



Jolaine Frizzell with works by Guerra de la Paz in the gallery's storage room. Photography by Sonja Ruckstuhl.

jolaine FRIZZELL

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
GALERIE KASHYA HILDEBRAND

My favourite artwork:
Jung-Yeon Min's *Chute Vers Mille Soleil*. She combines the myth of Icarus with Deleuze – it's incredible.

Painting or photography?
Painting.

Art motto:
Big, bold and beautiful.

For Canadian Jolaine Frizzell, undergraduate studies in Art History at the University of Calgary in Alberta led to a degree in Photography, followed by a return to art history for her postgraduate studies at the University of Western Ontario. After internships at various arts organisations working on their fundraising programmes, Frizzell relocated to Zurich, where freelance writing projects led to a full-time position at Galerie Kashya Hildebrand in 2009. She now oversees its exhibitions, catalogues and participation at art fairs.

What is exciting about working at the gallery?

I get to work with so many talented artists from all over the world. Really, the gallery functions as a kind of nexus where all these artists and their ideas interconnect. What is exciting for me is that I get to aid this process work more smoothly by helping artists express, share their ideas and write about their art. I get to facilitate between what the artist is trying to do and how the gallery, visitor or collector can come into it. I also find the sales side of it all very interesting, being at an art fair and meeting people.

What has been part of the learning curve?

Simple things like multi-tasking – you're doing so much that you're constantly having to learn to prioritise what needs to be done. I also think that the job is so much bigger than just sitting in the gallery and waiting for people to come in and buy the art. I've learnt that being an artist requires more than making great art. It also involves meeting deadlines, writing texts about your work and working with people in a team.

What stresses you out?

On the days before we leave for a fair, there are a lot of last-minute things to do – from updating artist CVs to adding images to the iPad and packing everything necessary for the installation when, for instance, there isn't much time to

find hardware stores in unfamiliar cities. When you couple this with artworks being delayed by customs, or delayed in general, it can cause a little bit of stress.

Any disasters?

I once spent 20 hours at Dubai airport because I didn't have a visa (my fault), or when we set up at Art Asia Miami without air-conditioning because the fair organiser only got it for the days of the fair proper – very sweaty! Also, in my first week at the gallery, I accidentally set off the alarm. It was a horrible, loud, solid five minutes of ringing, passers-by were staring at me and the alarm company only spoke German!

What inspires you?

Every single time we go to an art fair, after we've set up, struggled and finally finished, Kashya walks into the booth and with absolute sincerity says, "This is really the best booth ever". It is the greatest way to start a fair. Working with an artist for months to plan an exhibition, from choosing the pieces to designing the layout and then seeing people respond to it – that's also a thrill. Or receiving an email from an artist who said that she cried on the subway reading a text I wrote about her practice for a catalogue because she felt that I got what she was doing – those moments are amazing.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I would definitely like to curate more. It's such interest-

ing work and a privilege to be able to travel and meet people from various backgrounds. I'm learning so much. For example, I don't have a lot of experience with the histories and cultures of the Middle East, but through the art, I'm beginning to hear the region's voice and really see what's going on. I love that about what I do. That said, I don't think I want to open my own gallery. I think it takes a special kind of person to meet the challenges involved in having a gallery. It also requires a lot of financial risk – I don't know if I could handle the sleepless nights. I admire how Kashya can juggle all the demands and still be inspired.

What's a typical day like?

We come in at 11 am. I usually check emails, follow up any administration, do invoicing and so forth. Our next exhibition is with Marwan Sahmarani (*Canvas 3.1*), so I'm dealing with the transport company about getting his works to Zurich. Once that's done, we'll have to frame them – and I'm writing a text on his new series. We're also in the midst of applying for a bunch of art fairs coming up.

Do you ever get arted out?

No way! I find the art inspiring – it gives me energy. Sometimes, though, the pace can be a little exhausting. I was in Venice for the opening weekend of the Biennale this year and later in Basel and then for a break in Munich for the weekend and I was done. But just when you feel totally over-stimulated and run off your feet, you'll see a piece that pushes all that away, and you lose yourself in it all over again.

Does anything shock you anymore?

No, I don't think so. A particular artwork will never shock me, but I'll be interested in why an artist would want to make a work like that. 