

20th Century & Contemporary Art  
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# ArtReview ArtReview Asia

Kentaro Yamada in conversation with Mark Rappolt  
Join us on 4 July at the Daiwa Foundation, London

The LISTE Interviews: Liu Jie  
*The last in a series of interviews with LISTE newcomers – in partnership with E. Gutzwiller & Cie, Banquiers*

The Conceptual Curveball Tour  
*The third of ArtReview's four themed guides on what to see during Mayfair Art Weekend*

The Abstract or Pop Tour  
*The second of ArtReview's four themed guides on what to see during Mayfair Art Weekend*

The LISTE Interviews: Hormoz Hematian  
*The fourth in a series of interviews with LISTE newcomers – in partnership with E. Gutzwiller & Cie, Banquiers*

ARTREVIEW AND E. GUTZWILLER & CIE, BANQUIERS

## The LISTE Interviews: Vesselina Sarieva

The second in a series of interviews with newcomers to the LISTE art fair – in partnership with E. Gutzwiller & Cie, Banquiers



Vesselina Sarieva. Courtesy Sariev Contemporary, Plovdiv and Sofia

LISTE first opened its doors in 1996 and since then has developed into a key art fair for new galleries. **E. Gutzwiller & Cie, Banquiers** has been a supporter from the beginning, and has been the main partner since 1997. The private bank, with its head office in Basel, was founded in 1886 by Carl Gutzwiller and is still owned and managed by the Gutzwiller family and their partners. *ArtReview* spoke to four galleries new to LISTE this year, or who first exhibited at the fair last year. Vesselina Sarieva is the founder of **Sariev Contemporary** in Plovdiv and Sofia. The gallery's artists include **Rada Boukova**, **Pravdoliub Ivanov** and Nedko Solakov.

When was the gallery established? Does it have any particular philosophy or focus?

Sariev is an experimental gallery and to say the exact year of its foundation is difficult. I would say that in its structure it is an ambitious, non-conservative, performative gallery – flowing from one stage of development to another depending on particular goals.



fairs. It has always been important for us to be discoverers, to present new directions, trends, to stimulate even the established artists with whom we work to make something different and to surprise themselves, or to reveal a trait in them that was unsuspected. That is why we focused on little-known Bulgarian contemporary art – art that was then unfamiliar both in Bulgaria and abroad. With the foundation of Sariev Contemporary [in 2011], we launched an 'Introduction to Contemporary Art' programme with an 'Introduction to Bulgarian Contemporary Art' line. Since then we have published a book in English and, last year, launched a website.

Our activities happen in a variety of spaces, not just our main white cube gallery in Plovdiv or the studio in Sofia. We have had pop-up galleries for example and often our exhibitions are realised in more than one venue. We are currently collaborating with the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Plovdiv where we have been putting on shows. In addition, we develop programmes for contemporary art and culture through our other organisations – the [Open Arts Foundation](#), [Artnewscafé](#) and [Fluca](#). The latter functions as a open air stage for arts and culture, not just visual arts, but also contemporary music, dance, literature, cinema, etc.

We seek constructive dialogue with the artists who make projects with us. For us, this dialogue is determinant for their projects. There is an interesting dialogue with the audience too, and the way we work with collectors and collections – international and local – represents to most of them an entry into a completely new culture.

#### Aside from sales, what do you hope you gain from participating in LISTE?

Sales are extremely important because they support our artists and our development, but they have never been an end in itself. As I mentioned, our artists are not so well-known and displaying their work is only the start. For me, selling is above all establishing a dialogue, exchanging ideas and discovering values in the work of an artist with whom the collector wants to identify. The same goes with meetings with critics or curators. I always say – I'm no different from the artist, nor is the collector different from me or the curator. Everyone has their own important contribution to make with their own resources, but we are together in sharing a common emotion around art.

#### How many art fairs do you do a year and how does that sit alongside the gallery programme?

About three fairs a year – that might not seem much, but we choose the fairs very precisely. Of course, at the very beginning we made mistakes, but who doesn't! For the last few years, our key events were at Art Brussels and Artissima. This year we also added LISTE, where I've always wanted to show, and Art-o-rama in Marseille.

#### What are you showing in Basel? How did you decide?

At LISTE we will **stage** a solo exhibition of [Vikenti Komitski](#), a young artist of Bulgarian origin who lives in Berlin. There will be six new big wall objects and five collages, plus a video in the fair's Joinery Programme. I think of these works as an 'exorcism' of Bauhaus and modernist aesthetics by a savage Internet user!

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