



Editor's Choice

## Fair(y) tales

What three Berlin gallerists make of this year's huge Art Week success. *By Eva Eicker*

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### ART NEWS

#### City cancels DAU

Russian film-maker Ilya Khrzhanovsky's highly controversial project "DAU" has been cancelled for lack of a security concept. The artist planned to build a replica of the Wall around Prinzenpalais for four weeks, to be destroyed "in spectacular style" on November 9.

#### Berlinische Galerie makes purchase

After a major retrospective of Jeanne Mammen's work in 2017, Berlinische Galerie, who also manages the artist's estate, purchased her 1927 watercolour "Theaterloge (Der Tenor)" and is planning to add it to its permanent exhibition.

This year, Berlin Art Week exceeded expectations, attracting 120,000 art lovers from all over the world. 35,000 alone made their way to see the fairs *Art Berlin* and *Positions* at Tempelhof. Things seemed to go better than with predecessor *Art Berlin Contemporary* (ABC) a hybrid between art fair and curated event, constantly accompanied by financial and existential uncertainty. This was also the first year that the established Cologne Art Fair partnered with Berlin, apparently granting the city a new role in the national commercial art field. What's more, funding has already been secured for 2019 by culture secretary Klaus Lederer, the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, as well as sponsoring partners. But what does this success mean for the city's gallery scene?

Tanja Wagner opened her Tiergarten space in 2010 and sees "potential in Berlin Art Week to grow, because there is a new generation of collectors interested in discovering contemporary artists, sometimes sharing their generation's cultural background." The gallery's upcoming solo show features French artist **Annabel Daou** who experiments with writing, speech, and non-verbal modes of communication as well as textured, often monochrome paper- and tape-based constructions.

Next to long-established Berlin galleries, there are new ones opening up, the latest additions including Sweetwater in Kreuzberg. Hailing from New York, director Lucas Casso considered cities around the globe, but concluded that "Berlin's strong community between artists, gallerists and institutions provides a great context for the gallery." Sweetwater was not part of this year's Art Week shenanigans, but hopes to lure new talents to the city: "For many of the artists we will be showing, it will be their first significant exposure here." This is true for Casso's inaugural show of American artist Kayode Ojo's work, **Closer**. Inspired by Mike Nichols' film of the same name (starring Natalie Portman and Jude Law) it shows video work and photographs referencing body and gender in captivating close-ups alongside multimedia installations. If things go well, perhaps we will see Casso at one of next year's fairs.

Also seeking the crossover of media is Luca Barbeni's gallery NOME, opened in Kreuzberg in 2015. Barbeni explains that part of

what brought him here were festivals like *transmediale* connecting the art scene: "When I opened my gallery here, I already knew a lot of people." From his own experience, he can imagine that growing commercial fairs could motivate other gallerists to relocate to Berlin. NOME focusses on mid-career artists and research based exhibitions in the field of digital art, as seen in the current group show **Agency**, curated by London-based artist and writer James Bridle. Addressing themes like mass surveillance and transnational terrorism, climate change and conspiracy theories, the invited contributors' concern lies on individual creative intervention and resistance to hopelessness. Phantastic sculptures generated by 3D scanning and printing can be seen alongside an "army" of mass produced sim cards and piles of paper tracing the story of Wikileaks.

So, while the art market applauds a booming new festival, the city's galleries celebrate a diversity of media, fresh work and platforms for newcomers in Berlin this November. ■

**Closer** *Through Nov 17* Sweetwater, Kreuzberg | **Annabel Daou** *Nov 23-Jan 26* Tanja Wagner Gallery, Tiergarten | **Agency** *Through Dec 7* NOME Gallery, Kreuzberg