

## ***Making art accessible to as many people as possible***

Through her company G & O Art, Odile Gorse, in collaboration with her husband Ghenadie Burlacu, facilitates the connection between artists and art collectors through different places where the works can be showcased.

She details her activities.

### **Interview with Odile Gorse, president & co-founder of G & O Art, Counselor for Foreign Trade of France and Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters**

#### **Can you tell us about your journey?**

I was born in Ivory Coast and lived ten years in Senegal. Then returned to France where I spent ten years. With my multicultural influences and arts and culture-oriented education, I naturally headed for this sector. After studying art history at La Sorbonne, I followed my parents to the United States where I finally settled. I founded my first art company in New York at 23. Together with my husband, Ghenadie Burlacu, we created G & O ART in 2000. He is the "G" - I am the "O" of G & O. In 2010, because of our contribution to the promotion of culture in France and throughout the world, I was appointed Advisor for Foreign Trade of France, North America / NY section - with the sponsorship of Jean-Christophe Donnellier, at the time Minister Counselor, Head of Economic and Financial Services at the French Embassy in the United States. I am in my third term. I can help galleries, artists or art dealers who want to know about logistics or legislation in the US: transport, customs, etc.

#### **What are the activities of your company G & O Art?**

We have several. First of all, we are not merchants or gallerists, but agents. We offer a vast and unique range of visual arts to private collectors, International Institutions, Galleries and Art dealers as well as to the hospitality, design and luxury industries. We represent contemporary artists with national and international reputation as well as emerging artists. We take care of their entire career. This includes logistics: storage, transport, inventory, and of course, promotion, communication and marketing. But our activity as an agent is not only about managing their work, it also involves a human part that is important. Artists need to be morally supported and guided in their endeavors to be able to devote themselves to their art serenely. We represent about twenty artists from all continents and from all walks of life.

We also develop artistic programs for different companies to help them promote their message and brand image to their audience. We also create and manage private collections. Finally, we collaborate or have collaborated with institutions such as the French Embassy and Consulate in the USA, FIAF, the World Bank at WDC, the United Nations in NY, to name just a few, and groups like the BNP Paribas Banque Privée, the Accor Group and Air France among others. This is an opportunity for us to organize prestigious events such as "The Dialogue of Cultures" - a meeting of 50 Francophone artists in the Salle des Pas Perdus - for the International Organization of La Francophonie at the UN in NYC.

### **What is the difference between G & O Art and the work of a gallery?**

I opened a gallery in Soho in the early 1990s and I had the opportunity to experience this mode of distribution. A gallery, to be well identified, has the need to be known by a certain pictorial or formal style, and therefore only one type of artistic expression. I quickly got bored. As an agent, we can represent artists of different styles, to evolve in our work and always to discover new talents. None of our artists have the same style, so there is no competition between them. Moreover, galleries, although they play a significant role, are often very intimidating for an audience that knows little about art or are "timid". Some people do not enter a gallery easily. We are always looking for other ways to meet potential collectors and show them that art is alive and accessible.

### **How do you distribute the artists you represent?**

This is an important aspect of our business. We absolutely want the works not to remain in a warehouse between exhibitions. Art must be seen and by the greatest number, it is our motto. We always look for unusual places outside the gallery universe – flagship luxury stores, large law firms ..., where the works can be exhibited. We ensure that the paintings are always highlighted; we are also very attentive to the light and the scenography ... And always having the highest reward when a collector "falls in love" with a piece of art. We were invited, for example, to set up art installations in Air France First and Business Lounges at JFK Airport in NY. We are constantly looking for new opportunities. We are pleased to see that our innovative ideas we started implementing ten - fifteen years ago, such as collaboration of artists with major luxury brands or exhibitions in luxury hotels ... have now become "mainstream".

### **And the future?**

We have been coming to France several times a year for the last ten years. We organized a large number of exhibitions and installations that were very successful and encouraged us to continue. We are now developing our network in London, Brussels and Geneva. The adventure goes on ..