

Air de Paris

32 rue Louise Weiss 75013

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The gallery Air de Paris is located in an otherwise grey office building, which it shares with the Ministry of Finance on rue Louise Weiss. Despite its relatively central location, 'Louise', as the locals affectionately call the street, is far from crowded on weekdays. On opening days, however, when all the other galleries on the spot also start their new exhibitions, the young and the hip of the Parisian art world bring this empty street to life.

'Air de Paris' was the title Marcel Duchamp gave to his 1919 'ready-made' consisting of a glass vial of physiological serum whose original content was replaced by Parisian air. From 1990, Air de Paris was also the name of the gallery founded and still run by Florence Bonnefous and Edouard Merino. The positioning of their desk in the exhibition space is indicative of their desire to be accessible. The two met at the École du Magasin, a prestigious international curatorial training programme based in Grenoble, and opened Air de Paris in Nice in 1990. In 1994 the gallerist duo moved to Paris, and settled in the Marais, but in 1997 they joined a collective move to the rue Louise Weiss along with six other young galleries. This opened up a whole new zone of the city to art and introduced Parisians to a more daring type of gallery.

Current stars, including Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Philippe Parreno were first noticed by the gallerists back in Grenoble. Baudelaire's statement 'the beautiful is always bizarre' comes to mind when looking at the work of the gallery artists: Jean-Luc Verna, nude and tattooed, re-enacting scenes of classical paintings and sculptures to a rock soundtrack, or Olaf Breuning disturbing crowds of human-size blanket ghosts or giant bunnies. The gallery's uncompromisingly avant-garde stance and its lively openings, which often feature concerts or events by invited artists, have proved highly popular. Other gallery artists include Guy de Cointet, François Curlet, Brice Dellsperger, Trisha Donnelly, Liam Gillick, Carsten Höller, M/M (Paris), Sarah Morris, Allen Ruppersberg and Bruno Serralongue.

Air de Paris and the neighbouring gallery Praz-Delavallade recently opened a joint exhibition space called the Random Gallery, occupying the common shop window from 28 to 32 rue Louise Weiss.

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