

#iorestoacasa

#smartworking

#iamstayinghome

The current medical emergency continues as well as our activities from home.
In the last newsletter we asked you to help target our focuses by clicking on your preferred works.
Many of you have taken part, thank you!
Let's kick off our series of focuses on the artists represented by Galleria Fumagalli starting from the French couple Anne and Patrick Poirier.

ANNE AND PATRICK POIRIER



Anne and Patrick Poirier at Galleria Fumagalli in
Milano, 2017. Ph. Lucrezia Roda.
Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Anne and Patrick Poirier are among the most famous couples of the international art scene. Anne was born in 1941 in Marseille and Patrick in 1942 in Nantes. Winners of the Grand Prix de Rome in 1967, the Poirier are **artists in residence at the Villa Medici in Rome (1968-1972)** invited by the former director Balthus. **Since the beginning of this experience they decide to unite their artistic vision signing together their work.**

Born in times of war (in 1943 Anne saw the bombing in Marseille's port and Patrick lost his father during the destruction of Nantes) **the Poirier affirm the fragility of civilisations and cultures, and their aesthetic is often that of fragment and ruin.**

Multidisciplinary artists, they do not refuse any means of expression, including plastics, sculptures and environmental installations, photographs, works on paper, paintings and other visual fragments concerning the fragility of life. **Their solo exhibitions have been held in the most important museums and cultural institutions worldwide such as the Documenta in Kassel (1977) and the Venice Biennale (1984, 1980, 1976).**

«We were born during the war, in a world in ruin, and ruins are an image that reminds us the violence of history and the erosion of time.» Anne and Patrick Poirier

FROM RUINS TO UTOPIA



The Poirier's **interest in the civilisations of the Mediterranean** was first whetted in the 1960s when they embarked on numerous journeys in the Near and Middle East, and deepened with their stay in Rome, at Villa Medici.

In order to explore this cultural memory they went on to adopt **archeological practices**. Through metaphorical works they endeavoured to materialise the threats that loom both over culture and over nature, constantly prey to the violence perpetrated by men or history.

Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Storia*, 2007/2017. Polyester resin, acrylic, neon, gold leaf, aluminum, 64x73x25 cm. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Storia, Fragilità, Oblio*, 2007/2017. Polyester resin, acrylic, neon, gold leaf, aluminum, 64x73x25 cm, 65x80x28 cm, 64x73x25 cm. Ph. Antonio Maniscalco. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Ruins also deal with oblivion, with memory erased or suppressed, and offer an X-ray of a space into which the eye can peer, the better to understand. This universe of shadows inspired a series of constructions as **models for a specific utopia or dystopia**.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Utopia*, 2017. Neon, 70x30x10 cm. Ph. Antonio Maniscalco. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

ARCHAEOLOGY OF MEMORY

Poirier's research had taught them that architecture has often served as a metaphor for the phenomenon of memory. From Ancient Greece to the Renaissance, the arts of memory used "places" (*loci*), attempting to structure memory and to build **mnemotechnical systems based on architectural concepts**.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Journal du poète*, 2019. Mixed media on paper, 192 elements, 230x470x1 cm.
Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Close to our time, the artists became fascinated by writer Jorge Louis Borges and were bound to be receptive to Aby Warburg's obsession with libraries.

Devoted to utopias of memory, the Poirier have become architects who plan and build physical locations that enfold mental space.

With their *Journals*, for example, they organise and explain knowledge with spatial and architectural metaphors.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Journal*, 2017. Mixed media on canvas, 100 elements, 258x397x2 cm.
Ph. Lucrezia Roda. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

ARCHAEOLOGY OF FUTURE

The Poirier's work is imbued with and fed by their relationship with the world that surrounds them. It has changed over time and with the places in their life. Apart from stays on remote and age-old archeological sites, **they have lived almost their entire life in great urban centres** (Paris, Rome, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles), ever curious about the phenomena of the city.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Mésopotamie, Moyen Orient*, 2016. Acrylic, oil, polystyrene, polyurethane, 145x130x3 cm.
Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

They have observed the degradation of ancient sites, of the landscape, and of contemporary cities, their increasingly worrying levels of pollution, the squalor and lawlessness of the projects, and all the dangers that threaten nature, culture, and human existence.

These have spawned **apocalyptic visions of the future such as the absurd and uninhabitable architectural utopia of the work *Dystopia*, Towers of Babel for the modern era.**



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Dystopia*, 2017. Cardboard, plywood, acrylic, 190x140x130 cm, 200x120x135 cm.
 Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Mésopotamie*, 2016. Acrylic, oil, polystyrene, polyurethane, 240x200x3 cm.
 Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

PARALLEL ARCHAEOLOGY

The Poirier have never felt like “photographers”, they were interested in the flexibility and the rigor necessitated by analogue photography.

As well as the fact of **handling a sensitive, transitory, fragile surface that can react to any amount of “tinkering”**.

They like “cooking”, dabbling, the randomness and experimentation that are also at work in their other means of expression.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Archives*, 2017. Ilfochrome print mounted on Dibond, 76x64,5x6 cm.
 Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Archives*, 2015. Ilfochrome print mounted on Dibond, 153x185x6 cm.
Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Photography has always formed part of what the Poirier call their “parallel archaeology/parallel architecture”. They remain doggedly faithful to this multifarious do-it-yourself, to craft techniques that leave them completely free to make interpretations that arise from their imaginations, juxtaposed or combined.

Keeping a watchful eye on the fragility of the world, their photographic oeuvre, in experiments or through traditional techniques, unique pieces or series, forms part of their effort to testify to it in metaphorical form.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Fragility (Fragility)*, 1994/1995. Cibachrome print, 50x60x3 cm. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Fragility (Ruins)*, 1994/1995. Cibachrome print, 50x60x3 cm. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Archives*, 2014. Ilfochrome print mounted on Dibond, 241x151x6 cm. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

OPEN AIR INSTALLATIONS

What is true for archaeology is true for every space, be it natural or constructed. Every location is impregnated by memory, by the mind, and, if we pay sufficient attention, each one has something to tell us.

Since the time at the Villa Medici, the Poirier have harkened to the unspoken messages from the gardens and structures, from the factories and statues they have encountered on their wanderings. And, each time they have the opportunity and the place appears suitable, they build installations, spaces for contemplations and repose.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Vanitas*, 1988-2018. Cascina Maria Nicoletta Rusconi Art Projects, Agrate Conturbia. Ph. Lorenzo Palmieri

Natural features are part of the work that wanderers come across and discover with surprise, in special encounters.



Anne and Patrick Poirier, *Le Labyrinthe du Cerveau*, 2019. Villa Medici, Rome. Ph. Daniele Molajoli

«The whole of Anne and Patrick Poirier's oeuvre aims to radicalise and sensitise our cultural and historical awareness as a mean of self-knowledge [...] Imitation and reconstruction, discovery and invention come together to raise the viewer's awareness, to create a better understanding of the historical intellectual processes involved in the appearance and disappearance of different value systems. Archeology and scientific research into past civilisations provide the material for this radically imagined reconstruction, with the artist constantly searching for valid analogies to contemporary life.»

Lóránd Hegyi

To discover more on the artists' work, visit Galleria Fumagalli's [artists' page](#).

Texts partially drawn from the catalog *Anne et Patrick Poirier* curated by Laure Martin and published by Flammarion (Paris, 2017) on the occasion of the exhibition *Anne et Patrick Poirier. Vagabondages argentiques, 50 ans de bricolage photographique* held at Maison Européenne de la Photographie (6 September - 29 October, 2017).
