

Gina Folly
Dolce Vita

From October 6th to December 8th, 2023

Opening, Thursday, October 5th, 2023, from 6 to 8 pm

Nuit des Bains, Thursday, November 9th, 2023, from 6 to 9 pm

Guided tour with the artist, 6:30 pm

Gina Folly's work focuses on everyday life, on the interactions between the private and public space, between the intimate and social realms. She takes a precise, ironic and subtly critical look at the objects, messages and situations that surround us on a daily basis, which she retains, photographs and isolates in order to modify them and transpose them into the field of art. This gesture of appropriation, transformation and exhibition questions their real function, their purpose and above all the epistemological impact that these ordinary materials can have on our lives. She dissects them in order to reveal their poetic and dramatic potential, and their psychological and political impact.

The objects chosen by Folly question our condition as human beings, catapulted into an often hostile and coercive society. She endeavours to highlight the intrinsic contradictions, the underlying and imperceptible violence, lurking in all the signs of power that flood the social and political space, and parasitise our lives.

Folly chooses a variety of seemingly banal objects, such as boxes, electrical circuits, chains, padlocks, light bulbs, fans, handles and locks, eyelets and pregnancy tests. She extracts them from their context, transforms or duplicates them, slightly modifying the materials, formats, colours or finish, and recombines them with other objects, accentuating the feeling of constraint, hindrance and confinement.

In 2019, she intervened in the public space for the Kunsthau Baselland in Basel. Outside, Folly installed a large photograph of a bookshelf belonging to a friend she had stayed with. The title, *Fashion, Sex and Death - Science - Sports, Gardens and Conspicuous Consumption*, simply transcribes the labels that are stuck on the shelves, indicating the classification themes which group together the words "fashion" and "sex" with "death," "sport" with "garden" and "conspicuous consumption." Without alteration, this labelling already suggests a commentary and a political questioning. The framing of the photograph, a close-up on these few shelves, precludes an overall or interior view, accentuating the feeling of suffocation already induced by the themes chosen to arrange these books. This work is emblematic of that which underpins Gina Folly's work and determines its critical scope.

On the occasion of this exhibition, she spoke about her work and her commitment in a discussion with Inès Goldbach, the director of the Kunsthau Baselland and the curator of the exhibition, which appeared in the book *Listening to Artists* (published by édition VfmK Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2022):

"My works almost always generate from a photograph. I'm keeping a sort of diary, mostly taken with my phone. I document my daily life as an observer. They're architectural structures, objects and social

events that make our daily life easier, disrupt it, make it more complicated, or ones that I don't understand. Especially because of that, it can become interesting to document them. These moments mostly vanish again in my archive. I go back to them when I'm working on a specific project. They result in mostly appropiate objects that I reproduce and specify. These processes are about entering relationships. Be it getting to know the person who produced the object I'm attracted to, or who knows the reason of its existence, or to find the right producer to make exact replicas of the respective works."

In 2023, for her series of photographs exhibited at the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart, Gina Folly opted for a simple medium-format film camera with which she photographed members of the Quasitutto association of retired people, which offers all kinds of day-to-day support services. For another project, also in Basel, she distributed small disposable cameras to a number of children, so that they could take photos of their favourite works on display at the Basel Social Club, the fair that took place during ArtBasel 2023. In these two projects, the shooting is simple, on a 1:1 scale, with no aesthetic overkill, be it in terms of the framing, image processing, gesture, intention, recording. All of these parameters remain the most important, with no stylistic effects, no aesthetic overkill, no technical, dramatic or sentimental effects. A simple document, like an image seen in "real life," whose recording method perfectly reflects Folly's desire to remain in the background.

This absence of pathos allows viewers to project their own feelings, memories or experiences onto these very neutral, open images. These "implicit" images create an open space for appropriation and projection. Paradoxically, they have a greater impact on viewers' memories, making them more endearing.

The objects chosen by Folly are often not commercial products; they are made or transformed by their user for a very specific, functional, practical use; they are inexpensive, devoid of luxury or decoration. Like the fountains for refreshing coconuts that can be found on beaches. Built by the farmers themselves – a kind of DIY –, adapted to their use and made with "the means at hand." The fountain exhibited in June 2023 at the entrance to the Basel Social Club, during ArtBasel, was the perfect replica of one them.

Hans-Peter Feldmann, Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, Fischli and Weiss, and even Ed Ruscha have all worked in series, establishing a principle beforehand, a subject for collection, a pretext for repetition, multiplication of images or objects, made or appropriated, linked to everyday life. But whereas these artists practised a distancing, offering us a glimpse of our world through the prism a critical and necessary irony and scepticism, Gina Folly does not shy away from a compassionate dimension, in an inclusive gesture, never looking down on her subjects. By simply capturing everyday life, her environment and residual micro-events, however minute they may be, her works always bear witness to a society that is trying to maintain a precarious balance, a fairness and humanity that are so often abused. This empathy and awareness of otherness is the sign of a shift into another era.

As part of her exhibition project at the Centre d'édition contemporaine, Gina Folly will be producing an edition, a series of bouquets of preserved flowers presented in cardboard boxes coated with a varnish that protects against humidity and makes the boxes shiny. Each box bears an inscription, a very short phrase found randomly on a horoscope application that predicts the day ahead: slightly simplistic aphorisms, advice, judgements or trivial, absurd prophecies, whose meaninglessness and naivety create a poetic or downright comedic effect.

The process of preserving the flowers in this edition consisted of replacing the sap with glycerine, so that the plant retains a living appearance for many years, without the need for any special care. Once the bouquet has been preserved, no external intervention is required to ensure that the plants retain their original freshness. They are protected from wilting, frozen in a state of almost

eternal flowering, but their colour is transformed: the petals take on a light grey-pink tint, almost black and white. A light, subtle, refined metaphor for the passage from life to art.

Gina Folly's second project for her exhibition at the CEC will feature a frame containing a single sachet of seeds from the "Dolce Vita" flower mix - a reference to the title of the exhibition. The name of the mixture and the brand of these seeds, SELECT, allows Folly to intuitively and emotionally put this existential and philosophical question into perspective. What determines our choices, be they individual or collective? How does this infinite multitude of choices - from belief in chance, to the notion of the preconditioned unconscious, from chaos to consciousness and freedom of choice - influence our paths and our lives?

Gina Folly was born in Zurich in 1983. She lives and works between Basel and Paris. In recent years she has presented several solo exhibitions, including: *Autofokus. Manor Kunstpreis 2023*, Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart, Basel (2023); Solo presentation, Ermes Ermes, Paris Internationale, Paris (2019); *Fashion, Sex and Death - Science - Sports, Gardens and Conspicuous Consumption*, Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel (2019). Her work has also been shown in group exhibitions such as: *CITY SALTS: THE GINA SHOW*, Salts, Basel (2022); *WHIMSIES*, Essener Kunstverein, Essen (2022); *THINK, AND THEN THINK AGAIN*, Sgomento Zurigo, Zurich (2022); *ORCA - Duo-Show with Philipp Timischl*, Fondation Fiminco, Paris (2021); *PRK-1U*, Tonus, Paris (2021); *A Part*, Kunstcredit, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2020); *Reality Companions*, Motto Berlin, Berlin (2020); *Groupshow*, Bel Ami, Los Angeles (2019); *life and limbs*, Swiss Institute, New York (2019).



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