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# contemporary sculpture

**From an Anish Kapoor “coupe” to a surrealist sheep, the collection created by a chief financial officer and his art advisor is about to get bigger and bolder with the arrival of a new sculpture park near St Tropez. Claire Wrathall reports. Portrait by Léa Crespi**

Ordinarily, anyone looking to spend a six- or seven-figure sum on something will seek expert advice before committing to the deal. Yet art collectors are often content to trust the gallerist or auction house that stands to benefit from the sale. Not so Pierre Lorinet, the French-born, Singapore-based chief financial officer of Trafigura, one of the world’s largest commodities trading houses.

Having grown up in an environment full of art and with his 40th birthday

looming, Lorinet (pictured above left) decided he wanted to build a contemporary sculpture collection. His eye had been caught by a piece by Anish Kapoor, one of the best known, most influential living sculptors – not to mention most expensive (the record paid for one of his works stands at £1.94m). Lorinet wanted to be certain the work he had in mind was a good buy. A friend suggested he consult art advisor Edward Mitterrand (pictured above right), co-founder of the Geneva-based consultancy Mitterrand+Cramer

(and also, incidentally, son of the esteemed Paris gallery owner Jean-Gabriel Mitterrand and great-nephew of the former president of France). It was probably just as well.

“I checked out the piece and said I thought they were asking double what it was worth,” says Mitterrand. “I couldn’t recommend it. It was not just overpriced, but the gallery he was talking to did not represent the artist, so if the work

needed to go back to the studio for anything it would have been very complicated.” That too made him wary.

Glad of the advice, Lorinet changed his mind. “There are so many traps in the contemporary art world; it’s so easy to take a wrong turning or make a bad decision. You need an overall knowledge of the artists and galleries and pricing.” And he had no time to do his own due diligence. “The money isn’t necessarily the most important thing, but you don’t want to pay more than you need to.”

Before long, however, Mitterrand located an alternative piece by Kapoor at Galleria Massimo Minini in Brescia, Italy: a wall-mounted “coupe” similar to

the first piece Lorinet had wanted, though less flat and with a red interior (pictured overleaf). Lorinet bought it, at which point he decided to retain Mitterrand as an advisor. Lawyers were consulted, contracts drawn up, a fee structure agreed. Three years on, Mitterrand

**Above: Pierre Lorinet (left) and Edward Mitterrand at Galerie Mitterrand with (from left) Perfect Vehicles, 1986, by Alan McCollum, Soleil Rouge, 1972, by Alexander Calder, and Dada, 2008, by Sherrie Levine**





**“The number of times I’ve caught my boys climbing on the Lalanne Mouton”**

has purchased 20 significant works on Lorinet’s behalf, mostly by “mid-career artists”. The collection includes sculptures by Antony Gormley (*Force III*, a stacked-cube figure in Cor-Ten steel, pictured far right), Thomas Houseago, Alan McCollum (vases from the Perfect Vehicles series pictured on previous page), Ugo Rondinone and Alexander Calder (*Soleil Rouge*, 1972, pictured on previous page). Lorinet’s favourite remains their second purchase, Sherrif Levine’s *Dada* (pictured on previous page), essentially a child’s rocking horse cast in polished bronze that Mitterrand had spotted at Art Basel.

“I’d wanted to go but hadn’t been able to,” says Lorinet. “But Edward sent me a lot of photographs, and straightaway I thought it was just great. I loved its simplicity and colour.” There was, says Mitterrand, “a lot of pressure. I knew it was the last piece available from the edition” (of 12, one of which sold for £313,250 at Phillips in June 2012). But he secured it, and it remains the first piece you see on entering Lorinet’s home, where it doubles as an unofficial plaything. “I have two boys aged six and seven, and the number of times I’ve caught them climbing on it... Though it’s solid enough, so I don’t have a problem with that. They do the same with the Lalanne Mouton [essentially a model of a sheep by the surrealist François-Xavier Lalanne, examples pictured top]. I like that my kids are growing up surrounded by art and can experience it like this. They know to be more careful around the fragile works.”

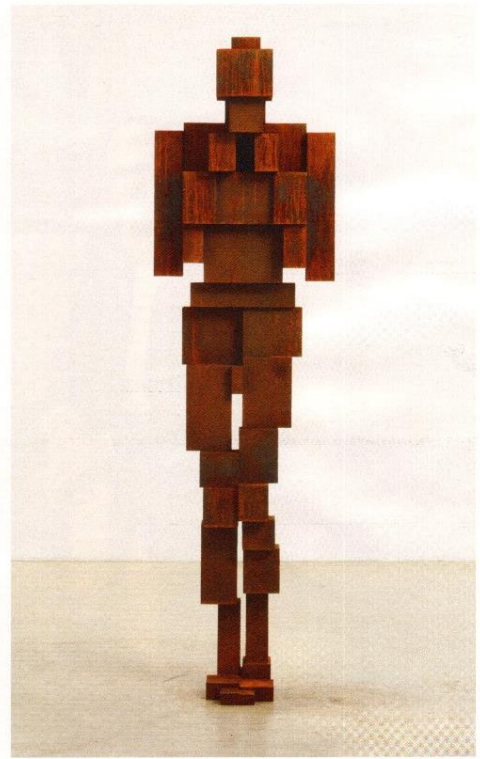
The acquisition of the Levine was also significant in the way it represented what Mitterrand calls “a great step in the direction I want to take Pierre in, not by force but by persuasion, of course”. And this is towards the realm of the great American minimalists – Carl André, Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt et al – though Mitterrand concedes that their work is “a bit more radical to interact with”, and it takes a certain leap of faith “to imagine paying \$250,000 for 16 small sheets of metal that lie on the floor” (an allusion to André’s 1974 work *Sixteen Steel Cardinal*, an edition of which Christie’s New York sold for \$242,500 in 2009). “You can’t base those sorts of



decisions just on trust. And you certainly shouldn’t buy something like that just because you’ve been told you should.”

It would be a stretch to call Lorinet’s fast-growing collection eclectic, but there is some latitude in what Mitterrand encourages him to buy. Its focus may be sculpture, but there are also two photographs by Louise Lawler. On the whole, however, Mitterrand takes a dim view of contemporary painting: “Really, I think the only interesting thing about painting today is talk of its death,” he says. Lorinet has, therefore, “committed some infidelities”, as he puts it, “and bought without Edward’s advice”, among them a Picasso. “I also like [paintings by the Dutch fauvist Kees] van Dongen, even though he’s very different from the artists Edward encourages me to buy.”

There have been works they’ve wanted but missed out on, too: a drawing by



Clockwise from top left:  
**Les Nouveaux Moutons, Brebis, 1994, by François-Xavier Lalanne. Force III, 2010, by Antony Gormley. Untitled (Apple Red), 2011, by Anish Kapoor**

things more complicated”, laughs Mitterrand – has grown out of their client-advisor relationship, based on their shared interests in art and wine, as well as friends in common. They also attend fairs together, notably the editions of Art Basel in Hong Kong and Miami, something Lorinet hopes to be able to do more of when, as reported last March, he leaves Trafifigura in September to pursue “other interests”, one of which will be art.

To this end he is a partner in the *Domaine du Muy*, a 10-hectare sculpture park half an hour from St Tropez that Mitterrand is opening in July. For Lorinet this is a project that will also enable him to commission and acquire large-scale installations such as Tomás Saraceno’s *Cloud Cities*, a 5m-long sculpture of interconnected polyhedrons, for which he will never have space at home, “and to work directly with artists. Time hasn’t been my greatest ally recently,” he says. “But I’m really looking forward to getting involved with works at their genesis.” ♦  
*Domaine du Muy, Domaine des Charles, 83490 Le Muy (+331-4326 1205; www.domainedumuy.com); by appointment only. Mitterrand+Cramer, 52 Rue des Bains, 1205 Geneva (+4122-800 2727; www.mitterrand-cramer.com).*

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