

**T**ired of bad weather in Paris, painters in the 19th century would sometimes head south, to Provence, where they found space to think and work. Today, it's become mostly a refuge for the rich. In 2009, Daiga Grantina, Tobias Kaspar, and Hannes Loichinger launched the first issue of the magazine PROVENCE in a neighborhood café in Basel, along with an exhibition curated by Egija Inzule.

The thing about PROVENCE is that it isn't quite a magazine, nor is it really about Provence. From the start, they agreed to only make eight issues, to be sure it wouldn't turn into a proper job. Supposedly, it's "dedicated to hobbies," but it's well aware that nowadays, there is no such thing as free time and no difference between work and play. Instead, PROVENCE carves out a place where the margins flirt with the center, where complicity merges with objection, and where luxury contains a critical edge. PROVENCE is not about saying yes, or saying no, but about the other options.

To publish is to engage with the contemporary information-based polis. PROVENCE goes along with it—on glossy paper no less—but does so on its own terms by drifting between competing economies. Of particular interest, in this context, is the case of Ghislain Mollet-Viéville. A Parisian collector of conceptual art, he calls himself an *agent d'art*, which somehow combines buying, selling, collecting, producing, and promoting artworks. In the 70s and 80s, he would advertize himself in art magazines, posing in a cardigan sweater.

He would also rent out his apartment for photo shoots, and beautiful women would appear in fashion magazines posing with Sol Lewitt sculptures. He made good money this way.

The fourth issue of PROVENCE is an auction catalogue for pieces of driftwood that originate from Provence's very own beaches. They are for sale.

PROVENCE is with us from October 29th to November 13th, 2010.