

The Nineties Now

A new curated section revisits exhibitions from the 1990s. Caroline Roux talks to six gallerists about the decade the art world changed

Phillip Tinari

UCCA

I look forward to Latifa Echakhch's solo presentation (kamel mennour, Paris, A2). I remember going to see her solo show at Protocinema in the Karaköy neighbourhood of Istanbul during the opening of the biennale there last year, and arriving, with a group of patrons, a few hours before the installation process was complete. The floor was wet and the video monitors still sheathed in plastic. Somehow when I went back a few days later this earlier, incomplete state seemed perfectly appropriate for the contents of a show that included two subtle videos – one of waiting by the Bosphorus for dolphins that never arrive; another, of boys jumping from the sea wall into the sea at the Moroccan port of El Jadida, immune to danger – and a floor piece inspired by the water calligraphy ubiquitously practiced in Chinese parks. Echakhch has always believed in the viewer as active participant, creating meaning through interpretation. At Frieze London she will show new sculptures and paintings that continue in her characteristic vein of poetic evocation, after which she will then embark on a major new commission at the Power Plant in Toronto.

Phillip Tinari, Director, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing

Opposite
Latifa Echakhch, *La dépossession*
("Dispossession"), detail, 2014, installation,
dimensions variable. Courtesy: the artist
and kamel mennour, Paris

Above
Shadi Habib Allah, 'Evacuated Containers',
2013, installation view at Green Art Gallery,
Dubai. Courtesy: the artist and Green Art
Gallery, Dubai

Polly Staple

Chisenhale Gallery



I am drawn to the solo presentation by Shadi Habib Allah (Green Art Gallery, Dubai, G27). I first saw his work in the 'Frozen Lakes' show at Artists Space in New York, and he also participated in the last New Museum Triennial with a video piece that documented smuggling in the Sinai Desert. His work often explores shadow economies, and the sometimes-unseen travel routes of goods. Having been born a Palestinian in Jerusalem, Habib Allah brings a sense of the entrenched relationship between history, mythology and politics in the region where he grew up, but puts that in dialogue with contemporary developments in technology, for example, or the urgency of daily life in New York City. His last show at Rodeo, London, featured a video of a lump of cooking fat sliding through the nocturnal streets of Jerusalem, like a kind of ghost, while an elderly woman paced around inside a claustrophobic apartment; presented alongside was a distorted, chandelier-like sculpture. It was extremely evocative, and I expect this new installation – featuring interrupted audio of conversations between Bedouins – will be too.

Polly Staple, Director, Chisenhale Gallery, London

FW GALLERIES AT FRIEZE LONDON
Green Art Gallery G27 | kamel mennour A2





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 Karen Kilimnik, installation view at The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, 2012
 Kilimnik showed *Fountain of Youth* in 1991, and revisited the piece for this exhibition
 Photo: Laura Wilson. Courtesy: The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut

Above
 Christian Nagel and Peter Zimmermann at Grünen Eck, Cologne, following Galerie Buchholz & Schipper's 'T Shirt Party', 1991
 Courtesy: Zentralarchiv des internationalen Kunsthandels e.V., Cologne

Lisa Spellman and Colin de Land in front of 303 Gallery on East 6th Street in 1986
 Courtesy: 303 Gallery, New York

Esther Schipper in 1994
 Courtesy: Esther Schipper, Berlin

Opposite
 Pierre Joseph, *Character to Be Reactivated (Policeman)*, 1993. The Policeman character first appeared in the show 'June' at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, curated by Purple Prose. Courtesy: the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

'Artists were in a very liberated position in the 1990s', says Nicolas Trembley, the curator who invited 14 galleries to participate in *The Nineties*, a special section at Frieze London dedicated to the seminal exhibitions of that decade. 'The market wasn't that strong. They were free to produce events, rather than sellable content. Rirkrit was cooking for his friends!' Trembley continues, referring to Rirkrit Tiravanija's now-celebrated alignment of social engagement as artistic practice, which began in 1990 with 'Untitled 1990 (Pad Thai)' at Paula Allen Gallery in New York. 'You had artists working with design, like Jorge Pardo, and with literature, like Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno. Performance, video ... It's clearer now how it all works together, and it seems like the right moment to take an objective look. But it's certainly not about nostalgia.'

Trembley wanted to take a broad view and, in spite – or perhaps because – of the fair's London location, to not over-privilege the young British artists (or 'YBAs') in the story of the Nineties. So while Michael Landy's *Market* (1990) – an eerily minimal installation of AstroTurf-covered stalls – is reprised at the fair in a new form by Thomas Dane and Karsten Schubert, the section also maps a wider terrain, stretching from Steven Parrino's collaborations with the likes of Colin de Land in New York (presented by Andrea Carratsch), to Daniel Pflumm's nightclub on Berlin's Invalidenstrasse (paid tribute to by Galerie Neu), and populated by figures like Mark Dion, Andrea Fraser and Heimo Zobernig (all participants in Christian Nagel's landmark 1992 'Wohzimmer/Büro', restaged at Galerie Nagel Drexler), and Sylvie Fleury (subject of a joint presentation by Mehdi Chouakri, Sprüth Magers and Salon 94). 'It was important to recreate some seminal shows', says Trembley. 'And in that sense, it is a sort of time capsule, with Wolfgang Tillmans' first show for Buchholz and the room by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster at Esther Schipper. That's not the sort of thing you'd usually see at a fair, but it turns out the work is still available and the market's finally ready for it now.'

Lisa Spellman, New York

There'd been a major New York-based movement in the 1980s with the neo-expressionists like David Salle and Philip Guston, but the focus was still on Europe. That finally changed in the '90s. The Gulf War in 1990–91 meant a slump in the market, and some people credit that with the move towards deconstruction – artists like Rirkrit Tiravanija making work that isn't for sale, etc.

But there were many divergent movements – in the feminist movement, 'goddess art' and 'victim art', for example – and then there were people like Karen Kilimnik and Jessica Stockholder, who established their practices right out of the gate as challenging all boundaries: between painting and installation, between romantic and popular culture. Their work showed that anything was possible. It gave you permission to do what you want.

At the beginning of the decade, everyone still lived and worked in the same neighbourhoods, in the East Village and Soho. All the artists' studios were there, and the band



Sonic Youth and the designer Anna Sui, and everyone intermingled. In 1995 303 Gallery left Soho for Chelsea: begrudgingly, but I wanted a ground-floor space. The landlords there had been holding on to buildings because a big stadium was to be built there and they were waiting to sell. But when it didn't happen all those Chelsea spaces became available. It's the usual New York real-estate story.

People say there were only 50 collectors back then. There'd be days and days of conversation with them, and slideshows. Sometimes the whole family would come to the gallery and be there for hours discussing a purchase. And there were just a few art advisors, like Thea Westreich and Barbara and Eugene Schwartz. But things were starting to change. A new generation of collectors had incredible curiosity about video and installation – pioneers like the Rubells. It was no longer just about hugely expensive paintings.

I first showed the *Fountain of Youth* by Karen Kilimnik in 1991. It's a piece based around a fountain with many component parts – the original was filled with baroque-shaped Astroturf cutouts, houseplants and beauty products but she's expanded it since. With her 2012 exhibition at the Brant Foundation, she revisited the work, increasing the scale to life-size and incorporating a beautiful stone fountain and boxwood hedges. For *The Nineties* we'll show this with some early drawings and possibly a new painting or two. In 1991, people were astonished by Karen's work, but now she's part of the canon.

Esther Schipper, Berlin

Cologne was the heart of the European contemporary art scene when I opened my gallery there in 1989. A large community of collectors was living in the area at the time and they really supported young galleries – not just through acquiring art, but also investing time in learning about the work being made in their midst. But after five years, I moved to Berlin. The fall of the Wall had opened up the city and made it an extremely exciting place in so many ways, but especially culturally. Artists were among the first to move to there – and are still there. Rent was affordable and there was a lot of space, physically as well as creatively.

Art was beginning to change, too, as the start of the digital age led many artists to move away from defining their work within the traditional categories of 'painter', 'sculptor' or 'photographer'. They took up where conceptual art from the 1960s and '70s left off and used the medium best suited to the expression of their ideas. The exhibition itself became the medium, and the viewer part of it.

In 1993, we staged an exhibition, called 'R.W.F.', for which Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster transformed an entire apartment in Cologne into an imaginary film set: a nod to the German film director Rainer Werner Fassbinder's practice of using his own home as a film location, mixing the cinematic world with private space. Dominique created a sequence of rooms, whose décor and brownish colours recalled a glamorous 1970s-era West German apartment. The exhibition title referred to the initials on the nameplate

next to Fassbinder's own doorbell: R.W.F. Only one work remains from the 1993 exhibition: the room that we'll be showing at Frieze London.

Florence Bonnefous, Paris

When Nicolas Trembley asked if we'd restage a show at Frieze London this year, his first suggestion was 'Les Ateliers du paradis', which Pierre Joseph, Philippe Parreno and Philippe Perrin devised in 1990 for our original gallery in Nice. However, it had been such a spontaneous event, to reprise it would have felt self-conscious and maybe cynical, too. So we suggested instead Pierre Joseph's 'Characters to be Reactivated' – a series created between 1991 and 1995, where a 'living sculpture' would appear in the gallery on day one, and then be replaced by a photograph thereafter. The person buying the photograph was granted the right to 'reactivate' the character – they can bring them back to life in another setting or situation.

We're reactivating three of Pierre's original characters at Frieze London – the Leper from 1991, and Cinderella and the Policeman from 1993. We tried to get back some of the photographs from people who'd originally bought them (often for just a couple of hundred pounds), but no one wanted to sell them. The original shots of Cinderella got lost, so the photograph was only produced upon her second activation in 2014.

The Leper will be sitting on the floor, with her face covered – a person separated from society by her circumstances. From time to time, she will be replaced by Cinderella, who sweeps the floor with a broom. The Policeman will be guarding the entrance to the booth throughout: arms crossed, legs apart. We're hoping to have no artificial light on the stand, so it has a particular ambience – we're not showing objects that are for sale.

By 1994, we'd opened a gallery in Paris in the Marais, a tiny space in a courtyard with a skylight. The following year we closed the one in Nice. There weren't any websites then, and you needed to be somewhere that the maximum number of people could visit;

we wanted people to see our shows, and in Nice that only happened for two months of the year. The Marais was still pretty left field then: creative and not so expensive. By 1997, we'd found a new space in the 13th and we've gradually taken over neighbouring spaces as other people have moved around.

Massimo De Carlo, Milan

When I opened my gallery at the end of the 1980s, Milan was a city known for fashion and design. I was still working as a pharmacist in the evenings: that was how I supported



Above
Massimo De Carlo mopping the floor of the Via Panfilo Castaldi space during Roman Signer's 'Flooding the Space', Massimo De Carlo, 1993
Courtesy: Massimo De Carlo, Milan, London and Hong Kong

Opposite
Wolfgang Tillmans, Lutz and Alex, sitting in the trees, 1992, from Tillmans' first show at Buchholz&Buchholz, Cologne, 1993. Courtesy: the artist and Buchholz, Cologne, Berlin & New York





Telling Tales

*From Ancient Egypt to Baroque Bologna to avant-garde
Moscow, the works at Frieze Masters open up a world of stories*

myself, then in the day I could look after my artists. They were all very young, like Maurizio Cattelan, with his giant Picasso head [for 1998's *Untitled (Picasso)*, the artist hired an actor to greet visitors to MoMA in a cartoonish papier-mâché Picasso mask], and Felix Gonzales-Torres, who was already creating the endlessly reproducible stacks of printed paper, and the piles of sweets that gradually diminished as visitors took them away.

I dedicated myself fully to the gallery once I'd moved to a bigger space in Via Bocconi in 1992 – we opened with a John Armleder show – and by 1994, the machine was working well. Maurizio was becoming famous, and Rudolf Stingel was well established, too. When Felix died in 1996, it was difficult for all of us. He was such a sweet, strong person, and had an ability to talk about complicated things in such a simple way. I worked with all of these artists because I believed in their work. It's one thing to say 'you're a fantastic artist', and another to say 'you're fantastic and your work will sell for millions'; that wasn't what it was about at all then. You didn't expect to make a great living showing avant-garde art. Today, the financial expectations of a show are so much more important and there's a lot more pressure on the artists.

In 1993, 13 curators were invited to participate in the 'Aperto' section of the Venice Biennale, creating an exhibition with the title 'Emergency/Emergenza'. Nicolas Bourriaud (who went on to run the Palais de Toyko) chose Carsten Höller; Francesco Bonami (overall Director of the Biennale in 2003) chose Stingel and Cattelan, and so on. It was a turning point – the first time that there was a strong international attitude outside of the national pavilions in the Giardini, and a lot of work that defied easy categorization. So I decided to revisit that idea for this show at Frieze London. I've always been happy to keep something behind, or to buy work back, and I'll ask my collectors to loan work, so I'm expecting to create a strong show: Matthew Barney, Paul McCarthy, Pierre Huyghe, Carsten, Felix, Maurizio ...

The Biennale directorship was a mess in 1993, and didn't want to make a catalogue for the Aperto, so Giancarlo Politi – the editor of *Flash Art* who was then Aperto's co-curator – made one. But the Biennale seized them all and burnt them. It would be amazing if there was just one left that we could show in London.

Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

My 1990s began with a show by Chris Burden. At the time we were located in the second floor of a building designed by the architect Oswald Mathias Ungers; Jablonka Galerie was on the floor above and Galerie Max Hetzler on the floor below. At the entrance of my gallery, Chris Burden had installed a turnstile connected to a gear jack that pushed big wooden planks against the gallery wall. So every time someone entered, it felt like the building was going

to collapse. (If we'd had 10,000 visitors, it would have probably done.)

By 1993, I was doing shows in a very small space behind my father's antiquarian book store (different from our current Cologne address) that we named Buchholz&Buchholz. I met Wolfgang in that year after I saw his photographs in *i-D* magazine. For Wolfgang's first show with me, his first gallery exhibition, he made an all-over installation in which he hung unframed photographs with magic tape next to pages from the magazine, straight onto the wall. To me it felt like something new. When asked if I had an idea to reprise a show from the decade for Frieze London, I thought immediately of this exhibition by Wolfgang.

Anthony Reynolds, London

When I was approached to make a proposal to revive a show from the 1990s, there were several candidates – but one stood out for coming out of nowhere with an explosive impact. Brought to my attention by Paul Graham, Richard Billingham went from the West Midlands to *Artforum* in six months. At Frieze London, I hope to include the first work Billingham exhibited in public – a triptych of his father, Ray, included in a show at the Barbican in 1994 called 'Who's Looking at the Family?' – along with some of the most iconic images from the series 'Ray's a Laugh', kept in reserve and not available since the '90s.

Since 1985 the gallery had occupied a huge basement near the Old Street roundabout. In 1989 we decided to find a small space in the West End (no one called it 'Mayfair' back then), opposite Anthony d'Offay. By 1990 it was our only gallery. It felt good! D'Offay brought in Beuys, Warhol, Polke, Richter, Nauman – I remember once having a drink with Jasper Johns outside the pub. Nigel Greenwood, Edward Toteah and Victoria Miro were already there. Of course it was not just the West End – Lisson maintained a terrific programme, and you can't overestimate the influence of the Saatchi Gallery on Boundary Road. The other crucial change was the international attention that was increasingly being paid to British artists. The shows 'Freeze' and 'Gambler' and the YBAs had seen to that. In 1997, 'Sensation' [an exhibition of works from Charles Saatchi's collection] blew the lid off: I think there were over 30 Billinghams in that show. The London art world had changed for ever.

For me, though, the decade is defined by the conjunction of my personal and professional life. The Brazilian artist Lucia Nogueira was my partner from 1984 until her death in 1998. During her final ten years she produced an extraordinary and moving body of work. An example of an artist whose work is respected by other artists and curators, but who sold little in their lifetime, Lucia's work has now been recognized; there is a show at Annelly Juda in the autumn.

Opposite
Richard Billingham, *Untitled & Untitled*
from the series 'Ray's a Laugh', 1990–6
Courtesy: the artist and Anthony
Reynolds Gallery, London



The Nineties is on view at Frieze London. To find more about the artists presented in the section, and for details of the Frieze Talks panel on the decade – featuring Margot Henderson, Gregorio Magnani and Wolfgang Tillmans – visit frieze.com