

Titre : **La Maison Rouge**

Sous-titre : **Rencontre avec Antoine de Galbert et Paula Aisemberg**

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At a time when Pinault, Saatchi or Ullens are omnipresent in the media, more and more private collectors create their own foundation to preserve and exhibit their collection. Opened in 2004 in Paris by the French collector Antoine de Galbert to show other private collections, the Maison Rouge foundation is therefore both an original project and the expression of a recent interest for this phenomenon. How does Antoine de Galbert combine his collector's activity and his role in the foundation? What space is there for such a structure within the saturated context of Parisian art venues? What are the motivations for a collector to show his works in such a place? Under which criteria does the Maison Rouge team chooses the collections to exhibit? These are the questions which, among others, we asked Antoine de Galbert and Paula Aisemberg, the director of the foundation, at the Maison Rouge on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 2007. (*see also **video interview***)

According to Antoine de Galbert, when he first thought about opening his foundation, the current interest for private collectors (mostly due to the economical context) was almost inexistent. The project was to show a private collection once or twice a year, alongside with monographic exhibitions of artists that are not well-known in France (such as Tetsumi Kudo, or, recently, Patrick Van Cackenberg). The Maison Rouge also tries to exhibit artist's collections, like Arnulf Rainer in 2005. The claimed strategy of Antoine de Galbert is to step out of the art market tendencies and fashionable events. Although a collector such as Harald Falckenberg is completely part of the market, he is also a visionary and, when parts of his collection were displayed at the Maison Rouge in 2004<sup>1</sup>, major works by Paul McCarthy or Richard Prince were still rarely shown in France.

The desire of distinguishing his various activities from those of museums or public institutions is entangled in Antoine de Galbert's discourse. As a collector, he is not in search of either exhaustiveness or specialization: he calls himself intuitive, and his interests range from traditional headdresses to contemporary art. As for the exhibitions at the Maison Rouge, he and Paula Aisemberg learnt how to deal with the specific exigencies of private collectors. Indeed, the invited curators have to take into account some intimate or social criteria that are in no way related to art history... Since the radical display of *L'Intime, le collectionneur derrière la porte*<sup>2</sup>, the opening show which was co-curated by Antoine de Galbert, Paula Aisemberg and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Central Station, la collection Harald Falckenberg*, cat.exp. La Maison Rouge, co-éditions Fage et la Maison Rouge, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> *L'intime, le collectionneur derrière la porte*, cat.exp. La Maison Rouge, co-éditions Fage et la Maison Rouge, 2004.

psychoanalyst Gérard Wacjman in boxes reproducing some interiors of collector's private homes, the Maison Rouge has kept being praised for the acuteness and originality of its exhibitions.

This is one of the reasons why, according to Antoine de Galbert, so many collectors are looking forward to showing their works in the foundation. Furthermore, collecting contemporary art often means storing oversized installations that cannot be lived with in the daily frame of the collector's houses. The Maison Rouge therefore allows them to rediscover a state of their collection through a new display and a professional, collaborative look. Indeed, Antoine de Galbert prefers working with "true" collectors, who, like himself, buy alone without the reassuring help of any counsellor. However, he likes to compare the program of exhibitions to a "sociological journey" through European collections, which is bound to evolve according to encounters. Until now, he and Paula Aisemberg have nevertheless tried to privilege what they consider "authentic collections": not the mirror of the art market, but a slowly elaborated "self-portrait of the collector", with its mistakes and its uniqueness.

#### *Version française (introduction)*

A l'heure où les Pinault, Saatchi et autres Ullens hantent les media, de plus en plus de collectionneurs privés d'art contemporain créent des fondations dans le but de préserver et d'exposer leur collection. Dans ce contexte, le projet de la Maison Rouge, ouverte en 2004 par le collectionneur Antoine de Galbert afin de montrer les œuvres rassemblées par d'autres, est donc à la fois original et révélateur d'un intérêt somme toute assez récent pour la collection privée. Comment Antoine de Galbert articule-t-il son activité de collectionneur et son rôle dans la fondation ? Quelle place celle-ci entend-elle se donner dans un contexte parisien déjà saturé de lieux d'art contemporain ? Quelles sont les motivations qui poussent un collectionneur à dévoiler ainsi ses œuvres ? Quels critères la Maison Rouge met-elle en place pour sélectionner les collections à exposer ? Autant de questions que nous avons pu poser, parmi d'autres, à Antoine de Galbert et Paula Aisemberg, directrice de la fondation, le 22 Octobre 2007 à la Maison Rouge. (*voir aussi **interview vidéo***)