



Galerie Chenel

Galerie Chenel was established in 1999 on the iconic quai Voltaire. Facing the Louvre museum, the place has a very powerful atmosphere with its contemporary setting that truly emphasizes the high-quality antique sculptures that they present. The gallery participates in different several major art fairs, organizes thematic exhibitions and visionary partnerships with contemporary artists. Galerie Chenel is a member of the SNA (National Union of Antiques Dealers), the IADAA (International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art) and the Carré Rive Gauche.

 Ancient Art

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 TEFAF Maastricht
Masterpiece London
Frieze Masters



Archaistic Hermes Head

Hellenistic or Roman

1st Century BD – 1st Century AD

Marble

H. 33cm, W. 19cm, D. 23cm

Provenance:

Collection of Leon Medina, New York.

Collection Andy Warhol (1928-1987)

Sold at Sotheby's New York, 29-30

April 1988, lot 3244.

Collection of a Palm Beach collector.

” Interview with Gladys Chenel ~ Co-Director



Ollivier, Gladys and Adrien Chenel in their gallery © Galerie Chenel

In the middle of a second French lock down, I had the chance to speak with Gladys Chenel. Gladys, her husband Ollivier and her brother-in-law Adrien, are the three talented art dealers who founded the gallery, more than 20 years ago.

artfairmag: You are part of the new generation of art dealers. What is your background? How did ancient art come to you?

Gladys Chenel: Firstly, Gallery Chenel is a family business. My father-in-law, Alain, was an antique dealer and an expert in Art deco in Nice. The boys grew up in this environment and they naturally walked in his footsteps. Our story began 21 years ago, having just arrived from England. Ollivier, a graduate in art history, was determined to open his gallery in Paris and brought me along with him. Adrien, still a photography student at that time, joined us shortly after. Our common taste for ancient art quickly led us to specialise in this field.

artfairmag: Your core specialty is antique sculptures, mainly Roman. You present them in a very modern way and often work with contemporary artists. What is the DNA of your gallery?

G. C.: We do things the way we think and with conviction. Our gallery looks like us and reflects ourselves. Our passion for classical antiquities does not affect our curiosity regarding other fields. Open to dialogues and mixing, we do not hesitate to sometimes offer a contemporary artwork or design furniture in juxtaposition with our ancient sculptures. We enjoy presenting our imposing marbles next to Picasso ceramics which are more fragile and colourful.

artfairmag: I'm curious about the profile of your buyers. Is there a typical profile or on the contrary, a great diversity within the ones interested in ancient art (age, backgrounds, private, public, etc.)?

G. C.: We do not have a special profile for buyers. They range from passionate collectors to enthusiasts, from national to international museums, from young to old, from the curios to the seriously interested, from fund investors to decorators, from the loyal clients to those that have bought only one artwork... In a nutshell, they come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but all of them buy because they have fallen in love with a piece and give us their trust.

“Our gallery looks like us and reflects ourselves. Our passion for classical antiquities does not affect our curiosity regarding other fields.”

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regarding other fields.”

artfairmag: Is there a type of piece that your collectors are more looking for than others? If so, is it the same at an art fair?

G. C.: People come to us for our taste and our seriousness. Our collectors are particularly looking for sculptures which, through their craftsmanship, fine quality and impeccable provenance, can make them dream and travel. That said, certain subjects such as a male torso or a voluptuous Venus will obviously attract more people. The fairs in which we participate give us the opportunity to have a greater visibility and bring us a new audience with different expectations.

artfairmag: For archaeological artworks, I feel like you must see it in real to appreciate it, to be touched by it. Do you think the health crisis and the resulting digitalisation of the art market will change the way you do your job?

G. C.: Our sculptures bring an emotion which is almost impossible to get from a screen. For a long time, we have worked on our online presence, whether it is on Instagram or on our website, in order to be as interactive as possible. They are both important windows, nowadays accessible from anywhere and by everyone. This crisis has certainly changed our perception of the art market and its fragility, but we remain positive and we are patiently waiting for a return to a “new normal” soon. We always keep evaluating and adapting to all situations, but we will not completely change our approach to our profession as (antique) dealers.

artfairmag: To conclude this interview, I would love to know more about a piece that is special for you.

G. C.: We like to present to you this large head of an archaic Hermes, probably Hellenistic, 1st century BC – 1st century AD. Being at the same time poetic and strong, the serene portrait of the god Hermes, protector of roads and travellers, is suggesting that the sculptor was strongly inspired by the fashion in Greece in the 6th century BC, known as archaic art which makes it really interesting as a Roman interpretation of another exciting era. We are not the first to be fascinated by this head. Among his owners, it used to belong to Andy Warhol in his private New York residence in Lexington.