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## DAILY AD

### EMMANUEL PERROTIN AND DOMINIQUE LÉVY CREATE MANHATTAN'S NEWEST CONTEMPORARY ART DESTINATION

Text by Stephen Wallis | September 25, 2013



The space curated by Dominique Lévy features postwar pieces, including this Lucio Fontana ceiling sculpture. Photo: Tom Powel Imaging Inc.

The most anticipated gallery opening of New York's young fall season is actually a two-for-one. Influential Paris dealer Emmanuel Perrotin and leading secondary-market specialist Dominique Lévy have teamed up to take over 909 Madison Avenue, a landmark 1930s redbrick building (at 73rd Street) long occupied by the Bank of New York and just a couple of blocks from the Whitney Museum of American Art.



Dominique Lévy (left) and Emmanuel Perrotin. Photos: François Dischinger, Courtesy of Dominique Lévy, New York; Karl Lagerfeld

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It's an unlikely alliance that brings together two very different pillars of the contemporary art market. The genial, puckish Perrotin will showcase his program of high-impact, festival-ready art in the soaring street-level gallery and on a subterranean floor (where a bank vault was located). The cerebral, Swiss-born Lévy—a onetime Christie's rainmaker who recently left a several-year partnership with Robert Mnuchin in the gallery L&M Arts—will present a mix of postwar masterworks as well as new pieces by contemporary talents on the second and third floors, with offices and a private showroom above that.



Artist Paola Pivi's feather-covered polar bears installed in the first-floor gallery curated by Perrotin. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli, Courtesy of Galerie Perrotin

To kick things off, Perrotin is showing works by Paola Pivi, whose double-take-inducing sculptures and installations playfully upend expectations and transform familiar objects into something wondrous. In the first-floor gallery she's installed seven life-size sculptures of polar bears, their fur actually feathers painted in various candy colors. On the level below is a vaultlike metal box with several slots that spit out \$1 and \$5 bills at regular intervals. Are they real and for the taking? Yes and yes.




Yves Klein's *Pluie Bleue*, 1961. Photo: Tom Powel Imaging, Inc.

Upstairs, Lévy has assembled a knockout exhibition of works by postwar giants Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein, and Cy Twombly, kindred spirits whose mostly abstract art evokes poetry, silence, and the infinite. The rarefied selection (only a few pieces are for sale) features loans from major museums and private collections, and includes one of Fontana's monumental ceiling sculptures in plaster and neon and a Klein installation incorporating a field of thrown pigment in his signature blue.

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909 Madison Avenue. Photo: Genevieve Hanson

The whole project—which includes the building’s elegant renovation by architect Francis D’Haene of [D’Apostrophe Design](#)—came together somewhat by chance. Lévy had nearly given up looking for spaces in the neighborhood when she went into Rag & Bone, which had set up on the ground floor at 909 Madison, to try on jeans. “I was drowning my frustrations by shopping,” she jokes. But a saleswoman informed her that the store was just a temporary pop-up, and Lévy immediately called her real estate broker. Having heard a rumor that Perrotin was about to sign a lease for a nearby space, she tracked him down in Hong Kong (where he’d just opened another gallery) and urged him to consider sharing 909 Madison with her instead. “Physical space is very important to me,” says Perrotin, who couldn’t resist the historical flavor of the Federal-style structure and its double-height ground-floor space with dentil moldings. As Lévy notes, it’s a building “that has soul.”

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