

Partie 1 – F. Carazzato

This year we worked on the Annick and Anton Herbert Collection, one of the largest Contemporary Art collections in Europe. During the three decades of its existence the collection has become home to masterpieces from the Conceptual, Minimalist and Arte Povera fields, and others by artists of the 1980s. It is now about to become a Foundation and will provide premises for research into Contemporary Art. The Herberts have also built up a rich, complex stock of documentation relating to the works and artists in the collection and to work by other artists as well. They see this material as simultaneously a part and an extension of the collection: a way of enabling a different view of the collection and of their approach each time the archive's potential is activated – or, rather, *reactivated*.

The "dot.doc" project grew out of discussion of the nature and value of documents in Contemporary Art and related research; and of the issues that may arise when the Foundation offers the public access to archives that have always been private. Given the complexity of these issues, the project has been divided into three segments, of which "A possible (hi)story" is the first. This use of the term "history" anticipates that point in the future when the Herbert Foundation will be open to the public: we have put ourselves in the shoes of young researchers about to reactivate the potential of the archives. In the course of our work we have worked on the double meaning of "history": both "history" and "story". As young curators we have resituated these issues within a curatorial context. And we have chosen the format of the exhibition in order to focus on the shift of the archives from the private to the public; the status of the

documents; and our choice of addressing, via the documents, a particular turning point in the collection's history: 1989–1990. This period was marked by a transition from a first to a second generation of artists; a kind of aesthetic shift within the collection; as well as social and political changes in the world, as they are reflected in the documents themselves.

We have structured the room in three parts, three walls: one devoted to the collection; the second to its extension; and the third to the "outside" of the collection. We used a grey band as a kind of guiding line to recount our "history"; and via the hanging and the formats of the documents, we have tried to underscore different but contemporary moments in the break represented by the period 1989–90. At the same time we have worked with the notion of "reproduction": how most people's access to contemporary art takes place through reproduction, via new technologies like the Internet, which appeared during the period of the collection we have chosen to focus on. This is why we have restricted ourselves to reproductions of the documents and reworked their formats.

Partie 2 – M. Garzia

Inside the Herbert Collection

A selection of documents from the private archives of the collection: reproductions of works acquired c. 1989–90, correspondence, sketches and photographs.

The exhibition "A possible (hi)story" is laid out on three different walls, in an outline of the Annick and Anton Herbert Collection's transition from private to public. Indeed, given that the Foundation will soon be open to the public, it's a transition from intimacy to the world at large. We have recreated the intimacy of the collection through the exhibition display, the documents we have chosen and especially the format of the reproductions.

For the first wall, we have chosen a photo of Anton Herbert. We see him at home in front of a selection of images of the most important works from the collection. The photo shows the collector as a kind of demiurge attempting to control his view of the world through his collection. This is a deliberate allusion, by the collector, to André Malraux's "Museum Without Walls". It is accompanied on the same wall by all the works acquired around 1989–90. We conceived the display, of a core selection, in order to show the collection's focus and lasting quality. At its centre, reproduced in A3 format, are the collection's recognised masterpieces. Around them, in A4 format, are various documents evoking the very intimate relationship between the collectors and the artists. All this material comes from the private section of the

archives and includes personal photographs like the one of Anton Herbert with Niele Toroni; postcards like the one sent by Dan Graham; or sketches, like the **one by Ian Wilson.**

These documents illustrate Annick and Anton Herbert's distinctive, highly considered approach to collecting, with its very real commitment to artists and gallerists. Despite its density, the exhibition display retains a chronological, left-to-right orientation which enables the viewer to move from the first to the second generation of artists. Indeed, we move from Minimal, Conceptual and Arte Povera artists, such as On Kawara and Donald Judd, to artist who emerged in the 1980s, such as Thomas Schütte and Rodney Graham. A generation that allows us to make the link with the collection's extension on the second Wall.

Partie 3: V. Bobin

Extension: Artists Collected Through Documents.

Annick and Anton Herbert's "Imaginary collection": ephemera, artist's books, invitations, posters and catalogue covers

On the second wall of the exhibition, we have tried to show the extension of the collection as it exists in the form of the Herberts' archives. These archives include documents on artists whose works are part of the collection, as seen on the first wall. Also included are documents on artists who are not part of the official collection: artists of earlier or later generations, whose work the Herberts actively sought to collect, solely in the form of documents. This allows for a broad view of the collection, and historical trends in the art at the time, through the activities of various art spaces, as we can see here in the form of posters, invitation cards and catalogues.

This wall can be read almost like a discourse, which allows the viewer to leave behind the intimacy of the collection, and approach the third wall which represents the outside of the collection: the cultural, sociological, economic and political history of 1989–1990. We chose the documents presented on the second wall for a variety of reasons: either for their artistic qualities, which seemed to us to represent the particular

together the artists who had produced work for the Bicentenary of French Revolution in 1989. It also allowed us a discreet nod towards our interest in the political commitment of some of the artists from the collection, and which doesn't appear among the "official" works in the collection. Whereas the Herberts see themselves as producing a discourse on the world, we saw this as significantly lacking. We already sought to evoke this on the second wall, and we will see it more clearly on the third wall.

The "*Bilder Streit*" poster – in fact, a reproduction of the cover of the catalogue – was placed set in the center of the wall, and allowed us to articulate the two sides of the wall, and, why not, the second and third wall. A kind of struggle between images is taking place that we have tried to show by placing posters with very different aesthetics on either side of the wall. Notably, on the right, we see posters by artists that are all represented in the Collection and which show the diversity of aesthetic and artistic choices of the time.

This finally brings us to the exhibition "L'Époque, la mode, la morale, la passion;" which seemed to us something of a counterpoint to the Herberts' own discourse. It also allowed us to address our own discourse, on the exhibition, on the third wall, entitled "Inside World." Here the link is established via four artists: Bruce Nauman, who enabled us to introduce the question of new technologies and new media; Richard Prince and Jeff Koons, who allowed us to introduce questions on economics and the art market; and Cindy Sherman, who allowed us to evoke

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Partie 4: L. Bouvard

The collection as Discourse on the World?

Social, political and economic history as depicted in the public archives of the Herbert Collection: invitations, posters, catalogues, magazines

The selection of documents presented on Wall 3 mainly comprises press articles, invitations and group show posters retracing economic, social and political events reflected in the artistic output and the context of challenges to art in 1989–90.

We have used the documents' image value rather than their content to make them more intelligible for the public, and to highlight their underlying aesthetic in relation to the Herbert Collection on Wall 1, opposite. Our selection is admittedly somewhat partisan, reflecting our personal tastes and focusing on major elements and events which seem to us still relevant today. On this wall we present various major themes which we have tried to link together. Among them are:

- activist movements, represented by posters produced by Grand Fury, a collective working on the HIV-AIDS crisis.
- the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Bloc v. Bloc confrontation, with an invitation announcing the presentation of one of Gilbert and George's books in Moscow.

We also saw it as important, in the light of our conversations with the Herberts, to use this wall to look at the art market explosion and, to some extent, echo economic issues. So we have included Hans Haacke's "Art Fairism" invitation, along with other documents such as the invitation to a Dan Graham exhibition in Japan – a symbol of globalisation. The "Artificial Nature" poster was very important for us too, in terms of its references to the body and the new technologies; so we decided to associate it with the Matt Mullican "Computer" exhibition poster as a way of opening a window onto matters to do with the new technologies and the Internet.

Wall 3 uses a more fragmented mode of presentation than the two others and the connections it suggests are less linear. We really wanted to centre it around our third video letter and in this way develop the hypothesis the letter presents.

Partie 5 J. Kläring

Three videos for the public

A subtext in pictures

The exhibition includes three videos that accompany the display on the walls, and serve as captions or supplementary information.

The first video gives voice to collectors Annick and Anton Herbert, who discussed their archives and documents with us. They spoke of their future foundation, which will serve researchers and curators. We also asked them to speak about the period from 1989-1990 covered by the exhibition.

The second video shows us at work and outlines our approach to the archives. It also includes a diagram explaining why we chose the years 1989 to 1990, and the subjects broached from that period.

In addition, there are three lists: firstly, a list of artists whose works have been acquired for the collection; secondly, a list of additions – artists represented in the form of documents; and, lastly, a list of artists not in the collection, yet equally important for the period, and whose names can be found in the documentation from 1989 to 1990, which we have chosen from the Herberts' archive. For the most part they appear in the list of exhibition posters and catalogs. This third list underscores the

choices made by the Herberts, all the while adding a number of hypothetical leads.

The third video refers in a highly specific way to the subject of the documents shown on the third wall. Here we made use of our present-day archive, i.e. the Internet. We filmed artists' videos found on YouTube, Ubuweb and their own web sites. Louise Lawler's audio work Bird Calls from 1972 is set against a poster by Gilbert & George as a reminder of feminist approaches.

Following through the hypotheses we chose, has enabled us to address the collection as a point of departure for critical projects to come.