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FARIDEH CADOT

A Rebel in the Art World – “Un Regard Autre”

Farideh Cadot is something of a legend in Paris and New York, but while she has much to be proud of, she does not plan to celebrate her 40 years in the business with an exhibition or by showing artists from the past. This lover of the arts is saddened by the speculation she sees invading and devastating a world that should be ruled by emotion, intuition and the spirit of discovery, and prefers to hold a large party for the friends who have always accompanied the turning points in her life – and there have been many.



Farideh Cadot in her gallery at 77, rue des Archives in Paris

Farideh Cadot is a determined, independent woman and a major player in the world of art. Since the 1970s, she has discovered, assisted and supported countless artists who are now universally celebrated. Joel Fisher, Meret Oppenheim, Philippe Favier, Gunter Brus, Tadashi Kawamata, Georges Rousse, Juan Uslé and Markus Raetz are just a few names in a long list of artists supported by Cadot at the beginning of their careers who have now entered the annals of art.

FARIDEH CADOT ASSOCIES

7 RUE NOTRE DAME DE NAZARETH (11-19h) & 110 RUE VIEILLE DU TEMPLE 75003 PARIS (SUR RENDEZ-VOUS)
TEL +331 42 78 08 36 FAX +331 42 78 63 61 info@faridehcadot.com www.faridehcadot.com

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A discoverer of new talents and a sought-after art adviser, Cadot was the first to go to the former Soviet Union, before the fall of the Iron Curtain, to meet its painters; the first to visit Carlos Garaicoa in Cuba in 1999, right after Air France started flying there again; the first to convince the Guggenheim in New York to exhibit French artists in the 1980s; and the first to show the work of Shirin Neshat in 1997. In no way, however, does she play the card of exoticism, especially now that it has become a commercial advantage.

A pioneer at the first FIAC contemporary art fair at the Bastille in Paris, and at Art Basel, she no longer participates in these events, which have lost their meaning. In 2011 she wrote an article for the French daily newspaper Libération denouncing the obsession with finances of the art trade, which she said had been “turned over to a handful of Doctor Madoffs.”



In Markus Raetz's studio in 1981

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Farideh Cadot disturbs certain people because she is a witness to a time most would like to forget, when there was still a place for wonder and excitement about new discoveries, when the art market had not yet been taken over by the hubris of finance. Her 40-year-old gallery is young enough to continue making daring and surprising choices!

Visitors are always treated as distinguished guests as long as they are capable of showing emotion when confronted with a work of art. They can forget about labels and instructions: Cadot will elegantly introduce them to an artist's world with just a few words.



The art in Farideh Cadot's gallery is for sale, of course, but she is really after people's hearts, not their portfolio. She values an aficionado who buys a print as much as a wealthier art lover.

Many art-world insiders and simple browsers have had their eyes opened to new horizons in her gallery. Many friendships have been forged there between artists, collectors and art critics. Her gallery has always been a place of debate and encounters, one of those places where singular ideas are born in the friendly confrontations of enthusiastic people.

Exhibition of Joel Fisher's bronzes

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The best advocate for the values of France, her chosen country

Farideh Cadot is a modest woman, and not everyone knows her amazing story. Of Iranian origin, she left her family when she was 15 to study in Europe. She was never to return to Iran. After studying in England and living in New York, she opened her first gallery in 1976 in a former pharmaceutical factory with a precarious lease in Paris's 13th arrondissement.

Forty years have passed, and she is still in the news but remains independent. She became a French citizen in 1968, and today there is no better advocate for the Republican values of the country she has chosen. In 2009, Simone Veil awarded her the medal of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in recognition of her far-reaching work for contemporary art.

A market gone insane

For 40 years, Farideh Cadot exhibited the works of many artists while also revealing much about herself. A discoverer of new talents, a sought-after art advisor, a promoter of neglected values, and a curator of many exhibitions in France and abroad, she still passionately loves her profession but not the environment it now operates in, which confuses paintings with cash. She is one of the few who still wants to pass on the keys to a vanished – temporarily vanished, we hope – world in which the values of art were first weighed on the scales of thought and desire before prices were discussed in a market that is perfectly legitimate but has now gone insane.



Legion of Honor - 2009

Her celebration on April 29 will not be a farewell. It will simply mark a new turning point in Farideh Cadot's life, one of many she has experienced – nothing is more foreign to her than a predestined path. The form of her activities will undoubtedly change, but not the substance. She intends to invent new ways of working, but this is just another transition for her. Once again her friends will be the first witnesses, as they were at the exhibition she held in 1996 to celebrate the gallery's 20th anniversary. Its title? "Transitions"!

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Farideh Cadot at her FIAC stand in 1984

For further information, photos or interviews, please contact:

Sylvie Robaglia
Art & Communication
29, rue de Ponthieu, 75008 Paris
06 72 59 57 34
sylvie@art-et-communication.fr
www.art-et-communication.fr

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