

A RESPONSE TO

“PRESS FOR CHAMPAGNE – *Inside the Art World*”



”I just read Fré Ilgen's recent book about the current art market that is both brilliant and often ‘laugh out loud’ funny. The composition of the book is as structurally elegant and balanced as his fanciful mobiles.

He opens with a very poetic description of Venice and the hilarious and breathtakingly expensive structure of the Biennale. He has short anecdotes between the five main scenes which are conversations with his ‘timeless five’: Rubens, Rodin, Kandinsky, Beckmann and De Kooning along with him and his wife, for the purpose of this book changed into the art-loving couple Fred Nohow and Jackie Sunshine, during a week together in New York. They have lunch and talk about the current art market, visit the MoMA, visit the MET, visit the Guggenheim, and then meet for coffee.

Fré even created a collage of the artists, photographed with himself and his wife Jacqueline sitting with them in their living room. Charming. Fré time travels with ease, and all the artists express their views on the current art market as seen from their dates in time. Fré is a master art historian.

He concludes with a series of anecdotes that all make a point in a very concise and surprising way. The prose is lyrical, Cartesian and jargon free like la Fontaine’s Fables or la Rochefoucauld’s Maxims. It is the autobiography of his soul in prose instead of in sculpture or painting. It is ‘The Portrait of the Artist as a Master’. It deserves wider readership.”

Maurice Hart

Maurice Hart (American, living in Berlin) studied ‘lettres modernes’ at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1979-80 and then was in the PhD program at Yale until 1983 when he decided he had to be a pianist and tenor.