

Festival! begins with the friendship of artists and of their two gallerists, forging a bridge across 25 years and new beginnings, across personal, formal and conceptual affinities and yet-to-be-discovered connections.

To begin: Twenty-five years ago, Esther Schipper and Mehdi Chouakri were both recent arrivals to Berlin. Schipper had opened her space in the Auguststrasse in 1995 but was still traveling back and forth to her Cologne-based gallery. Chouakri had just concluded his art theory studies in Paris and was visiting the city. When Chouakri opened his own gallery in Berlin in 1996, their friendship grew, sharing a mother tongue, the experience of being a relative outsider in the city, and also many cultural reference points. Reinforced by shared intellectual interests and similar affinities for the art emerging in the 1990s, and by the many friendships that existed among the artists in their respective programs.

Last March an exhibition by Saâdane Afif in the gallery's series *Pièce Unique* especially caught Schipper's attention: she was excited both by the work and the concept of the space and when she told Chouakri, the idea of a collaboration formed. Opened in 2017 the smaller of his two spaces in Mommsenstrasse in Berlin Charlottenburg, with its two narrow rooms and library, combines the imperfections and the charm of a distinctly non-white cube exhibition space. It is here that Chouakri has presented both his series *Pièce Unique*, single works by artists from his gallery, and hosted projects by other galleries.

But this is no ordinary year and the project, originally planned for later this year, has now developed into a sequence of stories about affinities that will unfold in a two-week rhythm, bringing together one artist from each gallery.

Ari Benjamin Meyers' work explores structures and processes that redefine the performative, social, and ephemeral nature of music. His conceptual projects and installations often draw attention to concrete details of music-making otherwise taken for granted and make tangible underlying conceptual operations. Recent works have addressed music scores themselves, forms and arrangements of musical instruments, gestures of performers and conductors, and the role of audience.

Charlotte Posenenske envisions art as a social and participative act made for a wide public, rather than made by individuals for individuals. That is why she is seen as one of the first artists to achieve participative art. In order to reach her goal, she chooses to produce an art easy to install, and on a

large scale: non-figurative panels, folded and tilted works, reliefs, square tubes made of steel and cardboard, revolving panels and removable partitions.

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