

Perrotin

*Flash Art,
The rebirth of 909 Madison Avenue*

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The Rebirth of 909 Madison Avenue, New York

Katy Diamond Hamer



New York Tales...

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The Rebirth of 909 Madison Avenue, New York, By Katy Diamond Hamer

What was once a Chase bank on the corner of East 73rd street and Madison avenue, now houses two galleries. Built in 1932, the ground and lower levels play host to Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin making its debut in New York. On the second and third levels is the Dominique Lévy Gallery, recently having split from L&M, branching out as a solo gallerist. The exhibitions "Audible Presence", a three person group show with works by Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein, and Cy Twombly at Lévy's space and "Ok, You Are Better Than Me, So What?" by Paola Pivi at Perrotin's enclave, are very different but offer up some similarities one being bright color; Yves Klein blue and Paola Pivi's brightly colored, feathered polar bears. Galerie Perrotin is one of the most well-known galleries in the world with a program of artists ranging from Maurizio Cattelan to the now popular KAWS, former street artist. Galerie Dominique Lévy on the contrary plans to focus on older artists, creating a vision that often allows for shows to be viewed for a longer than average run and group shows that will bring unexpected artists together. Such is the case with their current exhibition. The grouping of these artists is somewhat unexpected but refreshing as much of the work has never been exhibited in the US and sheds its aged skin, raising the bar on the throngs on contemporary exhibitions strewn throughout the rest of the city. Here, exhibitions are planned to be presented with established artists 4/5 times per year.

Director and founder Dominique Lévy spoke of the exhibition and her passion for the artists and their work carrying throughout the room a reminder of the power of art to move and awaken feelings once dormant. Works in the exhibition are on loan from venues such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The De Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, The Rauschenberg Foundation, the Fontana Archives, and others. There is also a piece by Yves Klein which was purchased in 1957 by Lucio Fontana, still part of the Fontana Archives and also a point of interest confirming the longstanding friendship between the two artists.



Yves Klein, *Pluie Bleue (S36)*, 1961, Installation view, Dominique Lévy Gallery, NY
Image courtesy of the gallery, 2013



Lucio Fontana, *Soffitto*, 1949, Installation view, Dominique Lévy Gallery, NY
Image courtesy of the gallery, 2013

From Lévy: *"This exhibition is first and foremost about poetry. And more specifically silence, and the silence of surface. They all shared a sensibility of the Mediterranean light, Twombly's travels throughout Italy, Klein discusses Giotto and the blue he used, and Fontana lived in Italy."*

She continues, *"I think all of them imposed silence, which is of course the only alternative to noise. And they all understood that. In an early statement from 1957, I want to quote Twombly who really opened my eyes when stating, 'Each line now is the actual experience with it's own innate history'. And when you look at the works here by Twombly they are about the line and when you look at the work of Klein it is a drawing in space. In each of them there is an incredible audacity that turns into what I consider unknown beauty, at least at that time. I think Fontana went against all the learned reflexes. And Klein, very early in his career, discovered that art is really infinity, immensity and immateriality in a unique way. I hope that the exhibition will allow you to feel many of these ideas as points of discussion."*



Cy Twombly, *By the Ionian Sea*, 1988, Installation view, Dominique Lévy Gallery, NY, Image courtesy of the gallery, 2013

Also, as part of the exhibition was a one night only performance of a 32 musicians and voices, twenty minutes of one note followed by twenty minutes of silence. The Monotone-Silence Symphony, was largely the inspiration for "Audible Presence". It was composed in 1949 and Klein described it as 'The Monotone-Silence Symphony, whose theme expresses what I wish my life to be.' Dominique Lévy stated, *"It's very much a symphony that puts the note at the heart of the composition. And a symphony in which I believe that silence is just as important as sound because the music continues, and the sounds is communicated through that silence. So it is very important for me when I go through an exhibition that the echo, the feelings, the sound of it, will continue all the way after. Therefore the silence compliments the noise and visa versa."*



Paola Pivi at the opening of "Ok, You Are Better Than Me, So What?", Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, New York, Image courtesy of BFA, 2013

Underneath this exhibition on the ground and lower level of the building, Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, is "Ok, you are better than me, so what?" by Paola Pivi. On the day of the official opening, I visited the gallery and had a walk through with the artist, asking her about this and previous works.



Massimiliano Gioni (at Paola Pivi's *True Blue Baby I Love You*, 2013), Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, New York, Image courtesy of BFA, 2013

Katy Diamond Hamer: Being an inaugural exhibition with Galerie Perrotin New York, what made you choose to install "Ok, You Are Better Than Me, So What?" an installation of life-size bears whose surface rather than fur, is covered in feathers. How did you arrive at this particular body of works?

Paola Pivi: "Ok, You Are Better Than Me, So What?" is the title of the exhibition and consists of the installation of the bears who have individual titles and the money machine on the lower level. I've done polar bears before, one in particular that was covered in feathers in three different shades of yellow. In that case it was covered in light yellow and a chemical yellow. I has this vision of making that bear and then I had a vision of making many bears in many colors and that is how we arrived at this exhibition.

KDH: You have a diverse practice and often require various mediums to achieve a particular effect or communicate an idea. Where do the initial concepts come from? Are they often inspired by the venues or institutions where they will be installed?

PP: I'm interested in various things, for example a type of wood could spark an interest in making a particular artwork. Somehow I get these visions, which are an elaboration of my process, which is not done rationally or step by step, I focus intensely on things that happen to me and at times, years later I'll have a vision. Usually it will be something complex, such as how trees grow from the ground, a deeper level of things. So where or how this specific body of work which came from a vision is related to, I don't know and am not focused on finding out. Polar bears are in my life because I am based in Alaska, even though recently spending much time in India, since 2006. The polar bear is on many peoples minds due to global warming, and it is also the largest meat eating animal on land. The bear in general has a very strong spirit being both aggressive and also has a comforting image that we carry in our minds.

KDH: One of the last times you exhibited in New York was "How I Roll", 2012 at Doris C. Freedman Plaza, Central Park New York, I think in a post 9-11 New York, it's impossible to see a plane in the city and not think of the towers. Was this a conscious choice?

PP: The project of the rotating plane, came to me ages before 9-11. It had nothing to do with what happened on September 11th, 2001 and for me, has the same meaning as the plane I used to arrive here yesterday.

KDH: In what way, since it is void of projected content?

PP: It's an airplane. I was invited by Public Art Fund, I proposed the idea and they accepted. We did think about 9-11 but for me it had no relationship so it was very important for me that it was installed after the ten year anniversary and after there was an evolution in history, Osama Bin Ladin had been taken. It will never be a closed chapter, but I had no interest in censoring my art, which had nothing to do with that element of danger and instead resembled a toy. I've worked with airplanes before, turning one upside-down during the 1999 Venice Biennale, and I've worked with a helicopter, turning it upside-down as well. The objects are part of my art.

KDH: I can find some humor in it as well, even as the plane rotated and the mythological cycle of 9-11 repeats each year in ceremony, rotating.

Having worked with sound and music in both "It's a cocktail party" (2008) and "Grrr jamming squeak" (2010/2011) how would you relate sound to your more physical method used when occupying space?

PP: As the room was entered in "It's a cocktail party" the experience was as if you were viewing a waterfall. I used various materials including red wine, coffee, facial tonic, water, orange juice, black ink and mint. The height of the sculptures were 5 meters and constantly flowing. Visitors were given raincoats and often smiled as they entered and experienced the work. It was very loud but also the viewer was surrounded by the smell as well. The sounds were recorded and placed on the internet and my husband did some remixes using the original audio. For me "Grrr jamming squeak" is one of the most important works. It was like a Utopia which came true. The city of Rotterdam welcomed me to make a semi-permanent sculpture and I made and designed this piece in a pre-constructed building. Inside, you had a recording studio, twenty different instruments, a sound engineer and all the recording equipotent that you could need and one hundred different audio recordings of animal sounds. Visitors were given the chance to play an instrument and pick the animal sounds for the background, the end result would be a professional CD whether the individual was professional or not. Once a week, we invited bands to play in the space and give instruction. It was open for free for one year and it was really a dream for me.

KDH: I was able to relate this work to the bears and the physical presence of an animal versus the audio presence. Was there any relationship for you in the way you want to fill space? Here Galerie Perrotin you have bears interacting in a rectangular room, not knowing how individuals will react or move around the space and the other end of that coin is the audio and the uncertainty of visitors who had the opportunity in "Grrr jamming squeak" to record but what they would record or when was arbitrary.

PP: I always think about the spaces and the experience. Even a sculpture or a work on the wall is always a performative experience for the viewer. It's always about how you come in, where you sit, how you move, the gravitation forces between the volumes.



Jeffrey Deitch and Simon de Pury, Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, New York, Image courtesy of BFA, 2013



Installation view, Paola Pivi's "Ok, You Are Better Than Me, So What?", Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, New York, Image courtesy of BFA, 2013

NEW YORK

LÉVY AND PERROTIN JOIN FORCES ON MADISON AVENUE

Nicola Trezzi

Although the opening dates — probably spring 2013 — and the inaugural exhibitions have yet to be announced, the new projects of dealers Dominique Lévy and Emmanuel Perrotin are generating buzz in New York. Bringing them together is a historic landmark on Manhattan's Upper East Side at 909 Madison Avenue and 73rd Street, which will be the new home of Dominique Lévy Gallery and Galerie Perrotin.

The two galleries will be separate enterprises with different programs: Perrotin will occupy the ground floor and a floor below street level, about 400 square meters; Lévy will take on the second and third floors of the former bank building. Considering their pedigree, we can expect a lot from both.

Born in Switzerland, Dominique Lévy worked at Christies and at galleries in Geneva and London before being hired by Christie's owner and mega-collector François Pinault in 2000 to head the auction house's private sales division, a new unit that Lévy developed before starting her own art advisory service called Dominique Lévy Fine Arts, in 2003. In 2005 Lévy and Robert Mnuchin merged to create L&M Arts, which was known mostly for its secondary market dealings. After seven years, Lévy and Mnuchin decided to split. As of January 2013, L&M's New York space will be known as Mnuchin Gallery. However, they've decided to keep the gallery they started together in Los Angeles in 2010 under



the director of Sarah Watson. Born in France, Perrotin entered the art world at the age of seventeen. He opened his first gallery in his apartment at the age of 24 and became famous for representing stars like Takashi Murakami and Maurizio Cattelan. In February 2005, the gallery relocated to an elegant 18th-century building at 76 rue de Turenne. Next he opened a white cube at 10 impasse Saint-Claude in 2007, and in 2010 the gallery

expanded to the upper floor of 76 rue de Turenne, offering a total of 1500 square meters of exhibition space. In May 2012 he inaugurated a new 650-square-meter space in Hong Kong, right after Art HK became the Asian branch of Art | Basel.

This joint venture is not altogether unexpected. Dominique Lévy and Emmanuel Perrotin have been friends for many years, and they have also collaborated: Lévy organized "Dan Flavin: An Instal-

lation" at Perrotin's Paris gallery in 2012, and that same year Perrotin collaborated with Lévy on an exhibition featuring nine new glass and steel sculptures by French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel, which was on view concurrently with the artist's traveling mid-career retrospective now at the Brooklyn Museum.

Left: Dominique Lévy. Courtesy Dominique Lévy. Right: 1932 Bank of New York Building. Courtesy Perrotin Paris/Hong Kong/New York.