

WHITE
MIRROR



WHITE MIRROR

by Didier Guillon

Itinerant exhibition

2019 -2020

Exhibition from October 25th to November 3rd, 2019

393 NYC – Gallery

393 Broadway – 10013 New York

PRESS RELEASE



EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Publicolor

Fondation Valmont is proud to support Publicolor, a nonprofit youth development organization that uses a long-term continuum of design-based programs that engage at-risk students in their education and empower them to plan and prepare for success in school, college, work and life.

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L'ÉLIXIR
DES GLACIERS

STORIE
VENEZIANE

In the glimmer of dawn, luminescent forms move across the horizon. Yet they are anonymous, shunned from the world, huddled under a blanket of survival, shrouded in fog, enveloped in obscurity as their only solace. Lost and alone, these abandoned souls wander blindly through the City, the illustrious Promised Land.

The question appears like a mirage: in the urban jungle, is a new horizon of dreams and desires off limits to people from beyond our borders?

“White Mirror” gazes through a two-way mirror to cast light on the darkness. (...) The “masks” fall away and reality emerges from illusion.

With his compelling work “White Mirror”, author Didier Guillon starts a meaningful conversation and sparks a debate on the border between art and politics. Using migratory movements to convey the interdependence of the souls drifting through our society, Didier Guillon shows us that there is no clear boundary between the observer and the observed, between lands of exile and lands of welcome.

One day, each one of us will find ourselves on one side of the mirror or the other.

Through the international language of symbolism, Didier Guillon creates a poetic world that challenges us to truly see the humanity of this contemporary geopolitical phenomenon, from an individual or universal perspective. And it gives the suffering of humanity a face imploring us to take another look at life and what it may reveal about ourselves.

Text written by Caroline Spir



Didier Guillon, « Hansel & Gretel », Venice 2019

“In the forest of mysterious shadows where pretty white lost souls murmur their joys and sorrows.”

Didier Guillon

HOW WAS “WHITE MIRROR” CONCEIVED?

Venice. Always, forever

A city of inspiration, dreams, happiness and visions for Didier Guillon.

The city where art reigns in all flamboyance, free from the world’s chaos and economic concerns.

The city where all artistic expressions are praised for their soul.

The city where *Fondation Valmont* has contributed to the artistic scene with major exhibitions showcased during the two last contemporary Art Biennales.

The city where *Fondation Valmont* has acquired a pure Italian palazzo, *Palazzo Bonvicini*.

The city where the Valmont Group engaged in the fragrance business with *Storie Veneziane*.

The city where this new achievement was born...

Venice.

Venice, 2019

The first intention of “White Mirror” was initiated and showcased during the Art Biennale. Baptized “Hansel & Gretel”, the exhibition unveiled Didier Guillon’s latest works, around the concept of a white forest populated with totems in honeycomb cardboard and *papier-mâché* masks. White faces, all identical, staring at the visitor... or maybe not. Their eyes blind to any presence, as a metaphor of loneliness in a crowd.

And this question: are you wearing a mask?



Hansel & Gretel, “White Mirror”, Venice 2019



White Mirror's Installation, Tokyo, New York, Berlin 2019

Tokyo, New York, Munich, 2019

Didier Guillon features a second collection of works, deeply influenced by front-page news, geopolitics and sustainability concerns. This new interpretation presents totems in honeycomb cardboard, golden and white *papier-mâché* masks and golden balls... which question visitors:

- Are we lost in the city?
- Are men hiding behind masks?
- Is the human race hiding reality under golden covers?
- Are some men hiding behind golden masks?

This collection of about 30 works entirely designed by Didier Guillon will come to life in La Maison Valmont Ginza (Tokyo) beginning of October, before flying to New York (393 NYC Gallery) and landing in La Maison Valmont Munich in November.



Didier Guillon

Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, 1953

President of the Valmont Group

Curator and artist

Didier Guillon descends from a long lineage of major art contributors, throughout history: merchants such as Charles Sedelmeyer, sculptors and art historians as Stanislas Lami. He takes pride in his filiation with emblematic sculptor and Egyptologist Alphonse Lami, whose father François was the illegitimate son of Francesco Borghese... Prince Aldobrandini General and Grand Equerry of Napoleon.

An artist himself, Didier Guillon draws from this phenomenal genealogy his passion for arts, as his profound bond with Italy... more specifically Venice, where he managed the purchase of a *piano Nobile* at *Palazzo Bonvicini* for *Fondation Valmont*.

True to his nature, Didier Guillon exhilarates as he relentlessly works to fine-tune his ideas. Over the last years, he designed multiple works in various media, several dimensions, skillfully combining a wide array of materials. He likes to think of new ways to approach, discuss and appreciate contemporary art.

FONDATION VALMONT, WHEN ART MEETS BEAUTY

As a fundamental pillar of the Valmont Group and a passion shared by Sophie and Didier Guillon, Art provides each Maison with a unique dimension. It plays a role in every initiative, complements the most spectacular launches and shines on its own through *Fondation Valmont*.

From the very beginnings of the Group, Didier refused to be quarantined within the borders of cosmetics and thus worked to build bridges with the world of arts. His choice was obviously motivated by personal pleasure, but also acknowledged that nowadays, no company can limit itself to its own microcosm.

He hence developed sponsoring projects, arranged traveling exhibitions in unexpected venues including spas and department stores, organized auctions to benefit humanitarian activities and put together a unique collection of nine works by selected artists celebrating Valmont's 30th anniversary, among other endeavors. The tone was set: Didier the art lover had found the perfect medium of expression.

When Art
meets
Beauty

Fondation Valmont repeatedly distinguishes itself through its international exhibitions, continued involvement in the Venice Biennale, projects blossoming in iconic locations and other exhibitions arranged locally in the Group's subsidiaries.



The Valmont Group dedicates three luxury cosmetics and fragrance brands, with contemporary values where effectiveness, seduction, sensory and olfactory experiences intermingle and combine along with a virtuous passion for art. To bring to light modern-day Venice, Sophie and Didier Guillon have transcribed their Venetian tales, olfactory fables inspired by the creative cauldron of the Venetian lagoon in the latest brand *Storie Veneziane*. They combine and express their favoured fields, art and alchemy. The art of perfumery extolled, mask of Murano glass enthroned and Italian leather in all its beguiling glory.

When *Fondation Valmont* anchors in Venice, Palazzo Bonvicini breathes...

Further to its two exhibitions during the 2015 and 2017 Biennales, *Fondation Valmont* decided to make a deeper commitment to Venice by taking residence in an historic palace, *Palazzo Bonvicini*. Inaugurated in May 2019 with the exhibition "Hansel & Gretel", this jewel brings a significant contribution to the local arts scene.

The residence offers the perfect nest to present exhibitions every year during the Biennale exhibitions of contemporary art and architecture. A genuine Venetian palace in the purest 16th century Renaissance style, *Palazzo Bonvincini* displays authentic refinement. Its crafted walls and ceiling moldings enhance the beauty of the gleaming frescos, while lush terrazzo floors serve as a vibrant tribute to the *savoir-faire* of the lagoon.





PUBLICOLOR, THE CHARITY ELECTED BY FONDATION VALMONT FOR THE “WHITE MIRROR” ART EXHIBITION

Charity Operation

One of the Valmont Group’s core values has always been to give back to the community. Valmont North America has supported the One Drop Foundation for the past four years and undertaken as a philanthropic mission to help give access to safe water.

With the “White Mirror” art exhibition and its orientation towards communities in need, *Fondation Valmont* has chosen to support Publicolor, a New York City-based nonprofit organization helping underprivileged populations.

Publicolor

Ruth Lande Shuman, an industrial designer interested in the psychological effects of color, founded the nonprofit organization Publicolor in 1996. Its mission is to improve educational equity by promoting an imaginative use of color and design in schools. The stay-in-school youth development program mentors students to achieve success in school, college, career and personal life.



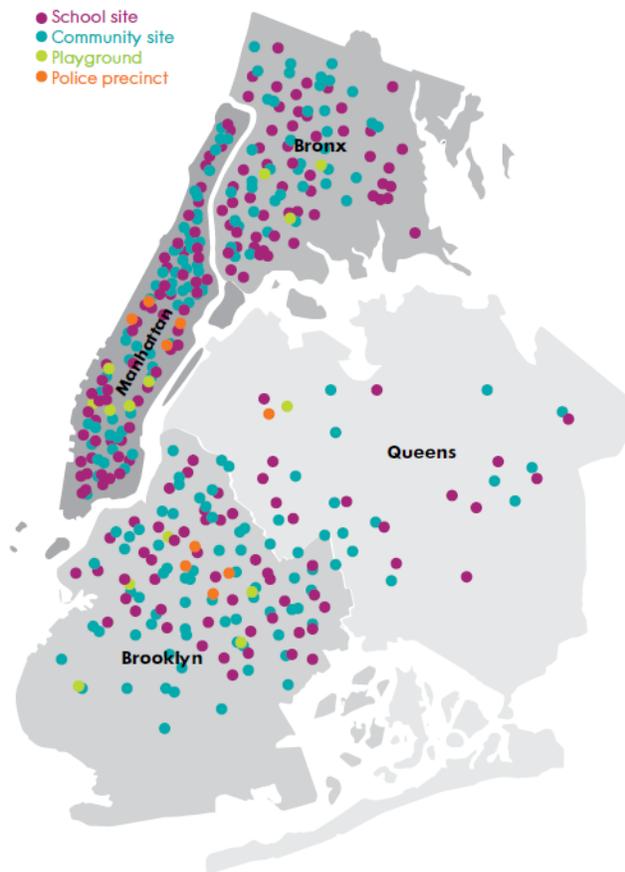
Publicolor

WHITE MIRROR

They recruit low-income students who are at risk of dropping out of the most underperforming middle and high schools throughout New York City, inviting them to paint warm colors on the walls of their schools, transforming cold, institutional-looking interiors into warm and welcoming environments. Publicolor's multi-year continuum of design-based programs also includes weekly workshops on a variety of careers including design, and life skills, plus college prep and academic tutoring.

Students may have behavioral challenges, chronic absences, grade repetitions, learning disabilities, or fail core subjects such as math and English. Other indicators that are obstacles to success are also present:

- 97% are eligible for free lunch due to low family income
- 83% are first-generation citizens
- 73% do not have any parent who has earned a 4-year degree
- 68% experience food insecurity during the year
- 66% speak a non-English language at home
- 48% reside in a single-parent household



Publicolored sites

Publicolor's model of revitalization starts with struggling underserved inner-city schools, but that's not where it stops. Once they finish a school, they extend their reach into the community, to local police precincts, homeless shelters, health clinics, and other neglected neighborhood facilities. At all sites they enlist volunteers, from parents to police to corporate employees and beyond, so that all develop a new sense of belonging and pride in their community.

Since 1996, **Publicolor has transformed 270 underperforming public schools, impacting over 900,000 students and teachers, and 241 community facilities** bringing dignity and respect to over 2.6 million residents of low-income neighborhoods.



The measurable impact Publicolor has on those students and their communities impresses and inspires *Fondation Valmont*. **The programs show significant improvement on students' attitudes, behaviors and life path... and are run respecting authentic values shared by *Fondation Valmont*:**

- Art as an inspiration
- Youth as the only viable future, human race continuation
- Sincerity in every action

"Publicolor showed me that anything is possible as long as I take it step by step. I never imagined it was possible for students to transform whole buildings and communities. Being dedicated to a project and working on it diligently every week can bring shocking results." – Sam, Publicolor Student

"Publicolor is a lot of different things, not just painting. It's the colors, the whole experience. It's magic! You start building that connection with each other when you paint together. And then, a couple of years into the program, it dawns on you that you're part of something much bigger." – Luisa, Publicolor Student

"When I first entered high school, I was shy and didn't feel safe at school. I still remember my first day painting with Publicolor. It felt good to do something on Saturdays rather than just stay home. Being at Publicolor was like having a second family. My grades got better as I began to realize the potential I had in me. I'm the first person in my family to attend college. I am a graphic designer, a poet and a mathematician. I am very proud who I've become as a young adult in the world." - Peterson, Publicolor Student



HOW WILL THE PARTNERSHIP COME TO LIFE?

Fondation Valmont is excited to collaborate with Publicolor to raise funding and to work on a major project with students. Four Publicolor groups are working on the design of artwork prototypes, to feed *Fondation Valmont's* next exhibition "Alice in Doomedland" for the Venice Art Biennale in 2021. In Venice. Where it all starts, where the story continues...

The idea came to Didier's mind as he was travelling to London with his daughter Valentine... and met a charismatic character "The Mad Hatter".

He resumes his inspiration in these few words: « *My artistic adventures always start with a family memory... which one day arises as an evidence. Alice in Doomedland was born from an unpredictable encounter between Valentine and the Mad Hatter, on Portobello Road.* »

Didier Guillon, 2019



The Mad Hatter and his daughter Valentine on Portobello Road, 2019

“Alice in Doomedland” challenge

Inspired by Lewis Carroll’s famous tale Alice in Wonderland, “Alice in Doomedland” exhibition will feature Alice’s wonderful universe, transposed in our days, pointing out our major current concerns... such as recycling.

The four groups of students’ challenge consists in producing two series of prototypes each, of mural and sculpture artworks. Burlesque and opulence will resonate in their creations.

Selection process

Each Publicolor’s group will submit their two artworks by 30 August 2019. A jury composed of 7 members will select, during the first week of September, the winning group for the prize. Deliberations will be guided by the following assessment criteria: two artworks in connection with the scene of *Mad Tea Party*, with global issues related to the current society in a burlesque, ridiculous and original way. Students are asked to express emotions and feelings in their art.



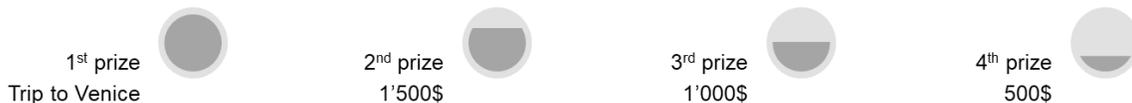
Publicolor's students working on “Alice in Doomedland” Challenge

The jury

- Didier Guillon, *President of the Valmont Group, Curator and Artist*
- Isao Llorens Artigas, *Artist*
- Stéphanie Blake, *Artist*
- Luca Berta, *Curator*
- Francesca Giubilei, *Curator*
- Silvano Rubino, *Artist*
- Cristina Tonini, *Art Historian*

The prize

Valmont will give contest prizes to the four groups - grants from a grand prize being a trip to Venice in 2021 to money prizes.



Fondation Valmont will offer the trip to Venice to the winning group to create their own installation at *Palazzo Bonvicini*. They will produce their life-size prototypes in the *Palazzo Bonvicini* during spring break 2021, to feed “Alice in Doomedland” art exhibition for the Venice Art Biennale in 2021.

TO CELEBRATE THIS NEW PARTNERSHIP

Valmont sets up a vast array of actions to support Publicolor:

Before the exhibit

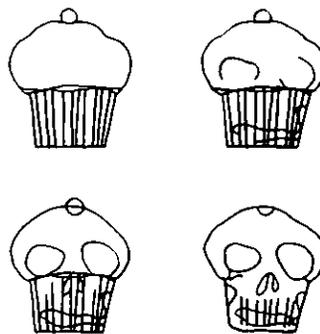
Valmont will give financial support for the artistic materials and will give the contest prizes to the four groups in September.

During the exhibit and onwards

- At the Valmont counter at Saks Fifth Avenue New York and selected Valmont SPAs, Valmont will proudly donate \$10 to Publicolor for each Storie Veneziane and l'Elixir des Glaciers' products sold during October – November 2019
- At the "White Mirror" venue :
 - The artwork prototypes made by the winning group of Publicolor's students will be exhibited during "White Mirror".
 - Visitors will have the opportunity to positively contribute to Publicolor's initiatives, thanks to contactless donations.
 - *Fondation Valmont* will sell a selection of artworks taken from its collection.



"Gold Mirror", Murano Glass,
by Didier Guillon, 2019, in
collaboration with Leonardo
Cimolin



"Skull Cake", serigraphy,
by ISAO, 2019



"The mad Hatter",
serigraphy, by Didier

After the exhibit

The journey continues after the exhibit in the upcoming years. Stay tuned for what happens next in Venice.

...Where it all starts, where the story continues

2019, October 25th - November 3rd

OPENING TIMES 10 AM – 6 PM

FREE ENTRY

393 NYC – GALLERY

393 BROADWAY – NEW YORK, NY 10013

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