

GALLERIA MASSIMO MININI

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jonathan monk

wall drawing covered by wall (uncovered)

We'd been to Berlin many times, for all kinds of shows and events, and we'd met dozens of artists, of varying talent. But never him: Jonathan Monk.

Our beloved Ariel (Schlesinger) had told us he lived in Prenzlauer Berg. In a three-story house, with a big garden out back. After various emails, in the fall of 2015 we finally met up in Rome and decided to do a show together. And so at the end of last summer, we set off for Berlin in the gallery's red van, to go see him at his home and studio in Prenzlauer Berg. We got there in the afternoon, said hello, had a look around, and started chatting. But before long, some earth-moving work in the yard next door turned up an unexploded bomb from World War II, which interrupted everything and forced us to evacuate.

We came back the next day when things had settled down, happy to see him again and to learn everything was intact. To learn that his deconstructed bronze grids "à la Sol Lewitt" were just fine, as were his wall-drawing posters and his world map made out of rainbow flags. And the "letters Lawrence Weiner doesn't need" and the magazines mysteriously preserved in the family garage by Jonathan's father. And, too, his "Closed" photo evoking the historic show by Robert Barry, his "Boetti/Kabul" skateboard with an impression of Alighiero's fist, his upside-down Italy inspired by a fridge magnet, with clear references to Luciano Fabro, his "Salvo-style" paintings sold for "100 euros a tree" and the thousand books he has published.

Jonathan welcomed us as usual, witty and kind. He helped us load up the red Ford with the pieces chosen for the exhibition, supplied us with water, gave us some catalogues, and made us a present of three works "for all your trouble," signing them without even being asked as we looked on in disbelief, and inquiring each time whether we'd like to have it. Boom! He's the bomb.