

# APOLLO MAGAZINE

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### IN THE STUDIO WITH... NICOLAS PARTY



Nicolas Party. Photo: Axel Dupeux; courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

*Nicolas Party is best known for his fantastical, disquieting pastel landscapes, often populated by cartoonish figures redolent of Magritte's paintings. These androgynous, brightly coloured characters are also liable to appear as monumental busts on trompe l'oeil plinths; Party works across a range of mediums including public sculpture, ceramics and installations. His latest exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts – 'Nicolas Party: L'heure mauve' (12 February–16 October) – brings together more than 100 works, including murals painted in situ, that offer a surrealistic window on the natural world.*

#### **Where is your studio?**

Red Hook in Brooklyn, New York

#### **What do you like most about the space?**

The studio has incredible windows that let in a lot of natural light and show a unique view of the Manhattan skyline.

#### **What frustrates you about it?**

It's in an industrial building with old radiators – it is difficult to control the climate and is often too hot in the middle of the winter.

#### **Do you work alone?**

We are a small team – three people work at the studio with me.

#### **How messy is your studio?**

It depends on the area of the studio – some are very messy, and others are extremely organised. The pastel room is full of dust that we are trying hard not to spread everywhere.

### **What does it smell like?**

At the moment, the studio smells of oil paint as I am working on a series of small oil painting on copper.

### **What's the weirdest object in there?**

There is a beautiful rock formation in the office. It is called a gogotte formation and is a naturally shaped sandstone concretion that is millions of years old. It looks like a Hans Bellmer sculpture.

### **Which artistic tool could you least do without?**

Pencil, eraser and a sketchbook.

### **What's the most well-thumbed book in your studio?**

A copy of Georgia O'Keeffe's catalogue raisonné.

### **Do you pin up images of other artists' works?**

I don't usually pin up images that I print. I keep them in digital folders. At the moment, I am looking at different examples of tabernacles for an exhibition that will take place in Milan in April.

### **What do you listen to while you're working?**

I almost never work in silence. My audio time is divided between podcasts and music. I prefer to have my mind occupied while I work. It makes my decision making faster and freer than if I was fully focused on the piece in front of me.

### **Do you ever sleep in your studio?**

I sometime have a nap if I come in during the weekend with my little toy poodle.

### **Who's the most interesting visitor you've had to your studio?**

Xavier F. Salomon, chief curator at the Frick Collection, visited the studio to examine the two Rosalba Carriera pastels I have in my collection. Tucked behind the wooden strainer of one pastel he discovered a small, folded piece of paper called a Santino. The paper, probably placed there by Carriera herself almost 300 years ago, had a small image that was meant to keep the pastel safe on its journey to its new owner.

'Nicolas Party: L'heure mauve' is at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts from 12 February–16 October.