



STROMBOLI

LIGHTS

MY

FIRE

NICOLETTA FIORUCCI is a familiar face to members of the contemporary art caravan. Known for her cheerful enthusiasm, curiosity and close personal engagement with the artists she supports, her acquaintance is much sought after, not least in the distant hope that it might come in the context of an invitation to what *ArtForum* called ‘art’s summer camp’, the annual Volcano Extravaganza festival of contemporary art on the Aeolian island of Stromboli.

INTERVIEW BY BEN EASTHAM

Fiorucci began collecting in her early twenties, focusing initially on drawings by Masters of the Italian tradition such as Guercino, Luca Cambiaso, Stefano della Bella and Tiepolo. With time, she developed a taste for contemporary art and design, her tendencies towards the cutting edge exemplified by her recent acquisition of works by artists including Marc Camille Chaimowicz and Andro Wekua. She set up the Fiorucci Art Trust as a separate entity in 2010, directed by Milovan Farronato and supported by curator Stella Bottai, to support institutions — including Chisenhale Gallery, the Serpentine Galleries and Gasworks — and artists through the creation of programmes including the travelling workshop Roadside Picnic

and the aforementioned Volcano Extravaganza.

Why did you begin collecting?
Collecting is a constant exploration, a research entailing risks and with no end point. Collecting is a way to learn, for me and for those around me.

What prompted you to set up the Fiorucci Art Trust?
About six years ago, I invited curator Milovan Farronato to guide my activity as a collector of contemporary art. Many of our conversations reflected upon the possible ways through which artists can be given an opportunity to produce new work and push their practice. These dialogues led me to set up the Fiorucci Art Trust with the

goal of supporting artists outside of the pressure of the market and allowing them to take risks. It is not necessarily aimed at the production of an exhibition or the creation of tangible objects.

The trust does not operate under the restrictions imposed by the market, on the one hand, and audience numbers, on the other. The programme benefits from a very focused audience. While public attendance is important for us, the primary focus is to foster cultural discourse through collaborations across disciplines.

What does the trust allow you to do that your practice as a collector doesn't?
The trust — a completely separate entity from my own collection

**“WE ENCOURAGE
THE ARTISTS
WE WORK WITH
TO FOCUS
ON DEVELOPING
IDEAS”**

— creates a neutral space between me as collector, with my identity and my taste, and the cultural activities that I wish to sustain.

I really wanted to create a ‘spazio libero’ for the artists, a space that could live beyond the relationship I have with art and the market as a collector. The way I look at art and my relationship with artists is constantly influenced and enriched by the activity of the trust, with an impact on the way I collect too.

Why choose Stromboli for the Volcano Extravaganza?
It was interesting for us to bring artists to confront and work within the remoteness of this place, where the four elements of fire, earth, water and air effect an extremely powerful representation of what ‘nature’ is

and does. From the first, informal gathering of artists in 2008 we noticed how much artists loved to work in and with Stromboli. Runa Islam's film *This Much Is Uncertain* (2009–10) — which the trust commissioned — comes precisely from her time spent by the volcano and was filmed in Stromboli. To see artists so deeply engaged with and inspired by the location prompted us to initiate the Volcano Extravaganza as a yearly project. As we become increasingly aware of the fragility of the planet, I think Stromboli will acquire a more prominent position within our programme, with residencies and projects all year round.

The residencies and programmes supported by the trust are unusual in that they make no demands on the artist to produce works. I consider this aspect very important. In some ways, I see the success of our programme precisely in the acknowledgement and acceptance of 'failure' as a possibility. We encourage the artists we work with to focus on developing ideas: this is more valuable than putting pressure on the 'promise' of an outcome.

How important is patronage to the development of an artist's career in the current environment?

It is very important to not confuse collecting with philanthropy: both these activities can, indeed, further the development of an artist's career, yet their agendas are very different. Public institutions struggle to sustain programmes focused on more 'niche' topics, or less glamorous projects. In the current environment public museums find it really hard to be able to maintain a forward-thinking, risk-taking profile while also fulfilling the agendas inevitably set by their sponsors and funders. Art organizations such as the trust might not become increasingly 'important' in a traditional view of art power and success, yet they can help artists and institutions by allowing moments of freedom and independent creativity.

Early 1980s

Began collecting Old Masters.

2008

Began working with curator Milovan Farronato to develop her collection of contemporary art.

2009

First informal gatherings on the island of Stromboli result in works such as Runa Islam's film *This Much Is Uncertain* (2009–10).



2010

Founded the Fiorucci Art Trust as a not-for-profit body.



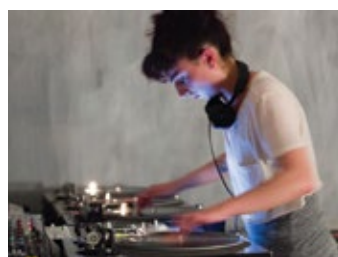
2011

First instalment of the Volcano Extravaganza on Stromboli, co-curated by Farronato with Rita Selvaggio



2014

Haroon Mirza invited to helm this year's edition of the Volcano Extravaganza.



THE VOLCANO EXTRAVAGANZA

Founded in 2011, the annual Volcano Extravaganza invites artists, writers, musicians, performers and architects to summit together on the island of Stromboli, situated off the north coast of Sicily. Described as an 'artist-run season of art', each edition is shaped by the approach of its artistic leader. Working in association with the trust's director, Milovan Ferronato, artists including Nick Mauss, Lucy McKenzie and, in 2014, Haroon Mirza have invited collaborators from different creative fields onto the island for a period of ten days to two months. Emphasizing the social, collaborative and, indeed, extravagant, the Volcano Extravaganza is as different as it is possible to imagine from the typical residency featuring an artist working alone in a tumbledown cottage beneath the rain, blissfully removed from the distractions of company.

The famously — almost notoriously — convivial atmosphere of

the extravaganza is reinforced by the insulation of the attendees from the wider world, stranded on a volcanic island. The features of this extraordinary landscape are, Fiorucci points out, evident in much of the work produced in its various incarnations, from 'Enrico David's series of paintings showing human profiles and faces with their throats obstructed by large rocks' to Goshka Macuga's collages, 'which include cut-outs from early issues of *Vogue* pasted on top of images of Stromboli's anthropomorphic rocks'. Yet the defining feature of this part-workshop, part-residency, part-networking opportunity, which has as its base the house that once served as Marina Abramovic's summer residency, is the spirit of exchange. 'We wished,' she tells me, 'to give an artist a platform to work in a collaborative way with other artists and participants, benefiting from the unique production modes of a remote, volcanic island.'

AD

Paper