziente non si è mai nutrita di troppe parole: ricordo che spesso ci invitavi a parlare meno, a concentrarci sul lavoro. Invece, contrariamente alle parole, mi sembra che il disegno rivesta un ruolo di primissimo piano nella tua ricerca.

Quando sono entrato in contatto per la prima volta con il tuo lavoro attraverso la monografia dell'Electa (andavo ancora al liceo), sono stato colpito, prima ancora che dal progetto in sé, dal modo in cui è disegnata casa Kalman. Mi ha sempre molto impressionato questa tua attenzione al disegno. Un'attenzione che nel corso degli anni si è tradotta in un sistema di rappresentazione sistematizzato, dalla dimensione del tratto alla scala del tratteggio. Qualche tempo fa, rovistando tra le mie carte, ho ritrovato una tabella che utilizzavo nel tuo ufficio, nella quale è codificato con precisione anche ogni colore del foglio adesivo da impiegare... Volevi che i disegni fossero fatti nella maniera più semplice e chiara possibile. Disegnare è un atto che hai sempre ritenuto fondamentale per il progetto, non è vero?

LS Sempre. Il disegno mi ha sempre interessato come momento di sintesi, un momento in cui i segni, ridotti all'essenziale, hanno tutti un significato ben definito. Mai tirare una linea con leggerezza. Già nell'approntare la planimetria generale, il disegno può farsi strumento del progetto perché consente di esplicitare i riferimenti fondamentali del luogo. Se non metti in evidenza questi elementi, non puoi capire il contesto.

SM Un progetto che, a mio parere, esprime molto bene questa tua abilità nel dare forma al progetto e nel comunicare con amore il tuo lavoro è quello per Braunschweig, che abbiamo esposto due anni fa a Como. Lo splendido modello che avevi realizzato nel 1979 occupava il centro di una delle due sale circolari d'angolo del *Novocomum* di Terragni; a fargli da sfondo, lungo la parete curva, c'era la gigantografia della tua sezione per Braunschweig che, con pochi segni precisi, sintetizzava l'idea di fondo del progetto. Oltre a questa sensibilità per il disegno, Braunschweig (con l'idea di fare del vuoto lasciato dalla distruzione della città un monumento internazionale in memoria della Seconda Guerra Mondiale) getta luce su altri temi classici del tuo lavoro: il vuoto come momento fondamentale della costruzione della città, ma soprattutto la coscienza civile del fare architettura, la chiarezza politica del tuo operato.

LS Per me l'architetto deve essere, prima di tutto, un intellettuale critico. Il suo compito è resistere a ogni forma di potere, a tutto ciò che accade e che non condivide. A proposito di Braunschweig, emblema della distruzione che una società può causare in tempo di guerra, oggi mi domando: che cos'è invece stata capace di produrre la nostra società in tempo di pace?

SM La tua coscienza civile, il tuo impegno politico si esprimono in un inesauribile desiderio di lavorare sulla città, di realizzare il potenziale urbano di ogni singolo intervento, anche la più misera casetta di speculazione. Questo atteggiamento presuppone una costante attenzione all'evoluzione della città e un forte radicamento nella condizione presente. Qual è la tua visione della contemporaneità? Qualche tempo fa ti ho sentito criticare duramente la condizione dell'architettura contemporanea. Sei ancora così negativo?

LS Assolutamente sì. Apprezzo chi s'impegna, ci sono senz'altro alcuni bravi architetti che producono singoli edifici di una certa qualità e non dico che tutto quello che si fa oggi sia da buttare. Ma non vedo spiragli per dare una scossa alle cose, per fare davvero un salto in avanti. Vedo che si tira avanti, che si producono singoli elementi spesso anche interessanti, ma che nell'insieme non riescono a provocare quello che mi aspetto. Non mi viene in mente nessun progetto visto negli ultimi anni che mi sia parso capace di sollevare questioni fondamentali. Sono tutti brillanti, ed essere brillante è per me un punto negativo, non certo positivo: meglio essere rozzi. Ma non saprei come uscire da questa situazione. Confesso di avere una certa difficoltà a dirti come vedo la situazione attuale, i suoi possibili sviluppi. Non trovo nulla che esprima una qualche fondamentale novità, e anche i lavori di qualità che vedo si limitano a ripetere quello che è già stato fatto.

SM Quindi non ti riferisci tanto alla mancanza di edifici di qualità quanto alla loro incapacità di innescare una riflessione critica sulla condizione della città contemporanea. In realtà alcuni tuoi ex studenti, oggi architetti affermati, hanno tentato questa strada. Sei al corrente di questi loro sforzi?

LS No, ma vedo quello che hanno fatto, i quartieri che hanno costruito e mi dico che sono pezzi di città che si sarebbero potuti fare cinquant'anni fa: non ci trovo nulla di innovativo.

SM C'è una tipologia di città, la città diffusa, che hai sempre rifiutato ma verso la quale oggi senti una mancanza di attenzione critica. Nel tuo lavoro d'architetto, però, hai occasionalmente accettato di intervenire all'interno di questo tipo di città che detesti e, quando lo hai fatto, hai cercato di dare delle risposte. È un aspetto del tuo operare che mi interessa molto. Dunque, per te, prestarsi a questi interventi non è un male assoluto: il problema nasce quando ci si abbandona all'abitu-

dine, rinunciando a un atteggiamento critico verso il contesto in cui si opera.

LS Sì, non è possibile dedicarsi solo a certi temi. In alcuni casi, tentare qualcosa di diverso può essere l'occasione per porre delle domande, per sollecitare una reazione all'interno di situazioni di grande banalità tentando di dar loro un valore urbano. Il mio fine è sempre stato la città, anche quando progetto una casettina. Quando ho progettato casa Kalman, sono partito dal presupposto che la casa unifamiliare non è un elemento urbano, il che mi ha portato subito a confrontarmi con la contraddizione di un tema che mi interessava ma che, al contempo, non sentivo mio.

SM Un tema fondamentale al quale hai sempre riservato grande attenzione nei tuoi lavori è quello del limite: sembra che tu abbia sempre voglia di fissarne uno. Negli ultimi anni, però, il tuo punto di vista sull'argomento è cambiato (penso ad alcune discussioni affrontate nelle ultime edizioni del Seminario internazionale di Monte Carasso). Ho la sensazione che il tema del contenimento della città e altri temi correlati, come la necessità di definire dei vuoti, che sicuramente continui ad approvare perché hanno rappresentato dei capisaldi del tuo pensiero, non ti bastino più: è come se intravedessi la possibilità di andare oltre, o addirittura di rovesciare le carte. Mi ha molto sorpreso sentirti sostenere che questa città diffusa, che tu odi profondamente, vada lasciata libera di espandersi senza controllo; che dopo i fallimentari tentativi di contenerla, controllarla, oggi ha più senso conservare le energie per tentare di mettere in evidenza alcuni elementi che (grazie alla loro intrinseca potenza) possono ancora dare un contributo fondamentale allo spazio urbano. Questa considerazione, che potrebbe rovesciare alcune tue salde convinzioni, fa parte di una tua nuova visione sulla città?

LS Sì, è un'idea che è al centro dei miei pensieri ultimamente: quando mi chiedo cosa fare per uscire dall'infelice situazione di cui parlavo prima, penso proprio a questo. Non c'è più alcun bisogno di affannarsi a correggere i casini che abbiamo combinato. Invece di continuare a perdersi in piccoli interventi, bisognerebbe avere la forza di immaginare una nuova città, di crearne un'altra all'interno di quella che c'è già, scommettendo su elementi fondamentali della struttura del territorio. Ci sarebbe bisogno di ribaltare un sacco di cose, un'intera generazione di pensiero; finché non nascerà un'idea capace di farlo, a furia di fare casettine non ne verremo fuori.

SM Però un lavoro come quello di Monte Carasso lo rifaresti...

LS Sì, in effetti si arriva a quest'apparente contraddizione. Quel lavoro lo rifarei, ma c'è una giustificazione: Monte Carasso non fa parte di questo insulso proliferare della città. È un posto che aveva delle qualità che non si trovano altrove. Non era un granché di paese, ma possedeva tutti gli elementi che facevano venir voglia di farlo diventare un luogo con una chiara identità; alcuni paesi che puoi vedere oggi in Svizzera, invece, avresti voglia di raderli al suolo, altro che migliorarli.

SM Dunque esistono dei casi, come quello di Monte Carasso, che meritano un atteggiamento diverso. Sei andato molto vicino a creare un secondo Monte Carasso con quel bellissimo progetto in Italia, a Rosà, dove proponevi di preservare la torre piezometrica. Lì un potenziale ci sarebbe stato. Quindi non escludi occasioni del genere?

LS No, assolutamente. Quando hanno tirato giù quella torre dell'acqua, devo ammettere che è stato uno dei colpi più duri della mia vita. Ne ho sofferto almeno per un mese. È stato come se mi avessero tolto un pezzo di me stesso: quando ho visto la torre demolita ho pensato "non è possibile"...

SM Ecco, in quel caso avresti probabilmente rifatto un altro Monte Carasso, però ritieni che oggi ci siano casi in cui bisogna andare oltre. Non sai ancora di preciso come, ma ne intuisce la necessità. Uno dei progetti in cui sei riuscito ad andare davvero a fondo nella riflessione sulla città è la Deltametropoli d'Olanda. Ma in quel caso avevi il vantaggio di esserti posto, ancora una volta, la domanda giusta: quella di se e come ci si possa orientare all'interno della metropoli moderna come in una città tradizionale. Sei riuscito a spingere la riflessione fino a un certo grado di radicalità, a porre questioni fondamentali senza doverti per forza occupare di tutti gli aspetti. Quindi secondo te bisognerebbe lavorare su una scala diversa, metropolitana? Con gesti talmente potenti da innescare il cambiamento di cui parli?

LS Credo di sì. D'altra parte tengo a sottolineare come, nel caso di Deltametropoli, tutto ciò sia stato affrontato da un punto di vista molto pratico. Ho lavorato a quel progetto pensando alla possibilità di vedere, di conoscere e di riconoscere tutta la metropoli olandese atterrando con un aereo. La metropoli "diventa" un cerchio, la vedi. Quando atterri, sei all'interno di quel cerchio ma hai ancora la possibilità di

leggere ogni città che compone questa metropoli grazie alle torri che ne segnalano la presenza; dall'interno di questo cerchio vedi un alternarsi continuo di mare e città. Hai la concreta possibilità di abbracciare con lo sguardo e quindi di comprendere tutta la metropoli in pochi secondi. Era questo l'aspetto che mi interessava. Questo progetto supera la dimensione abituale di lettura di una città: anzi, l'idea tradizionale di dimensione non c'entra proprio più niente. Ritengo che rigettare questo progetto sia stato un'idiozia: secondo me, aveva le potenzialità per diventare "IL" progetto capace di dare finalmente un senso a una metropoli europea, senza dover buttar giù niente.

SM È per questo che accettavi il difetto di quella famosa città diffusa: il tuo interesse in quel caso prescindeva dalla scala, da come si compone il singolo brano di una città, per rivolgersi a una scala più ampia. La mia intuizione è che tu sia alla ricerca di qualcosa di talmente potente da lasciare in secondo piano i frammenti, le casette...

LS Proprio così. La potenza di questi temi rende inutile continuare a coltivare i propri orticelli. Bisogna arrivare a toccare questioni fondamentali.

SM: Questo è uno scatto che richiede una lucidità estrema: dietro l'angolo, c'è il rischio di tornare a progetti molto utopici, alle mega-strutture... E poi si tratta di un atteggiamento che hai sperimentato nella prima fase della tua carriera, e che hai poi abbandonato. O si tratta di qualcosa di diverso?

LS Penso di sì. Ma in realtà, non saprei risponderti con precisione perché, come dicevo prima, è qualcosa su cui continuo a riflettere ogni giorno, ma sono ancora lontano dall'aver trovato una risposta definitiva. Sono pensieri che sorgono, ma ci vorrà ancora del tempo prima di capire come possano concretizzarsi. Forse alla mia età non avrò il tempo per finire questa riflessione.

SM Trovo questi ultimi pensieri profondamente interessanti. Se ricordo bene, hai due cavalli di battaglia tra i progetti di Le Corbusier: il primo è la casa Curutchet in Argentina, che s'inserisce con grande precisione e sensibilità nel contesto tanto da averti fatto esclamare, quando l'hai vista per la prima volta, "questa è una mia casa!"; l'altro, al quale hai già accennato prima, è il progetto di concorso per l'ospedale di Venezia. Nello spiegare questo secondo progetto, tu dimostri l'abilità, la sensibilità con cui Le Corbusier legge la città e (perdonami

la brutta espressione) si sottomette al tessuto esistente. Mi dirai: "è Venezia, funziona", non è il tipo di città diffusa di cui stiamo parlando. Si potrebbe leggere una certa contraddizione tra il tuo elogiare la sensibilità di Le Corbusier in Argentina e a Venezia e il tuo desiderio di radicalità, più vicino ai suoi "progetti-bomba" per Rio de Janeiro o per il "Plan Obus" di Algeri. Hai l'impressione che oggi ci sia il bisogno di tornare a mettere delle "bombe", a inventare progetti che sappiano anche mettersi in contrasto con il contesto, se necessario?

LS Proprio così. Bombe che non distruggono. Questo secondo me è essenziale: non distruggere niente, ma mettere bombe.

Luigi Snozzi

Nato a Mendrisio nel 1932, è fra i più noti architetti svizzeri. Dopo essersi diplomato al Politecnico di Zurigo nel 1957, lavora negli studi di Peppo Brivio e di Rino Tami prima di aprire il proprio studio a Locarno nel 1958. Dal 1962 al 1968 lavora in associazione con Livio Vacchini. Parallelamente al lavoro come architetto inizia un'intensa attività didattica come professore invitato al Politecnico di Zurigo (1973-75), poi alla Scuola di architettura dell'Università di Ginevra (1981) e al Politecnico di Losanna (1980-82 e 1984-85), dove diventa professore ordinario nel 1985. In seguito a questa nomina apre un secondo studio a Losanna nel 1988. A partire dal 1998 è professore invitato in Italia nelle Facoltà di architettura di Trieste e di Alghero. Vincitore di numerosi concorsi, riceve nel 1993 il Premio "Prince of Wales" della Harvard University per il suo lavoro nel comune di Monte Carasso.

Stefano Moor

Nato a Lugano nel 1968, si diploma nel 1993 al Politecnico di Losanna con Luigi Snozzi, con il quale avvia una lunga collaborazione didattica presso lo stesso istituto di Losanna e nei seminari internazionali di progettazione di Monte Carasso, che continua tuttora. Parallelamente inizia un'attività professionale indipendente, senza trascurare numerose altre esperienze didattiche quale critico esterno. I suoi lavori sono stati presentati in mostre personali e collettive e ha tenuto conferenze in Svizzera e all'estero. Dal 2014 è docente presso l'HEPIA di Ginevra.

Fotografia: Jeremy Ayer

"Proceeding slowly, yet steadily"
Stefano Moor in conversation with
Luigi Snozzi

« Le projet d'architecture, qui nous permet d'identifier un lieu spécifique, la maison, qui remplit une fonction mais qui va pourtant au-delà, le monument, qui donne une valeur à un lieu banal, l'édifice enfin, qui nous paraît à la fois autonome et lié à un lieu spécifique, vieux de deux mille ans ou actuels, tous viennent au fond de Luigi Snozzi, car c'est lui qui nous a appris à les découvrir et à les comprendre. »

Roger Diener, *Le projet, la maison, le monument*

Stefano Moor

I would like to go over a few points with you. In the late 1980s, I came as a student to the Polytechnic Institute of Lausanne, where you were teaching. I remember that in my first class with you, I thought, "Finally, now we can start thinking and understanding..." To me (and to many other students), that first encounter was a revelation. My first two years of studies had been quite difficult and disorienting, then you opened up a whole world to me. From that day, first as your student and then as your assistant, I met many personalities with whom you were in touch, and although I have always seen you as somewhat of a lone rider, I have a fairly good idea of the extent of their impact on your work and research. I don't know so well your formative years, those before you became the "Master" we all know. Who were *your* masters, if you had any?

Luigi Snozzi

I suppose that one of the most influential personalities I met during my training was Enrico Filippini: he worked as an editor for the publishing house Feltrinelli in Milan, translated literary and philosophical works from German, and was a sophisticated and highly regarded intellectual. A man

of rare intelligence who opened my eyes to the world. In my youth, I went on countless trips with him, his wife Ruth Schmidhauser and Peppo Brivio, driving a Lambretta across southern Italy. Another key figure was Virgilio Gilardoni, who promoted an intense cultural activity through the Cinema Club that he founded. Gilardoni was a staunch communist, a true activist, hated by many. He once wrote me a beautiful letter, which is included in my Electa monograph.

Most of these encounters took place in Peppo Brivio's studio. Back then I was still studying at the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich and every summer I went to his studio "to learn the trade". Brivio was the one who introduced me to the fundamental issues of architecture. Tita Carloni, who was two years ahead of me in his studies, also worked in his studio. Carloni was an exceptional figure, extremely well read, a versatile intellectual who also wrote radio comedies in dialect. Brivio and Carloni taught me a lot: they introduced me to Wright's architecture, and this influence is quite obvious in my early works (the Lucchini house in Faido and, even earlier, my university project for a residential tower).

SM The residential tower project (which you often describe as a "challenge" to Peppo Brivio's architecture) dates from your seventh semester, toward the end of your studies. Would you tell me the story of your diploma project, the one that was initially rejected and which you had to do over?

LS In my last year, I got a "1" in Jurisprudence, the lowest grade one can get. And at the time, getting a "1" meant you had to postpone your diploma project. During that year I trained at Emilio Stanzani's sculpture workshop in Zurich: I would go to the garden of a nearby psychiatric institution and sculpt. The next year, I resumed my diploma project under the tutorship of Rino Tami, whom I had already met in Brivio's studio.

SM You often say that you didn't always plan to study architecture...

LS That's right. I wanted to become a painter, like my friend Livio Bernasconi; but there were twelve of us in the family and, as the fifth son (and first male born), I carried the weight of responsibility. My father wouldn't openly say it, but the message was clear: he didn't want me to become a painter. Everyone expected me to contribute to supporting the family. This family history prevented me from choosing that path. So I had to find a different trade which would satisfy both my father's expectations and my more "artistic" ambitions: and this is how I came to architecture.

SM Let's dwell some more on your years as a student at the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich. Who were your teachers? How do you assess the training you received during those years?

LS I remember William Dunkel, maybe the best teacher in the institute at the time, and Hans Hofmann, whom I truly appreciated and with whom I worked on my first diploma project: he was a very open person, genuinely interested in the work of his students. Both teachers clearly came from the Modernist Movement, but with a focus on formal language rather than on urban issues. In terms of expression, their legacy is still recognisable in my work up to this day.

SM You graduated in 1957 and returned to the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich in 1973 for two years, this time as a guest professor, and without any previous experience in teaching. Between these two dates, you became a prominent architect, created significant works in collaboration with Livio Vacchini, successfully took part in important competitions... in other words, you became an architect who is exceptionally aware of urban issues

and always capable of asking the right question. In those years, I perceive a turning point in your research: while your earlier projects approached the city almost by contrast (I am thinking of your proposals for the Polytechnic Institute of Lausanne, for the Administrative Centre in Perugia, or for Zurich's train station), your later projects elaborate with great accuracy on the cornerstones of your research, e.g., the necessity to draw the line between city and countryside and to work with empty spaces. wBeside the influences you already mentioned, are there others that you wish to acknowledge? Other personalities or circumstances that made of you "the" Luigi Snozzi we all know?

LS I think the person behind that turning point was Aldo Rossi, especially his book *L'architettura della città*. That book really clicked with me, I learned a lot from it. My fellow Swiss Italian architects and I were lucky to be able to read it in Italian as soon as it came out in 1966, while our Swiss German colleagues had to wait for the translation for years. Rossi has been very important for me. I mean his theory, of course.

SM In the years when you were teaching at the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich, between 1973 and 1975, Aldo Rossi was teaching there, too. Is that when you personally met him for the first time or were you two already in touch? And talking of Rossi, I wonder if the survey of the city of Bellinzona you made with Livio Vacchini and Tita Carloni is in any way indebted to the methodologies for urban analysis that Rossi developed in those years. Did you deliberately follow Rossi's method or was it merely a fortuitous meeting of practices?

LS I'd never met Rossi in person before Zurich. Of course, when we did the survey in Bellinzona, we all knew his work: the method we

used was based on the theories of Saverio Muratori, Aldo Rossi and Aldo Aymonino among others. The survey was supposed to be used in the city's urban development plan, and the development plan that came out of it was as bad as it could be. This is where I understood that these surveys had their limits and that we needed to go further than that. Surveys are necessary, but not sufficient to carry out a good project.

SM Rossi's book develops theories and methods. But where did you learn your sensitivity to urban design? On this point I have trouble drawing a parallel between you and Rossi or any other direct influence. Leaving theory aside, you have a deep understanding of your trade. When you work on the theme of the city, you never stop with the theory: you design and articulate it, always in search of the right opportunity to do some good architecture. This is where I find a substantial difference between you and many other theoreticians. I often heard you claim that an excess of theory may, in some cases, compromise the architect's work. Theory does belong in your work (as testified by all the books that surround you and by everything you know), but I feel that you never really put the accent on theory as such, that you are always more interested in the practical side. Not only in your professional experience as an architect, but also and especially in your work as a teacher.

LS Absolutely. In my classes I never spoke of theories in the abstract: I always and exclusively relied on the explanation of my own projects. And I never showed the work of other architects, except for that of Le Corbusier for the hospital of Venice – and extraordinary project which, had it been followed through, could have made a very important statement. If I ever proceeded differently, those were certainly very exceptional cases.

SM Indeed I do not recall you mentioning any other architects or their theories in your frontal lectures; what I do recall is your impressive capacity to draw on their teachings when discussing the projects of your students. You never explicitly talked about Palladio, yet through his works you guided us toward the possible solution of "our own" planning problems. Your approach to teaching seems to stress the practical aspect, architecture as a trade, just as you do in your professional activity as an architect. You work on a project as if you were solving a sudoku (one of your favourite hobbies): you put all your passion and attention to detail in solving the problem. I have very happy memories of working on projects with you, strenuously searching for "the" solution.

LS You cannot create a project without a smile on your lips. You need to be happy, there is no other way. You cannot work on a project with a stomach ache. The project, whatever its nature, requires a great deal of slow and patient research. Even today, before starting a new project, be it a small house or the Palace of Nations, I feel lost. The blank sheet stares back at me for days on end, and I feel incapable of expressing any idea. Nothing. Zip. This is why every new project scares me; I'm afraid I won't be up to the task. For the first days I do nothing, I try to not even think about it, until suddenly something clicks. It's always been like this, for me: I never started a project thinking "Yes, I can do it". Quite the opposite.

SM And yet, if I think of how you analyse projects when teaching, I am always impressed by how quickly you manage to pin down the central issue... I was never aware of your blank page issues. Maybe because, when I have the opportunity to work on a new project with you, the lack of immediate answers is compensated by your special curiosity and by your capacity to ask unexpected questions. For instance, the

other day, when we were discussing a potential new project for a residential area, the first questions you raised were: who is going to live there? What is the human context? It is as if you constantly reminded yourself of what your work is really about. Your famous invitation to put one's moral conscience before one's talent as an architect can also be seen in the way you work: before venturing on any new project, you always try to figure out if it's worth it and, if relevant, which topics must be underscored.

LS Yes, it is absolutely essential to understand what the project is about and what you are doing before sitting at the drawing desk. It's often a slow process because, once you've overcome that initial feeling of helplessness, you can easily stumble again and stop several times in the course of the project. And luckily so: when you stumble, you take a step forward. That was often the case with Vacchini. If after a few attempts we realised that we were going nowhere, we would drop everything and go to the bar and drink champagne. It's important to give yourself the time to find the right answer. In that sense, I've always suffered when working with people who, when faced with those natural setbacks, come up with dozens of alternatives in a row, as if they were fishing them out of some kind of storage.

SM Does your intolerance for ready answers extend to a more general idea of contemporary efficiency? A transcription of your conversation with the philosopher Fabio Merlini, titled *L'architettura inefficiente* (Inefficient Architecture), was recently published. Are you suggesting that the idea of super-efficiency might be dangerous?

LS It's terrible. You know, my best friend ever was a fisherman. He passed for the village idiot but he was superb at fishing. Well, when I was with him (it's almost hard for me to talk about it), I felt we could spend months together

like this. I was fascinated by his great perseverance. As a fisherman, fishing was never enough for him: every day, he tried to improve what he didn't like about yesterday's performance. I met another person who was like that: the chef of a restaurant where I used to go, who cooked veal breast with spaghetti. His spaghetti were always way overcooked, but his veal breast was the best in the world. I swear, for fifty years he cooked nothing but that. He was a one-menu guy: spaghetti and veal breast for fifty years, and every day he made them with the same love and dedication, but always trying to improve them. That's the kind of people I like, those who carry on and never give up, ever ever ever. I enjoy repetition.

SM You have that aphorism about repetition: "Variety is the prelude to monotony, if you want to avoid it you must repeat your element".

LS Yes. Just like my father used to do. He was a veterinarian and, as member of a curious commission that verified the authenticity of Lourdes miracles, he would travel around the Canton of Ticino to give a lecture that I know by heart, titled "Lourdes and medicine". I had to accompany him (I must have been seven or eight) and I just couldn't stand it: I was supposed to run the slideshow while listening for the umpteenth time to the same lecture, the same words, and the same jokes. He always started with "Lourdes is on the bank of the river Gave, which begins with a 'G' like God and ends with an 'ave' like *Ave Maria*"... so embarrassing, I literally wanted to hide under the table! Well, that's the kind of people I like. Today, in such relentless repetition, I see my father's true strength. Here is another anecdote about that side of his personality: there was a fish disease (I don't recall its name) which could be passed on to humans, and my father had to give regular lectures to raise awareness among fishermen about that

disease and how to prevent it. One day, during one of those endlessly repeated lectures, the audience started throwing tomatoes at him. My father, hit by the first tomato, went on as if nothing had happened: "as for the trout..." and then the second tomato hit him! By the time he was done he was dripping with tomatoes, yet he did not bat an eye: he would get hit by a tomato, wipe it off, and go on. My father never gave up, ever. I like simple people who can tirelessly repeat the same task, day in, day out. This kind of people changes every day, because every day they increase their knowledge by a fractional amount, invisible to most. Here lies the strength of a person: in proceeding slowly, yet steadily. The steps must be short.

SM Efficiency, in this case, means to acquire an in-depth knowledge of a given topic, to avoid being superficial: it has nothing to do with a spasmodic search for variety.

LS Indeed it doesn't. Efficiency requires advancing one millimetre after the other. One millimetre per day is already too much. I like people who move that way, and I have surrounded myself with friends like this.

SM Your aspiration to patient research never required many words: I remember you often invited us to speak less and focus on our work. But drawing, unlike words, seems to have an absolutely essential role in your research. When I discovered your work for the first time in the Electa monograph (I was still a high school student at the time), I was impressed, even more than by the project as such, by the way in which the Kalman house was drawn. I was always struck by your attention to drawing which, over the years, was translated into a rigorous system of representation that regulated everything, from the size to the scale of the line. Some time ago, while going

through my documents, I found a chart that I used in your studio, which codifies even the colour of the self-adhesive papers... You wanted our drawings to be as simple and as clear as possible. That was always very important, wasn't it?

LS Always. I was always interested in drawing as an opportunity for synthesis, as a moment when signs, stripped down to their bare essentials, acquire a well-defined meaning. A line should never be drawn carelessly. Even in the early stages of a general blueprint, the drawings can be instrumental to the project by making explicit the location's key points of reference. If you fail to highlight those elements, you cannot understand the context.

SM An instance that expresses particularly well your ability to shape a project and communicate your passion is the Braunschweig project that we presented two years ago in Como. The wonderful model you created in 1979 was placed in the middle of one of the circular rooms on the corner of Terragni's *Novocomum* building; on the background, against the rounded wall, was a blow up of your Braunschweig cross-section which, in a few concise lines, summed up the project's underlying idea. Beside this attention to drawing, Braunschweig (and the idea of turning the emptiness left by the destructive power of war into an international monument in memory of World War II) highlights other classical themes of your work: emptiness as a crucial moment in the construction of a city, but above all the civic awareness and clear political position of your work as an architect.

LS To me, architects must be, before anything else, critical intellectuals. Their task is to resist any power or event of which they do not approve. Thinking of Braunschweig, which epitomises the destruction that society

can wreak in times of war, today I ask myself: what did our society produce in times of peace?

SM Your civic awareness and political commitment are expressed in a tireless desire to work on the city, to achieve the urban potential of every single project, down to the most insignificant speculation house. This requires a constant attention to the evolution of the city and being deeply rooted in the present. What is your vision of our contemporary age? Some time ago I heard you strongly criticise the state of contemporary architecture. Are you still so pessimistic?

LS Absolutely. I do appreciate the effort and I'm sure there are good architects around who produce single good-quality projects, and I'm not saying that everything that is being made today is garbage. But I don't see any openings for shaking things up and for really taking a step forward. Architects are getting by and producing single elements that can be interesting, but overall they seem unable to trigger what I'm expecting. I can't think of any project I've seen in the last few years that raised what I consider as fundamental questions. They're all brilliant, and to me being brilliant is a setback, certainly not a quality: being common is much better. But I wouldn't know how to get out of this situation. I must admit that I find it quite difficult to tell you how I see the current situation and its possible developments. Nothing seems to express any fundamental novelty, and even the good works I see just repeat what's already been done before.

SM So you are not referring so much to the lack of good-quality buildings as to their inability to inspire a critical reflection on the condition of contemporary cities. Actually some of your students, now successful architects, did endeavour to do so. Are you aware of their efforts?

LS I am not, but I can see what they did, the districts they built, and I say to myself that these works could have been done fifty years ago: I can't find any element of novelty.

SM You always refused the notion of "urban sprawl", while deploring the lack of critical attention to it. In your work as an architect, however, you occasionally agreed to work on that type of city, which you hate. And when you did, you tried to provide some answers. I am fascinated by this aspect of your work. So, to you, accepting that kind of project is not necessarily an absolute evil: the problem arises when it becomes a habit and when people abandon their critical attitude toward the context in which they operate.

LS That's right, you can't focus only on certain topics. Sometimes, trying something different can be an opportunity to ask questions and elicit a reaction in order to attribute an urban value to extremely trivial situations. My ultimate goal is always the city, even when working on a common house. In the case of the Kalman house, I started from the assumption that a single-family house is not an urban element, which forced to face the contradiction of being interested in a theme which did not belong to me.

SM In your work, you always pay considerable attention to the theme of the boundary, as if you always wanted to establish one. But in more recent years, your perspective has changed (I am thinking of the discussions we had during the last editions of our International Seminar in Monte Carasso). You seem no longer satisfied with the idea of containing the city and other related topics, such as the necessity of defining empty spaces, although you doubtlessly still approve these cornerstones of your past research: it is as if you were seeing an opportunity of going beyond those topics, or even of turning

them upside down. I was very surprised to hear you claim that the urban sprawl, which you despise, should be allowed to expand freely; that after the failed attempts to contain and control it, today it makes more sense to spare our energies in order to highlight a few elements which (thanks to their intrinsic force) can contribute in a significant manner to the urban space. Is this consideration, which appears to overturn some of your beliefs, part of your new perspective on the city?

LS Yes, it's something I've been thinking about lately: when I wonder what we should do to get out of the unfortunate situation I just mentioned, this is precisely what comes to my mind. We no longer need to run around trying to fix the mess that we've made. Instead of losing ourselves into details, we must have the strength to imagine a new city inside the one that already exists, investing on the territory's structural elements. There are many things to revolutionize, a whole generation of ideas; until we find the right ideas, going on building small houses will be of no help.

SM But you wouldn't mind working again on a project like Monte Carasso ...

LS Yes, there is indeed a contradiction: Monte Carasso is not part of that meaningless urban sprawl. It is a place with unique qualities. It wasn't much of a village, yet it possessed all the elements that made you want to turn it into a place with a clear identity; unlike other villages that you can see today in Switzerland, which one would rather demolish than improve.

SM So there are cases, like Monte Carasso, which deserve a different approach. You came quite close to achieving a second Monte Carasso with that wonderful project in Rosà, in Italy, where you proposed to preserve the water tower. The project had potential.

Does it mean that you do not rule out that kind of opportunity?

LS I don't. When they took down that water tower, it was one of the hardest blows I ever had to deal with in my life. I suffered for a whole month. It was as if they had torn away a piece of me: when I saw the demolished tower, I thought "I can't believe it"...

SM In that case you would have been willing to create a second Monte Carasso. But you think that in other cases, today, we should go further than that. You don't know exactly how, but you feel it is necessary. One of the projects where you really went far in your reflection on the city is the Deltametropolis in the Netherlands. But there you had the advantage of having asked, once again, the right question: whether and how we can orient ourselves in a modern metropolis as in a traditional city. You managed to push your reflection to quite a radical degree and to ask fundamental questions without necessarily having to consider all the aspects of the project. Do you think we need to work on a different, metropolitan scale? With gestures that are so powerful as to trigger the change that you mentioned?

LS I think so. But I also want to stress that the whole Deltametropolis project was approached in very practical terms. I was thinking of the possibility to see, know and recognise the whole metropolis while landing on a plane. The metropolis "becomes" a circle that you can see. When you land, you are inside that circle, but you can also read every city that composes the metropolis thanks to the towers that mark their presence; from within that circle, you see a constant alternation of sea and cities. You have the concrete opportunity to visually encompass and therefore understand the whole metropolis in a few seconds. That's the aspect I was interested in. It's a project that goes be-

yond the usual dimension of reading a city: the very notion of dimension, in its traditional sense, is no longer relevant. Turning down that project was a foolish choice: I think it had the potential to finally create a meaningful European metropolis, without having to demolish anything.

SM That's why you accepted the downside of the urban sprawl: your interest, in that case, lay beyond issues of scale or of composing a single urban fragment, but addressed something larger. My intuition is that you are looking for something so powerful that fragments and small houses become secondary...

LS Exactly. These topics are so powerful that cultivating your own garden becomes irrelevant. We must reach the fundamental questions.

SM You need great clarity of mind to achieve that: there is always the risk of becoming involved in projects that are too utopian, too focused on mega-structures... And after all, this is an approach that you adopted at the beginning of your career, and which you later abandoned. Or is something different?

LS I believe it is. But I couldn't give you a precise answer because, as I mentioned before, it is something that I'm still thinking about every day, and I am still far from a definitive answer. These are budding thoughts, and giving them a concrete shape will take time. Given my age, I might not be able to bring that reflection to a conclusion.

SM These ideas are extremely interesting. If I am not mistaken, you have two favourite projects by Le Corbusier: the first is the Curutchet house in Argentina, whose accurate and insightful inscription in its context led you to cry out, when you saw it for the first time: "This is one of my houses!";

and the other, which you already mentioned, is his project for the hospital in Venice. When explaining that second project, you stress Le Corbusier's sensitive and skilful reading of the city and how he (please forgive the expression) bows down to the existing urban fabric. You might say that it works because it's Venice, not the kind of urban sprawl we were talking about. Yet one could find a slight contradiction between your praise for Le Corbusier's sensitivity in Argentina and in Venice and your longing for radical ideas, closer to his "bomb-projects" for Rio de Janeiro for the "Plan Obus" in Algiers. Do you feel we need to go back to those "bombs", to project that can position themselves in contrast to their surrounding, if needs be?

LS Absolutely. Bombs that do not destroy anything. That's the whole point, I think: to place non-destructive bombs.

Luigi Snozzi

Born in Mendrisio in 1932, Luigi Snozzi is one of the best-known architects in Switzerland. After graduating at the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich in 1957, he worked in the studios of Peppo Brivio and Rino Tami before opening his own studio in Locarno in 1958. From 1962 to 1968, he collaborated with Livio Vacchini. Parallel to his work as an architect, Snozzi taught as an invited professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich (1973-75), then at the School of Architecture of Geneva University (1981), and finally at the Polytechnic Institute of Lausanne (1980-82 and 1984-85), where he became full professor in 1985. After this appointment, he opened a second studio in Lausanne in 1988. Since 1998, he has been an invited professor at the faculties of architecture of Trieste and Alghero. Snozzi is the recipient of many awards, including the "Prince of Wales" prize, which he received in 1993 for his work in Monte Carasso.

Stefano Moor

Born in Lugano in 1968, Stefano Moor graduated in 1993 from the Polytechnic Institute of Lausanne with Luigi Snozzi, with whom he started a long collaboration as a teacher in the same institute and at the international architecture seminars of Monte Carasso, which he still organises. In parallel, he pursued a professional independent activity and had numerous teaching experiences as an external examiner. His works have been presented in personal and collective exhibitions and he has held lectures in Switzerland and abroad. Since 2014, he has been teaching at the HEPIA in Geneva.

Photographs: Jeremy Ayer

Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst/
Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018
Diese Publikation wird vom Bundesamt
für Kultur im Rahmen seiner Förderung
des schweizerischen Kunstschaffens
herausgegeben und finanziert. Sie
erscheint in Zusammenarbeit mit dem
Verlag Schweizer Kunstverein, als
kostenlose Beilage zum Kunstbulletin
Nr. 7-8 / 18.

Grand Prix suisse d'art /
Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018
Cette publication éditée et financée par
l'Office fédéral de la culture dans le
cadre de son soutien à la création
artistique en Suisse paraît en collabora-
tion avec la Société suisse des beaux-
arts, comme supplément gratuit du
Kunstbulletin n° 7-8 / 18.

Gran Premio svizzero d'arte /
Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018
Il presente volume, edito e finanziato
dall'Ufficio federale della cultura nel
quadro del suo sostegno alla creazione
artistica in Svizzera, è pubblicato in
collaborazione con la Società svizzera di
belle arti, come supplemento gratuito del
Kunstbulletin 7-8 / 18.

Swiss Grand Award for Art /
Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018
This publication was produced and
financed by the Swiss Federal Office
of Culture as part of its support for the
arts in Switzerland. It is included as
a free supplement with Kunstbulletin
no. 7-8 / 18, in cooperation with Verlag
Schweizer Kunstverein.

Jury, giuria, Prix Meret Oppenheim 2018

Eidgenössische Kunstkommission
Commission fédérale d'art
Commissione federale d'arte
Federal Art Commission

Giovanni Carmine
Präsident
Président
Presidente
President

Laura Arici
Valentin Carron
Victoria Easton
Julie Enckell Julliard
Anne-Julie Raccoursier
Anselm Stalder

Aldo Nolli
Anne Marie Wagner
Experten Architektur
Experts en architecture
Esperti di architettura
Architecture experts

Léa Fluck
Sekretärin
Secrétaire
Segretaria
Secretary

Die Eidgenössische Kunstkommission ist beauftragt, das Bundesamt für Kultur in allen Fragen der Kunst- und Architekturförderung des Bundes zu beraten. Sie bildet die Jury bei der Verleihung des Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst / Prix Meret Oppenheim.

La Commission fédérale d'art a pour mission de conseiller l'Office fédéral de la culture dans toutes les questions touchant à l'encouragement fédéral de l'art et de l'architecture. Elle fait office de jury pour l'attribution du Prix Meret Oppenheim.

La Commissione federale d'arte ha il compito di consigliare l'Ufficio federale della cultura in tutte le questioni inerenti alla promozione dell'arte e dell'architettura da parte della Confederazione. La Commissione federale d'arte costituisce la giuria per l'attribuzione del Gran Premio svizzero d'arte / Prix Meret Oppenheim.

The Federal Art Commission has the task of advising the Federal Office of Culture on all matters concerning federal support for art and architecture. The Commission also acts as the jury for the Swiss Grand Award For Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim.

Preisträgerinnen und
Preisträger
Lauréates et lauréats
Vincitrici e vincitori
Awardees
2001– 2017

2001
Peter Kamm
Ilona Rüegg
George Steinmann

2002
Ian Anüll
Hannes Brunner
Marie José Burki
Relax
(Marie-Antoinette
Chiarenza, Daniel Croptier,
Daniel Hauser)
Renée Levi

2003
Silvia Bächli
Rudolf Blättler
Hervé Graumann
Harm Lux
Claude Sandoz

2004
Christine Binswanger &
Harry Gugger
Roman Kurzmeyer
Peter Regli
Hannes Rickli

2005
Miriam Cahn
Alexander Fickert &
Katharina Knapkiewicz
Johannes Gachnang
Gianni Motti
Václav Požárek
Michel Ritter

2006
Dario Gamboni
Markus Raetz
Catherine Schelbert
Robert Suermond
Rolf Winnewisser
Peter Zumthor

2007
Véronique Bacchetta
Kurt W. Forster
Peter Roesch
Anselm Stalder

2008
edition fink
(Georg Rutishauser)
Mariann Grunder
Manon
Mario Pagliarani
Arthur Rüegg

2009
Ursula Biemann
Roger Diener
Christian Marclay
Muda Mathis &
Sus Zwick
Ingrid Wildi Merino

2010
Gion A. Caminada
Yan Duyvendak
Claudia & Julia Müller
Annette Schindler
Roman Signer

2011
John Armleder
Patrick Devanthery &
Inès Lamunière
Silvia Gmür
Ingeborg Lüscher
Guido Nussbaum

2012
Bice Curiger
Niele Toroni
Günther Vogt

2013
Thomas Huber
Miller & Maranta
Marc-Olivier Wahler

2014
Anton Bruhin
Pipilotti Rist
Catherine Quéloz
pool Architekten

2015
Christoph Büchel
Olivier Mosset
Urs Stahel
Stauer & Hasler

2016
Adelina von Fürstenberg
Christian Philipp Müller
Martin Steinmann

2017
Daniela Keiser
Peter Märkli
Philip Ursprung

Die Preisverleihung fand am 11. Juni 2018 in Basel statt. Die Preisträgerin und die Preisträger wurden geehrt von:

La remise des prix a eu lieu le 11 juin 2018 à Bâle. La lauréate et les lauréats ont été honorés par :

La cerimonia di premiazione si è svolta a Basilea l'11 giugno 2018. Hanno reso omaggio alle vincitrici e ai vincitori:

The award ceremony took place in Basel on 11 June 2018. The laureates were honored by:

Bea Schlingelhoff (Künstlerin, Zürich):
Sylvie Fleury
Kathleen Bühler (Kuratorin Gegenwartskunst, Kunstmuseum Bern):
Thomas Hirschhorn
Werner Oechslin (Kunst- und Architekturhistoriker, Einsiedeln):
Luigi Snozzi

Herausgeber, Editeur, Editore da, Publisher
Bundesamt für Kultur, Office fédéral de la culture, Ufficio federale della cultura, Federal Office of Culture
Hallwylstrasse 15, CH-3003 Bern

Redaktion, Rédaction, Redazione, Editor
Manuela Schlumpf

Beiträge, Textes, Testi, Texts
Giovanni Carmine
Léa Fluck
Samuel Gross (Sylvie Fleury)
Stefano Moor (Luigi Snozzi)
Yasmil Raymond (Thomas Hirschhorn)

Übersetzung, Traduction, Traduzione, Translations
Daniela Almansi, Philippe Moser,
Monica Nolli, Bram Opstelten,
Alain Perrinjaquet, Chrisoula Petridis,
Davide Pivetta

Korrektur, Relecture, Rilettura, Proofreading
Daniela Almansi, Philippe Moser,
Monica Nolli, Bram Opstelten,
Alain Perrinjaquet, Chrisoula Petridis,
Ambroise Tièche

Gestaltung, Conception, Progetto grafico, Graphic Design
Vela Arbutina, Zürich

Fotografien, Photographies, Fotografie, Photographs
Reto Schmid (Sylvie Fleury)
Jiajia Zhang (Thomas Hirschhorn)
Jeremy Ayer (Luigi Snozzi)

Schriften, Caractères, Caratteri, Typeface
Neue Haas Unica

Druck, Impression, Stampa, Printed by
Druckerei Odermatt AG, Dallenwil

Auflage, Tirage, Tiratura, Print run
15'000

ISBN 978-3-9522701-3-4

© 2018 Bundesamt für Kultur, Bern, die Autorinnen und Autoren für ihre Texte sowie Reto Schmid, Jeremy Ayer, Jiajia Zhang für die Fotografien.

Bild: Meret Oppenheim, *Symmetrisches Gesicht mit Locken*, (Tdb), 1960.
© 2018, ProLitteris, Zurich.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI
Département fédéral de l'intérieur DFI
Dipartimento federale dell'interno DFI
Departament federal da l'intern DFI
Bundesamt für Kultur BAK
Office fédéral de la culture OFC
Ufficio federale della cultura UFC
Uffizi federal da cultura UFC

