

WHITE
MIRROR



WHITE MIRROR

by Didier Guillon

Itinerant exhibition

2019 -2020

Exhibition from November 27th to December 4th, 2019

Corso di Porta Nuova 38 - 20121 Milan

PRESS RELEASE



EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY



IN SUPPORT OF



Fondation Valmont is proud to support Save the Children, the international Organization that for 100 years has been fighting to save children at risk and guarantee them a future. Active in over 120 countries, Save the Children believes every child deserves a future and provides them with access to a healthy life, education and protection from harm.

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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



Prototype White Mirror’s installation, Tokyo, New York, Milan, Chengdu, Munich

Tokyo, New York, Milan, Chengdu, Munich

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), Milan and landing in La Maison Valmont Chengdu and Munich.



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 Bonvicini* 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.



**SAVE THE CHILDREN, THE CHARITY ELECTED BY
FONDATION VALMONT FOR “WHITE MIRROR”**

Charity Operation

One of the Valmont Group’s core values has always been to give back to the community. To celebrate this new art exhibition in Milan, the Group has decided to support the activities of Save the Children, with different types of donations.



For the past 100 years, Save the Children has taken pride in getting things done, as they help children in over 120 countries secure a better future. The Organization works with local communities to maintain high levels on their identified priorities – three major breakthroughs they want to achieve by 2030:

- Survive: no child dies from preventable causes before the age of 5
- Learn: all children have access to qualitative basic education
- Be protected: violence towards children is no longer tolerated.

Valmont will **support Save the Children’s activities by concrete actions:**

- During the time of exhibition, Storie Veneziane fragrances sold on the premises will show an exceptional **20% discount** on their regular price. For the **purchase of any Storie Veneziane fragrance, Valmont will donate 50% of its price to Save the Children.**
- An **unprecedented lucky draw on one of White Mirror’s art pieces:** visitors will be invited to leave their contact details on the exhibition’s database so as to take their chance to win a **Golden Mirror, a Murano glass cage hand crafted by Didier Guillon and Leonardo Cimolin.**



In addition to that, Fondation Valmont will launch the **“Save the Children Challenge”**

At the end of the exhibition on December 4th, children that will participate to the activities of Save the Children will be invited to the gallery, to **draw and paint on 10 of White Mirror’s totems.** Inspired by the exhibition’s concept and message, students’ drawings will express their emotions and feelings.

Evaluated by a jury composed of eminent members and artists, the winner team will be rewarded for their achievement: their **totem will be exhibited at Fondation Valmont’s** Palazzo Bonvicini during the “Venetian Love” exhibition, held from March and November 2020. All contestants of the challenge will be invited to come to Venice for one day, visit the exhibition, enjoy lunch at the Palazzo and discover an authentic Murano glass world-renowned studio, Aristide Najean’s Cathedral.

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

WHITE
MIRROR

2019, November 27th – December 4th

OPENING TIME: MOND /FRID. 10:00 – 19:00

SATURDAY. 11:00/18:00 – SUNDAY. CHIUSO

FREE ENTRY

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