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View of Art Plural Gallery
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Art Plural Gallery is a gallery dedicated to modern and contemporary art and design, located in the heart of the cultural district of Singapore. Founded by art trader Frédéric de Sernaclens, this innovative platform presents solo shows, group exhibitions, installations, public art projects, conferences as well as artistic productions. Art Media Agency interviewed its founder, Frédéric de Senarclens.

AMA: You established the Art Plural Gallery in Singapore in 2008, after having left your hometown Geneva. Why did you choose Singapore to expand your activities?

Frédéric de Senarclens (F.d.S): We founded the gallery in 2008 in order to develop my art trade and gallery management activities in Asia. Singapore was more attractive than Hong Kong since it was a younger market with a strong potential. Besides, the government in Singapore have invested some colossal sums to develop a great number of infrastructures, art fairs, museums, and free-ports for quite a number of years now, in order to transform the City-State into a flagship cultural pole in Asia. In Singapore, we organised a few public art projects, we invited international artists, and we participated in art fairs before inaugurating the Art Plural Gallery in 2011.

AMA: Is it easier to open a gallery in Singapore?

F.d.S: After managing my own gallery in Geneva for a few years, it was much easier for me to open my gallery in Singapore. However, to answer your question, Geneva was my hometown and from the start I benefitted from an important network and a captive public of collectors. In Singapore, I had to start from scratch, overcome cultural borders and progressively gain the trust of Asian collectors.



Frederic de Senarclens

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AMA: Could you please speak about the art market in Singapore? Are there a lot of collectors?

F.d.S: At the crossroads between Indonesia, China and India, Singapore is an ideal location in Asia and attracts collectors from the entire region. The recent success of “Art Stage Singapore,” the international contemporary art fair, shows the importance of the south-eastern market in Asia. Organised during the festival, our personal exhibition of Fabienne Verdier was a tremendous success. Throughout the past few years, we have noticed a real enthusiasm for art and seen the number of collectors increase.

AMA: How do you choose the artists with whom you work?

F.d.S: Above all, according to personal taste and thanks to my “good eye” for contemporary art. Art is a passionate profession. I only choose artists whose work and philosophy I admire. Meeting back at the studio is a crucial, often intense moment. Whether the Thukral & Tagra in India, Bernar Venet in the south of France, Chun Kwang Young in Korea, or the Starn brothers in New York, they all tell a story and I am very grateful that they opened their doors to receive us.

AMA: Please tell us more about your background. Why did you choose art trading?

F.d.S: Art has always been my passion and I have been a collector for a very long time. I studied political sciences and economics, and after working abroad, I had the opportunity to work for a major art trader. Then I opened my own business with my own gallery.

AMA: You focus mostly on modern and contemporary art and design. Did you choose these specialities according to the taste of Singaporean collectors?

F.d.S: My primary expertise is modern and contemporary art. Design Art is an innovative discipline and we thought that it would be interesting to bring it to Asia. As a matter of fact, we have just inaugurated the exhibition “Pablo Reinoso” in Macau, on the occasion of French May, which got a lot of media attention. Our choice of art reflects my taste and my artistic preference, which I pass on to my clients.

AMA: You also organise conferences and artistic publications. Are the residents of Singapore open to learning art?

F.d.S: The Singaporean public is very curious and wants to learn in general. As for the collectors, they are very well informed and extremely educated. As for these conferences, which attract a large public, we offer above all the opportunity to meet artists and to understand their practices.

AMA: You have been mentioned by the press as a leading gallery in Singapore. How did you succeed in reaching that status?

F.d.S: It is the fruit of an incredible amount of work. We have organised some major artistic projects, public art, and numerous exhibitions. The solo shows of Ian Davenport, Shirin Neshat, Bernar Venet and Fabienne Verdier attracted a great number of visitors and stirred great interest from the international press.

AMA: You are located in a historical building, in the heart of the cultural district of Singapore. How did you choose this location?

F.d.S: We were looking for a great commercial area in this historical part of the city, in the heart of the district of museums. We were lucky to find this unique four-storey place, 1,200sqm in an Art Deco building. It is the dream of all gallery owners...

AMA: You emphasise the meeting of the East and the West through cultural exchanges, dialogues and ideas. Is it because you wish to educate collectors or is it a matter of personal taste?

F.d.S: The Art Plural Gallery is an international gallery project in the heart of Singapore. It is therefore important to create an intercultural platform, to favour exchanges namely between the East and the West. With artists such as Qiu Jie, whose works will be presented in October 2013, Chun Kwang Young and Fabienne Verdier, this dialogue is reflected even in the heart of their works.

AMA: You will be celebrating the two years of your existence at the end of May. For this occasion, you chose to exhibit the works of Korean artist Chun Kwang Young. Why did you choose this artist in particular?

F.d.S: We are very happy to present the works of this tremendous artist within our walls. This exhibition will be spread throughout our storeys for a total immersion into his artistic universe. He is one of the greatest Korean artists and we are pleased to honour him.

AMA: Thinking over the past two years, would you have chosen Singapore as the city to open your gallery or would you have chosen another city?

F.d.S: Singapore has come to be an excellent choice. It is often the first spot to be chosen in Asia. It is a young, dynamic and entrepreneurial city in which I find myself.

AMA: What are your plans for the future?

F.d.S: We would like to continue in this path and develop our international activities.