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The New Tastemakers

A Paris exhibition looks at freewheeling freelance curators who are reshaping the art world

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By TOBIAS GREY



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Laurence Papouin

Laurence Papouin's 2012 'Barre de 3 magentas' at Galerie de Roussan

The youthful figure of the globe-trotting freelance curator has become an integral fixture of the contemporary art world. Unencumbered by institutional or academic ties, working alone or as part of a group, he or she has even become a star of sorts.

In a radical role reversal, this month's inaugural Nouvelles Vagues event in Paris puts the curator—not the artist—center stage. Rather exceptionally in a country where public and private spheres rarely mix, the event (until Sept. 9) is being jointly held by the state-funded Palais de Tokyo and 31 independent Parisian galleries.

After receiving over 1,600 proposals from young curators dotted about the globe, a jury that included Swiss über-curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Venice Biennale's Massimiliano Gioni and Palais de Tokyo President Jean de Loisy narrowed the choice down to 53 projects, with each receiving a €40,000 allowance.



"The idea was to see if there are curators out there who will broaden our list of artists worth following," says Mr. Loisy. "Though this phenomenon of the freelance curator started some time ago with Hans-Ulrich Obrist and others, it has grown increasingly important over the last five years."

Mr. Loisy readily embraces the provenance of the event's title, which evokes the freewheeling French film movement of the 1960s. "Today's curators are the art world's equivalent of film directors; they even look like

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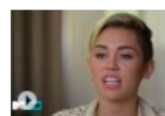
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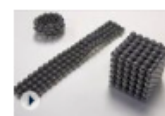
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