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It is a great pleasure for me to recommend BIG IDEAS PARADE GIANTS.

My experience with them has been simply incredible: with their professionalism, calm and expertise they have lead me through all the phases that are necessary to the construction of a balloon. They have taught me what can be done, and, more importantly, they have listened carefully to what I really wanted to do.

I had approached Big Ideas when researching a company that could manufacture a helium balloon for an art exhibition in Milan: the balloon had to be gigantic, at least 70 feet long and represent with great detail a human body. The flying machine was conceived as a portrait of the artist Pawel Althamer (an internationally acclaimed Polish contemporary artist). The job presented many difficulties given the time frame, the nature of the piece which was to be not simply a parade balloon but really an object capable to fly. The artist also had many additional requests and wanted to be involved in the modeling, the coloring and the over all conceptualization of the piece. The artist was also very concerned with finding the right people to execute his vision. No other company in the world – not even the legendary Cameron Balloons – was willing to take on such a challenging project and under an incredibly tight schedule of 8 weeks.

When I spoke with Big Ideas for the first time, I understood I had found the right people: they were willing to listen and to develop new possible solutions. They were not interested in problems, but in how to solve them. Not only had Chip Schilling and Ken Moody assured me such a complicated project was possible; they also spent endless hours explaining how they would have realized and suggesting ways and small changes that would have tremendously improved the product.

When working with artists, it is always difficult to find manufacturers that can understand what the artist wants and how to realize it without betraying the artist's vision. Chip and Ken instead really guided me and the artist through the process and kept us constantly informed.

After eight weeks of incredible hard work and endless phone calls which Chip and Ken picked up at any time and on any day of the week, we received the balloon in Milan and inflated to find ourselves contemplating a true work of art, in which the vision of the artist had been incredibly amplified by Big Ideas talent.

The portrait of the artist as an inflated balloon has become really an icon in the collective imagination of the city of Milan and of all of Italy. It has become a temporary monument, loved, discussed, joked about by hundreds of thousands of people.

The balloon immediately became a beloved media story, and it has been reproduced in countless newspapers, magazines, and TV shows all over the world. A Chinese company that had turned down the job emailed us after seeing the balloon on Chinese television to congratulate with us and with Big Ideas. We received compliments and congratulations from museums and institutions all over the world, and from many competitors of Big Ideas that felt the need to express their admiration for a balloon that was really re-defining what is possible in the industry.

As you can see, the Trussardi Foundation and myself can only recommend the service of Big Ideas: together with Chip and Ken we had the honor to really do something unusual, something that might push the limits of balloon flying and subvert our understanding of what contemporary sculpture can mean.

Sincerely
Massimiliano Gioni

Artistic Director, Trussardi Foundation, Milan Italy
Curator, New Museum, New York, NY