



Almost like a photograph of a moment.

FRANCESCA GAVIN

The studio feels quite fundamental to your practice.

HAMISH PEARCH

I get up quite early. I go in. I've got a lot of things on the go at once. I try to distract myself. I've got a few different modes of working, some things are quick placements which can happen without me paying attention while cleaning or moving things around. Other things are labored over for months. It sounds weird, but I just let things happen. I like thinking through objects and their relationships. If I take this and put it next to that, what does it make? It's almost like making things to try and position myself in the world. It feels like the studio is just a place where I collect things and then



reorganize and reshape them slowly.

From Switzerland with love

Françoise Grossen recalls her New York years

Photography by
Charlie Rubin

21 The artist Françoise Grossen was born in 1943 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, where she recently returned to live following several decades in New York. Françoise first began harnessing fiber as a sculptural medium over forty years ago, effectively splitting from her contemporaries. In her words, “First we broke with the rectangle, then we broke with the wall.” The following written exchanges with Françoise took place over several months and contain recollections of her years at the studio in Soho, where she worked and lived.

22 The antelope, the ficus, the light of the lamp: that's life. This room had become the central space of the flat. A friend's daughter found the ficus by chance in a nightclub far from Manhattan after I had moved out. This plant – once impossible to transport – had become a tree whose shape she instantly recognized.



23 L'antilope, le ficus, la lumière de la lampe: c'est la vie. Cette pièce était devenue l'espace central de l'appartement. La fille d'une amie a retrouvé le ficus par hasard dans une boîte de nuit loin de Manhattan après mon déménagement. Cette plante impossible à transportée était devenue un arbre dont elle en a instantanément reconnu la forme.

24 Three “metamorphoses” developed with the help of papier-mâché, a material then new to me and which served the desire to make larger objects. Before that, I worked for a long time only with rope, sometimes with the natural color, sometimes with dye.

Phase of my work where I wanted to make more monumental pieces. Solicited by invitations to biennials or for exhibitions, practical and technical questions then came to influence the final form of the work.



25 Trois “métamorphoses” développées avec l’aide de papier mâché, un matériel alors nouveau pour moi et servant le désir d’obtenir des objets plus volumineux. Avant cela j’ai travaillé longtemps seulement avec la corde quelque fois la couleur, quelque fois avec les teintures.

Phase de mon travail où je souhaitais faire des pièces plus monumentales. Alors sollicitée par des invitations à des Biennales ou pour des expositions, les questions pratiques et techniques sont venues influencer la forme finale de l’oeuvre.





28 Workshop area of the flat where I worked with ladders permitting me to go down as I progressed . . . The beams of the ceiling allowed me to have an overview of my progress and to support the full weight of my work.

Detail of a sculpture that to me evokes the likeness of an animal head. Each work was born from a previous work. Here, a somewhat uncertain metamorphosis between animal and vegetal is seen.



29 Coin atelier de l'appartement où je travaillais avec des échelles me permettant de descendre à mesure que j'avancais sur mes réalisations. Les poutres du plafond me permettait d'avoir une vue d'ensemble de mes oeuvres en cours et de supporter tout le poids de mon travail.

Détail d'une sculpture qui m'évoque comme une tête d'animal. Chaque oeuvre naissait d'un travail précédent. Ici, une métamorphose quelque peu incertaine entre l'animal et le végétal.



30 The question that obsessed me for a long time was how to start or finish a work. Here, I have chosen to leave it unfinished. The repetition of certain units allowed me to maintain relative mobility in the transport and installation of this kind of sculpture.

31 La question qui m'a longtemps obsédée était celle de comment démarrer ou achever une oeuvre. J'ai choisi ici de la laisser inachevée. La répétition de certaines unités me permettait de garder une mobilité relative dans le transport et l'installation de ce genre de sculptures.



32 The corner where Beda, my architect husband, set up his office when he retired. The presence of plants has always been important to him and me.
Rope work (braiding and dyeing). The importance and duration of preparation cannot be overemphasized.



33 Coin où Beda, mon mari architecte, avait installé son bureau au moment de sa retraite. La présence des plantes à toujours été importante pour lui et moi.
Travail des cordes (tressage et teinture) On n'évoque jamais assez l'importance et la durée de la préparation.



34 Collection of postcards illustrating all the possible textile working options (see also the basket work next to the stool). Upper floor: color sample before the choice of materials. And my light table on which I worked on my presentations or documented the many exhibitions I visited.

35 Collection de carte postales illustrants toutes les options possibles de travail textile (voir aussi le travail du panier à côté du tabouret) Étage supérieurs: échantillon de couleur avant le choix des Matériaux. Et ma table lumineuse sur laquelle je travaillais mes présentations ou documentais les nombreuses expositions visitées.

