



CURATOR

Fredérique Hutter and Last Tango *Baloise Art Collection*

“The most important skill for a curator is intuition,” says Zürich-based artist manager Frédérique Hutter. Having worked with such galleries as Bruno Bischofberger and Haunch of Venison, she now runs her own space and, since 2022, has been the art adviser for the Baloise Art Collection, the Swiss insurance firm’s cultural arm.

Intuition is what led Hutter to curatorial duo Last Tango. “One of my collectors spoke about Linda Jensen and Arianna Gellini, and their space,” she says. “I had a hunch about them right away.” When it came to choosing who should look after the exhibition inside Art Forum Baloise Park at this year’s Art Basel, she knew that it had to be them.

Part of Hutter’s role at Baloise consists of giving emerging curators a bigger stage, allowing them to rethink what should be on show at the large gallery space inside the corporation’s HQ. Here, the duo will be able to pick which piece from the insurer’s more than 1,500-strong collection they believe deserves the spotlight – and hang it alongside 11 works borrowed from other institutions and artists. The resulting show, *Siren Songs / Sinister Sirens*, opens on 15 June.

“It’s not the first time we have worked with such prestigious pieces but

it was amazing to have such incredible works to choose from,” says Gellini (pictured, centre, with Hutter, on left, and Jensen). “It was challenging to narrow it down to one that resonates with an overarching theme.” They decided on a pencil, charcoal and watercolour work by US artist Bruce Nauman, titled “Human Need Drain”. “It’s about the idea of agency, which has been a focus in our curatorial work,” says Jensen, who kicks into high gear when she talks about art and the questions it inspires.

Even though instinct is a big part of the profession, a curator also needs to know how to negotiate efficiently. “You need to be good at sensing people and managing them,” says Gellini. “When you do an exhibition, you’re dealing with personalities who bring themselves into the picture.” Empathy, sensibility and curiosity are important. “It’s about nurturing a community; having the museum director meet their neighbour as well as a student from art school.”

That type of meeting is not unusual at Last Tango’s exhibition space. Housed in a former barn overlooking the Limmat river in Zürich, the venue is sandwiched between the area of the city that’s home to many artist ateliers and the blue-chip galleries at Löwenbräu Areal. “It’s crucial that there’s a place for the big galleries to see the emerging artists and vice versa,” says Hutter.

“This way they can nurture each other.” Her own nurturing work will soon be ready to bear fruit. — MZ

‘Siren Songs / Sinister Sirens’ opens on 15 June at Baloise Art Parc; art.baloise.com