

1986 was one of the most exciting years of my life and totally immersed me in the contemporary art world of the megalopolis, a true cultural melting-pot. In New York I came into contact with a microcosm that aroused a lasting passion to discover new artistic scenes emerging in contemporary art. The city also taught me to work in a different and very personal way.

With my destiny all mapped out, I could never have imagined that New York was going to be a city that would count for so much in my whole professional career, not only intellectually but in every way it sparked my passion for art and has been the catalyst that changed my life and made me go out and discover contemporary art.//On my second trip to the Big Apple where I still had no contacts at all and where I was visiting the capital of contemporary art alone, walking through the districts of Soho, Chelsea, door to door, floor to floor, I fell under its spell. I wanted to learn, understand, exchange, with the idea of later on developing the wealth of creation this great city brought me for the development of contemporary art, but also for the upheaval it triggered in my own personal development.

In those days I already knew Olivier Mosset and John Armleder, and they were both already present on the American scene. I quickly realized that on my own I was losing precious time and that to progress I had to listen to people I admired and who were part of this world.

One day Olivier Mosset introduced me to a young, freshly-appointed curator in New York, Bob Nickas. We immediately got on well together and shared our passion. For ten days we would meet from 9pm to 10am to go round galleries, attend vernissages, visit studios, art centres, and the alternative venues he had decided to show me. I also took a free day to visit the Metropolitan and the MoMA to see the great historic artists and, for example, exhibitions of works by Picasso, Braque and others of an even more classical vein. Bob was very excited about a show he had seen at the MoMA in the 1960s called Real Art and, over twenty years later, he has proposed building on this theme to create another Real Art revisited exhibition with me in Geneva, but exhibiting the new generation this time.

With Bob Nickas as a teacher I was able to penetrate that universe. He is a man of few words, almost withdrawn, uncompromising, who has a very intellectual approach to art, in fact quite the opposite of me (self-taught, sensitive, passionate, someone who is very intuitive and who has had to find his own way). Bob guided me along the road to discovery.

Today, 26 years later, I have decided to take stock of that part of my life history by exhibiting some of the youngest talents of this generation's family of artists with some of those who have attracted

less media attention but who are no less interesting. History and fashions have changed much faster than I could ever have imagined at the time. Many artists have come under severe market pressure since frontiers between continents opened up, globalization, other trends that are constantly changing too – people talk about the “Kleenex effect” in art that multiplies fast... Certain creators, in spite of their exceptional talent, do not always have the courage, the patience or perseverance to keep their heads above water on the demanding path to creation. Captive in the solitude of their studios, alone with their work and striving to make ends meet, they sometimes sink into a ‘purgatory’ of art against a background of total indifference until the tide turns, until someone or something swings the spotlight on them again. This is naturally nothing new and there is no shortage of examples.

I decided to organize this exhibition with a number of works by artists from this artistic scene.

Making no allowances, I now realize what an impact their works have had on me; not just from 1986, the year of discovery, but also from any period of history of art. I would like to say how proud I have been to be one of the actors involved with this essential generation and look forward to showing you round the exhibition starting on November 19.

Pierre Huber

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