

# NICOLAS RAUFASTE

\*1988 IN POMPALES, LEBT UND ARBEITET IN BIEL

RD *In the past you've worked with dried banana peels, arranging them in installations or drawing them. What's up with that?*

NR I am really interested in the idea of the local as opposed to international globalization. The banana skin was this symbol representing movement, distance and separation between two points in history. In fact, the origin of the banana is in Asia. Because of globalization and more specifically slavery, it then traveled to South America. It is a very ambiguous symbol. I created several works dealing with this idea and finally realized that I have to watch out, or I will be dealing with banana skins my whole life. That would be boring. So I decided to find new solutions to the questions I am interested in.

RD *So for you the history of a thing is important? You are not only interested in the visual appearance of something but actually in the whole story behind it?*

NR Yeah. Because I'm curious. It's very important. Sometimes the aesthetics, the visual appearance is not very interesting. I don't want to say it is not important at all. But it is clearly not dominant. This becomes clear in the way I take pictures. I never actually learned to do photography, but I've taken quite a few pictures, so I know how to do it. So now I decided to work with this cheap camera. It is easy to use — it's like taking a picture with your iPhone — and it looks cheap. For me a photo goes beyond the aesthetics. It is not very good, very precise. It doesn't make you go, «Wow! Wonderful!». That is not my way of thinking. It's the same with sculpture. I prefer to speak of objects. You might say I create non-photographs and non-sculptures. This is kind of new, and I am still working out the meaning of this.

RD *In Zurich you are showing a site-specific installation that includes a non-sculpture with leather and a non-photograph of a mannequin wearing an old-fashioned dress. How does this installation reflect your interests as an artist?*

NR This exhibition at *Perla-Mode* is quite interesting to me because it is exactly my theme. Here and Now. For me that means that I start with Biel, because my daily life is always my starting point. Where I live, where my studio is, where I work. I then ask myself how I can get some distance. And the distance can come from history, or time, or space. *Perla-Mode* was a textile shop. And the history of the textile, like the history of the banana, is very interesting. At the moment I am working at the museum of history in Biel. In this museum they have these dolls wearing historical dresses. I find it very funny that the museum uses this kind of mannequin. For me it refers to the ones you would find in a shop window. In earlier times the museum building was also a fabric factory. The textile industry used the port of Marseille and then shipped the raw material to England to be processed, or sent it through Geneva, Neuchâtel and Biel to Zurich. And leather is in a way at the origin of the textile. Before they discovered textile, humans used leather. So the leather is about bringing the prehistorical context to the history. And, like that it is quite precise in the direction I want to go.

RD *In your studio you also have this question pinned to the wall. Is it in relation to the installation?*

NR It was very interesting how this question came about. It was a question from Robert (the curator) that was a new input for me. It is di-

rectly related to the way I do research: I collect notes, diary entries, reflections, little drawings — anything may later become part of a work or not. I do feel more at home with sculpture and pictures — and I'm not so good with text. Yet because the idea of a subject is important to me, I'll consider presenting something even if it is not my preferred medium. Text is a generic tool. I write a lot for my research. So it makes sense to present text in an exhibition. My idea is to extract the strongest substance and concentrate the thoughts. And in fact this sentence is from an email, and I decided to put it in larger font and change its appearance. The question is: Are you negotiating the difficulty / challenge of making a site-specific piece «from the distance»? It could be interesting to see site-specificity this way. To create it without being there physically. With new technology it is actually quite easy to work from the distance. So now this is an angle I want to bring into the work.

Interview:  
Rebecka Domig

Abb. auf Rückseite:  
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