

when it feels right, jump in!

mes meufs at home with barbara reisinger and david misteli

More and more young investors reject the well diversified portfolio of classical assets and venture into the field of art-as-investment. Whether the practice is financially beneficial is still subject to research. For some, that seems to be a minor concern. They are in for the fun!

Vienna Business Quarterly: How did the idea for the exhibition at your home come about?

Barbara Reisinger: The idea to do that exhibition came up, when we first met Alex Wyatt in January 2016 at an opening at the sculpture studios of the Vienna Akademie der Bildenden Künste. At that time, we had, as a couple, just recently settled in Vienna, and were interested in getting involved with the local young art scene. So, learning about the idea for an exhibition project involving artists living and working in Vienna's 4th district, basically an open-doors artwalk in the neighborhood, seemed like a great opportunity. We had always figured that stockmarket investments were no fun at all, most of them involving self-important men in suits, obscure interest rates and numbers. But being part of something as vibrant and exciting as an art project was something entirely different, and, frankly, we deemed it to be rather adventurous. And since we had freshly renovated our living room we were excited to take part, and to provide our apartment to the project.

VBQ: So, there was the project. How did you - being relatively new to Vienna - come across the collaborative project *mes meufs*?

David Misteli: Right, so there was the main project that was later to be called *mirage*, but the next big step for us was to decide on what or whom we wanted to show at our apartment. That's when it came in handy that my wife (Mr Misteli gently puts his hand on Mrs Reisinger's knee) knew Sophie Hammer from her early days - they had grown up together, we still have pictures of them playing on the sunny meadows of the Hammer estate. Together with Elisa Bergmann and Michaela Kisling she had only recently formed the art collective *mes meufs*, and the three of them were very actively organizing and curating shows and events at this venue* they were renting at the MuseumsQuartier. Their work was mostly focussing on questions of institutions, collaboration, identity and fashion. And we felt that we could really relate to those issues.

BR: Their first exhibition had featured a living room suite that somewhat looked like landscape and some fake candles reminiscent of a goth-teenager's room. So there was a strong domestic, even intimate vibe to what they were already doing, and it was only a small step from there to taking the exhibition home, so to speak.

VBQ: Was it not strange, at least in the beginning, to welcome the collective to your private apartment, especially knowing it would be open on the day of the exhibition? You mentioned earlier the issues of institution and identity - how did *mes meufs* deal with the fact that they were also intruding someone's private home?

BR: Well, firstly, since we had invited them, they were not intruding at all, but also beyond that - when they first came to our apartment to, you know, get a feel for the place, they were very considerate, so we did not feel that we might be exposed or, as they say, deconstructed in any way.

DM: They even asked us, whether there was anything that we might need for the apartment, and of course, having undergone renovation recently, there were plenty of things we still had to acquire or furnish.

BR: I told them that the cat was acting a bit stiff and somewhat inanimate lately – they hadn't failed to notice, it was so obvious at that time ... and eventually they came up with a cat tree. So you see, they were very aware of the fact that were intervening in our life at home. The cat's condition didn't improve much, sadly.

VBQ: So, when the exhibition was all set up, which pieces were your favorites?

DM: Of course I loved all the works, but being a connoisseur, too, I have to say, that vacuum cleaner tube is by far the best piece. It's truly dedicated to the neighborhood, with its filigree engravings it references our favorite Vietnamese restaurant that is right around the corner. They have these lovely motivational messages all over their walls. But I admire the aptly titled *Stucco*, too; being the most discreet piece of them all, it was barely noticed by visitors, yet the skillful handling of the material really lives up to its title.

BR: I was immediately taken with the bedspread. I had considered buying one of the scarves that Daniel Buren did for Hermès, and loved the stripes. Also, the *mes meufs* couture had such a lightness to it, the delicate colors, the simple cuts. And it contrasted beautifully with the more solid denim of the bedspread – both being shown in the same room, you know.

VBQ: In terms of investment, how do you think are these works of art that are obviously quite specific to your apartment going to play out?

DM: I honestly think that the specificity is not really a problem in terms of resale but more of an asset. People don't want those random works anymore, that can be placed anywhere – everybody owns a Warhol these days. Today, people want objects that tell a story, it's about personal attachment and depth of feeling.

BR: Our identity and personal story, we feel, is being transcended by these works.

* Raum D [editorial office].

This interview was held via piratepad.net in different parts of the apartment.