

After moving to Los Angeles in Autumn 1989, Martin Kippenberger bought a 35% share in ownership of an Italian restaurant called Capri in Venice, California. The artist's obsession with the Ford Capri, an American car that took the name of the most cinematographic Italian island, is an open secret. More than enjoying the pleasure offered by cultural mash-ups, Kippenberger was interested in eating a plate of spaghetti Bolognese every day. It goes without saying that this is not the place to discuss the quality of an Italian recipe prepared by (supposedly) American cooks for a German palate (who called spaghetti "noodles," sic.) Kippenberger ate his spaghetti sitting always at the same table, and every person who entered the restaurant couldn't but see him.

In 1989 Kaspar Müller was a child. He was born in 1983, in Schaffhausen, a town in northern Switzerland near the Rhine Falls. In the house where he lived with his parents, the TV was in a cabinet that Müller had to open in order to watch the colours chasing each other on the display. After the beginning of his career as an artist in the years 2000, he has been participating in many exhibitions in commercial galleries, institutions and non-profit art spaces, mainly within Switzerland. In June 2011, sitting in a café in Zurich's railway station, in front of a tomato soup, Müller has accepted the proposal of a solo exhibition in the non-profit art space Gasconade in Milan.

The Gasconade project took its first steps in January 2011, during a phone call between the space's founder and Federico Vavassori, when the two speakers were more than 400 miles far from each other. Eight months later Vavassori opened his commercial gallery, with which Gasconade shares its office and exhibition space, alternating their parallel programs. The word gasconade appeared in the founder's notes in a list including the words braggadocio and rodomontade. Since these terms are all synonyms of bombast, it is presumable that the founder was interested in concepts which had nothing to do with the idea of "lightness." Besides, Vavassori says that in the previous Autumn the founder had read the book *L'uccello e la piuma. La questione della leggerezza nell'arte italiana* by Luca Cerizza (Vavassori himself read that essay in only three hours, taking advantage of the fact that his friend and future gallery-mate had forgotten a copy of the book in his car.) It is logical to conclude that Gasconade was born out of the purpose of setting apart, with no hesitation, the experiences discussed by Cerizza, focusing on the younger generation of local artists.

The domain [www.gasconade.it](http://www.gasconade.it) was bought eight days after the above-mentioned meeting with Müller. Since then, the Swiss artist (who was wearing a black suit during the meeting, not because he was supposed to go and visit his parents, but because he had spent the night in a cocktail bar without, however, making remarkable romantic conquests) has been aware that his exhibition would be an exception proving the rule, a necessary transgression of Gasconade's precise aim at promoting

the work of mostly Milan-based young artists. After all, Müller likes rules, but he likes breaking them even more. The group of works that the artist has presented in his exhibition focused on the human side of art production, at a time when dematerialization and outsourcing of production processes exert an increasingly higher influence on creativity. As most of his artists peers, Müller is part of a category known as “post-studio” artists. Although in some of his works he uses the techniques of applied arts, this happens because technique is a human knowledge; it represents the chance to show off a virtuosity that machines are unable to reproduce. More than fifty blown glass bowls have been lined up along a rope installed in the exhibition space. Focusing on the differences among the bowls rather than on their similarities, Müller precisely decided how and where to place each item, so that the complexity of the work itself has been constantly compromised by the singularity of the elements that composed it. The artist has been gently replying to the expectations that common onlookers have on works of art: he tends, indeed, to formalize a conceptual process in a product endowed with aesthetic and monetary value. After all, glass bowls are transparent, fragile, charming; and they hang on the spectators’ heads.

The history of a work of art, of an exhibition, of an art space is based on the aspirations of a number of people. During youth, ambition cannot be set apart from daily actions. Sometimes it is in contrast with the process that professionalizes passions, some others it accelerates it. By quoting Bruce Nauman, Müller wrote to Gasconade’s founder that “The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths.” In *The New Spirit of Capitalism* Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello argue that the claim (emerged during the 1968 riots) of a better consideration of the role played by individuals at their workplace has been assimilated by capitalism, which plans people’s daily lives according to perspectives of professional success. In such a context, is it still possible to laugh at our failures? Is it still possible to display them on a stand-up stage? Müller’s exhibition, the artist’s first one in Italy, has astonished spectators leading them to ask: should art play any role in contemporary society or should it rather represent a place where roles do not exist? Some people wondered whether love is still possible, some others what they would do the day after.

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